

## ***GUINEA: YELLOW FEVER***

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#### ***The Disaster***

A serious outbreak of Yellow Fever occurred in Guinea in August/September, and the numbers of those affected continues to climb. On 30 November, 163 cases had been registered, with 65 deaths. As of 17 December, these figures had climbed to 486 persons affected, with 187 fatalities. Ten regions are particularly affected, with the highest incidence registered in the central Prefectures of Mamou, Labé, Kankan and Kindia. Recent armed conflict and insecurity in the east of Guinea Conakry has prevented the Ministry of Public Health and supporting agencies from conducting mass immunization in the eastern areas of the country. Despite the constraints, the disease is now reported to be spreading more slowly due to immunization efforts and the dissemination of health information. However, there is a global supply problem for yellow fever vaccine at present which has prevented complete immunization of the at-risk population of around 1.9 million in the affect areas. The outbreak has also now spread to Liberia's regions of Grand Cape Mount, SoroGbawema and Makpele.

In responding to the Ministry of Public Health's appeal for assistance in fighting the Yellow Fever outbreak, the Federation and the Red Cross Society of Guinea are collaborating with the following UN and Government agencies or NGO's: UNICEF (vaccines, supplies and social mobilization), WHO (vaccines and epidemiological consultant), MSF supported by ECHO (vaccines and epidemiological personnel) and the World Bank and Governments of Japan and Germany (funding support).

#### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

CHF 50,000 has been released from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to start the planned activities. The International Federation and Red Cross Society of Guinea (RCSG) have been working in cooperation with the Ministry of Health since 4 September to conduct public information and social mobilization concerning Yellow Fever. On 21 September, in response to the spread of the Yellow Fever outbreak to other areas, 5 Red Cross staff were sent to affected areas to train volunteers and local Red Cross workers and volunteers. In total 5,633 volunteers have been trained and deployed to disseminate prevention messages and steps to take in case of infection. The Regional Delegation also assigned two members of the Epidemic Regional Surveillance team (ERST) with leaflets and educational materials (250 posters on immunization, 10,000 leaflets on yellow fever, 10,000 leaflets each on meningitis, malaria, cholera, measles and diarrhoeal diseases) to support the RCSG in planning and implementing activities. The team participated in coordination meetings in Guinea and worked with the RCSG and its partners in establishing a plan of action for Red Cross support in containing the Yellow Fever outbreak. The Federation's delegation in Conakry made available 5 light trucks/vehicles in

September to enable an RCSG team to implement a training programme for local Red Cross volunteers in the affected areas. Volunteers and local Red Cross workers formed mobilization teams supporting the Ministry of Public Health vaccination teams. Printed materials provided from the regional delegation have also been distributed.

At the national level, a task force has been established composed of Ministry of Health and partners which includes the Federation and the RCSG. Weekly meetings are held in conjunction with the Service for Epidemic Prevention.

## *Needs*

The potential for Yellow Fever to spread from Guinea to other countries has increased the need for wider immunization campaigns ahead of the rainy season. The Federation and the RCSG will continue to implement social mobilization and public health information activities while other agencies support procurement of vaccines and supplies. Support for the Ministry of Public Health in including Yellow Fever immunization during the next National Immunization Day is also needed. The situation in neighbouring Liberia and, possibly, Sierra Leone will be closely monitored.

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