



BURKINA FASO: MENINGITIS

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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 70,000 (USD 56,000 or EUR 43,209) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs in this operation. This operation is expected to be implemented over 3 months, and will be completed by 16 May 2007; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

[<Click here to go directly 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

According to Burkina Faso's Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization (WHO), there is a meningitis epidemic in Burkina Faso. So far, over 1,300 cases have been recorded, with 142 deaths (translating to a case fatality rate of more than 10%). Eight health districts are directly affected: Banfora, Batie, Dano, Houndé, Nanoro, Ouargaye, Sapouy and Titao.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has declared a meningitis outbreak in the districts of Ouargaye and Banfora, where the number of cases has surpassed the epidemic threshold. The ministry has planned for a vaccination campaign in these areas. In the other districts, the cases have exceeded the alert threshold but have not yet reached the epidemic level. The districts in the "alert" phase – 5 cases per 100,000 inhabitants – are Batié and Dano (Southwest) Houndé (West), Sapouy (South), Nanoro (Centre-South) and Titao (North). Intense surveillance is being implemented.

The Burkina Faso government, through MoH, has begun conducting social mobilization. A vaccination and immunization campaign is scheduled for this week, with the technical and financial support of partners. The campaign will be administered free of charge country-wide and treatment will also be made available free of charge for affected people.

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Burkina Faso is in West Africa's meningitis "belt", which stretches across the semi-arid Sahel region – from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east. Each year, between December and June, sand storms combined with seasonal respiratory infections trigger outbreaks of meningitis. The causal bacteria are transmitted through respiratory secretions such as sneezing or coughing and through direct contact with infected people.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Burkinabe Red Cross Society (BRCS) is mobilizing resources to assist the government in the fight against meningitis in the Ouargaye and Banfora regions as well as in other areas. Social mobilization activities will be conducted by Red Cross volunteers in the affected health districts. The national society will also participate in the implementation of the government's plan of action in the identified zones.

The BRCS, a long time partner of the MoH, has developed a plan of action with the support of the Federation regional delegation in Dakar to complement the actions of MoH. Red Cross volunteers are already supporting the case identification process in the field.

The needs

Health authorities have warned that the disease is likely to spread. As a result, there is an urgent need to train volunteers who will assist in raising awareness in the communities about preventive measures to avoid further spread of the outbreak. The volunteers will also assist MoH in the ongoing and planned vaccination campaigns.

Coordination

A statement issued by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO, on Tuesday, 13 February 2007, announced that a mass vaccination campaign has been launched in the eastern district of Ouargaye (which has recorded cases above the epidemic threshold – 10 cases per 100,000 inhabitants). Authorities are also planning a vaccination campaign in Banfora district (in the west) where meningitis is also at epidemic level.

Plan of action

The Red Cross action will not only focus on the districts directly affected by the outbreak, but activities will be carried out simultaneously in neighbouring districts so as to prevent further spread of the outbreak.

Strategy

The Burkinabe Red Cross Society will work closely with MoH and will target 200,000 people and support/supervise 1,000 volunteers in the affected districts. The Red Cross action will focus on:

- Social mobilization;
- Community training;
- Capacity building activities.

Objective: The Burkinabe Red Cross Society will contribute to the control of the epidemic in the eight affected districts and other neighbouring health districts in the next three months.

Activities:

- Train 800 volunteers on health education and hygiene promotion;
- Organize community mobilization and sensitization activities;
- Mobilize 1,000 volunteers to deliver key-messages on proper hygiene practices;
- Use education vans to inform the public;
- Increase preparedness activities in districts on "alert" phase as well as in neighbouring districts;
- Broadcast campaigns in rural areas radios through the radio.

