



No. MDRGM002

THE GAMBIA: FIRE

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 185 countries.

In Brief

This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 20,325 (USD 16,260 or EUR 12,783) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to enable the Gambia Red Cross Society respond to the needs in this operation. This operation is expected to be implemented over 2 months, and will be completed by 10 January 2007; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 10 April 2007). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

[<Click here to go to the attached map>](#)

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

The situation

On 30 October 2006, at around 22:00hrs, a fire disaster occurred at Kanifing Housing Estate (plot no. B11), in the Gambia, after some leaking gas was ignited by a candle flame. Gambia Red Cross Society (GRCS) staff and volunteers who lived within the affected neighbourhood rushed to rescue the affected family and to help in extinguishing the fire. Unfortunately, as one of the rescuers was trying to remove the leaking gas bottle from the house, it exploded and the Red Cross staff/volunteers (who had been trained in disaster management), were caught up in the ensuing flames. At least 18 people, 17 of the rescuers and one member of the affected family, were injured.

They were in turn rescued from the fire and were rushed to the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital where 14 of them were admitted while the other 4 were treated and discharged. All the affected people suffered third-degree burns. The GRCS has so far recorded the deaths of seven people, including the Red Cross volunteer management and branch development coordinator. The deaths have been attributed to inadequate medical care and equipment. It is feared that the remaining injured people could succumb to their injuries if proper medical support is not provided.

As at 9 November, seven of the people admitted at the hospital were still in critical condition. Families of the casualties and their institutions of affiliation are responsible for buying medicine for them. It is particularly difficult for families that lack financial resources to cater for such expenses for their relatives. There is, thus, the need for external intervention as the patients need proper and constant medical attention.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Immediately the disaster occurred, Gambia Red Cross Society staff and volunteers who lived in the neighbourhood mobilized themselves to respond swiftly. Despite the loss that the Red Cross volunteers suffered after they were caught up and injured in the flames, more volunteers of the national society are providing support to the affected people by attending to them at the hospital (in shifts).

Coordination

A crisis meeting has been held in which the Gambian government declared the fire a national disaster. The government also contributed GMD 1,000 (CHF 46) for each of the bereaved family and GMD 5,000 (CHF 231) for each patient under treatment. Though it is a financially-constrained national society, the GRCS contributed GMD 1,000 to support the treatment of the injured. The Federation regional delegation in Dakar also gave CHF 1,000 for the same.

Plan of Action

In order to better respond to the needs of the affected people, the GRCS – together with the regional delegation in Dakar – developed a plan of action to assist the affected populations.

Objective: To provide medical support for the seven survivors and assist the bereaved families to recover psychologically by assisting them financially for two months.

Specific objectives

- To support the seven survivors to quickly recover by supporting them to pay their medical bills.
- To provide psychological support to the bereaved families.
- To sensitize the affected community as well as Red Cross volunteers on how to respond to future potential cases of fire.

Expected results

- The surviving people are out of danger and all their medical bills are settled.
- 50 volunteers have been trained on proper techniques of handling fire disasters.
- Communities at high risk of fire are sensitized and mobilized to adopt good fire handling practices, in cases of fire.

Activities

- Providing medical support (for treatment) to the injured.
- Training volunteers on first-aid practices.
- Sensitizing the Kanifing community in dealing with fires.
- Psychological and financial support to the affected families.
- Distributing torch lamps.

Budget outline

Type	Value (in CHF)
Beneficiary needs	
Medical and first aid	10,488
Teaching materials	1,560
Utensils and tools	2,880
Sub total 1	14,928
Operational needs	
National staff	3,060
Other general expenses	728

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Stationery	96
Communication	192
Sub total 2	4,076
Total without PSR	19,004
Programme support (6.5% of total)	1,321
Grand Total	20,325

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **In Gambia:** William Jammeh, Secretary General, The Gambia Red Cross Society, Banjul; Email: redcrossgam@yahoo.com; Phone +220.990.04.01; Fax +220.439.49.21
- **In Senegal:** Alasan Senghore, Federation Head of West and Central Africa Regional Delegation, Dakar; Email: alasan.senghore@ifrc.org; Phone +221.869.36.41; Fax +221.860.20.02.
- **In Geneva:** Madeleine Lundberg, Federation Regional Officer for West and Central Africa, Africa Dept.; Email: madeleine.lundberg@ifrc.org; Phone +41.22.730.4.35; Fax +41.22.733.03.95