Expected results:

- 800 volunteers, 65 supervisors and 15 team leaders are trained;
- 200,000 people are reached through sensitization activities;
- Didactic materials are produced;
- 150 information sessions and 200 focus group discussions are organized;
- A post evaluation workshop for the campaign is held, to gather lessons learned and decide on future preparedness activities.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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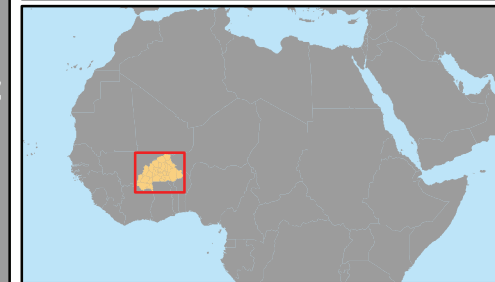
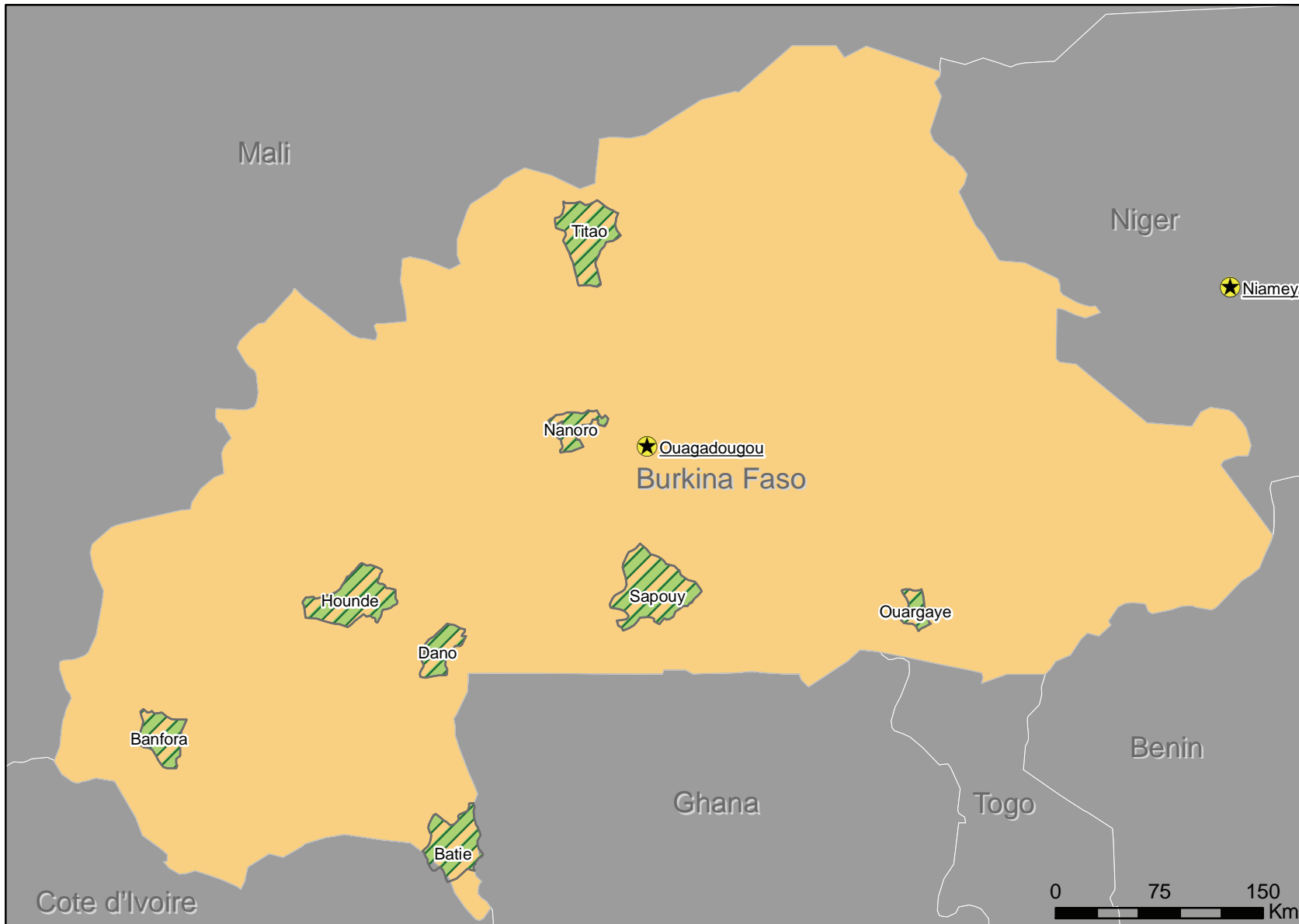
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[<Map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



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- ★ Capitales
- Affected districts