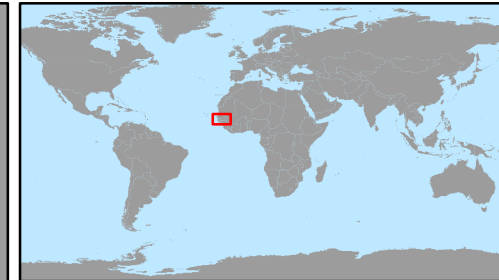
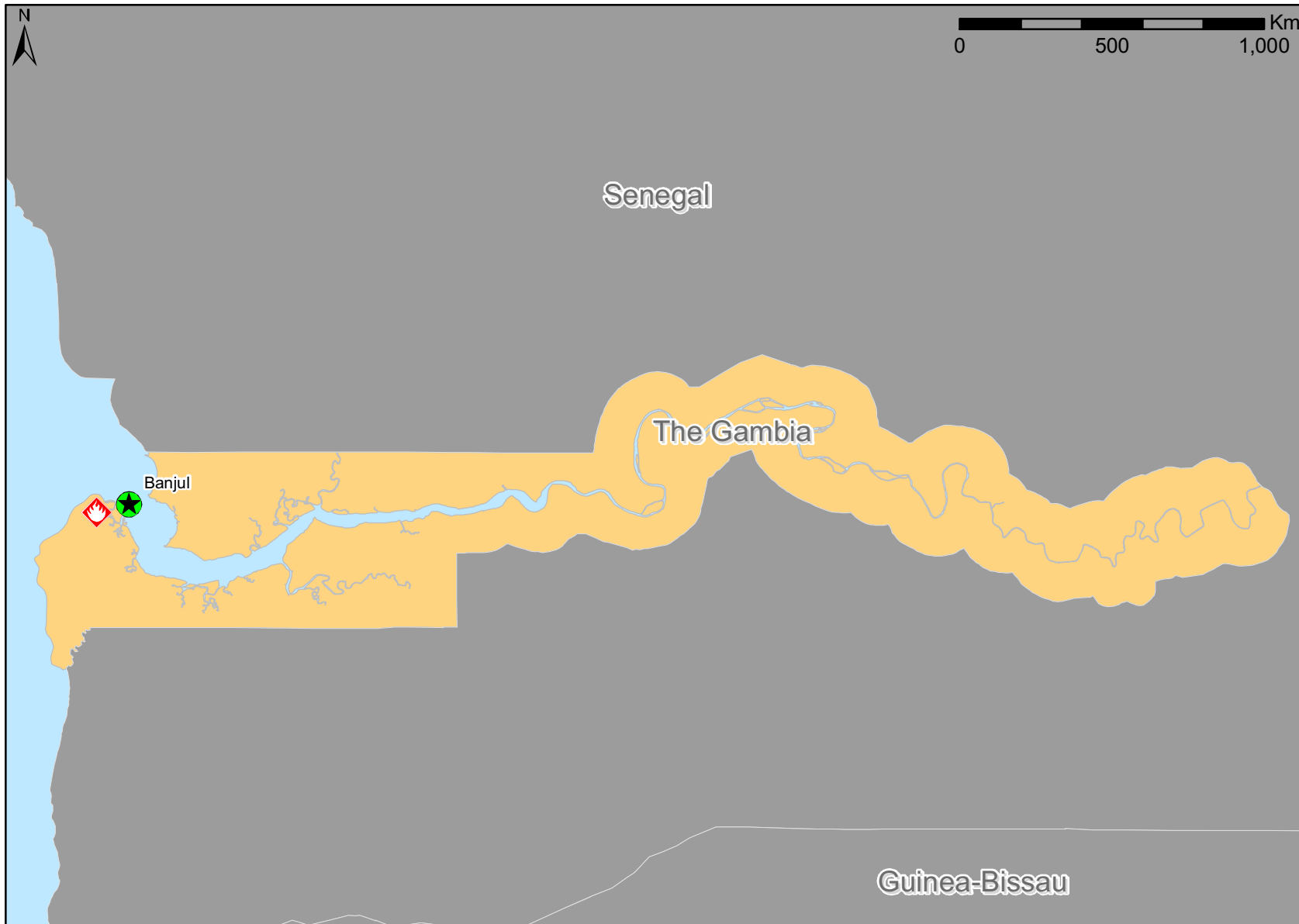
All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

[Map below; click here to return to the title page.](#)



The Gambia: Fire



On 30 October 2006, at around 10 pm, a fire disaster occurred at Kanifing Housing Estate plot no. B11. A candle and a gas leak caused the fire that involved 18 victims. All of them are suffering from third-degree burns.

Legend

- Capitals
- Kanifing
- The Gambia
- Other countries