

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## **SENEGAL AND GAMBIA: FERRY DISASTER**

3 October 2002

*Information Bulletin N° 1*

*Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 10,000*

*This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 10,000 has been released, and the Federation does not anticipate further needs. Un earmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update.*

### ***The Situation***

A thousand lives are feared lost in one of Africa's worst sea tragedies following the sinking of a Senegalese ferry boat which was reportedly carrying double its legal limit of passengers. The Joola went down late last Thursday night (26 September 2002) off the coast of Gambia, as it made its way in rough seas from Ziguinchor, the main town of Casamance province to the seaside capital, Dakar. The state-owned ferry was equipped to carry about 550 but reports said that over 1,034 people were on board. Most of the missing are Senegalese nationals, along with a number of foreigners from neighbouring Guinea-Bissau and Gambia, as well as French, Spanish and Swiss nationals. Gambian and Senegalese naval and civilian boats launched a joint rescue operation.

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

Senegalese Red Cross volunteers and first aiders immediately responded to the disaster by collaborating with local authorities to provide assistance. Two teams of 15 first aid workers carried out night and day shifts in Dakar's port, transferring bodies from rescue boats to refrigerated containers set up in the port city. Senegalese Red Cross volunteers worked in collaboration with firemen and police forces. Volunteers also provided first aid to the injured survivors, transporting them to hospital. More than a hundred Senegalese volunteers, helped by Gambian Red Cross volunteers, assisted at hospitals and health and administration offices.

The Senegalese Red Cross established a psychological support unit, for counseling grieving families. The Red Cross is helping families with administrative procedures for identifying the dead and reporting the missing.

The DP department of the Gambia Red Cross Society joined the Gambia Ports authority to provide first aid and ambulance services, and assisted in transferring bodies to the refrigerated containers. The Gambian Red Cross provided 400 blankets along with other first aid materials (vinyl gloves and face masks) and helped to transfer 27 survivors rescued by a Gambian fishing trawler. They also recovered 16 bodies.

A co-ordination meeting was held between the ICRC, the Federation, and the Senegalese Red Cross. The regional delegation is supporting the Senegalese and Gambia Red Cross with a DREF allocation of CHF 10,000

primarily to cover logistics costs (vehicles, fuel, operational expenses), health equipment, and psychological support for the volunteers.

## *The Needs*

The Senegalese Red Cross has identified the following items for a 15-day operation:

ITEMS*	QUANTITY
First aid kits	3 kits
Petrol	301 litres
Gloves	70
Masks	70
Disinfectant	
Mats	50
Tents	3
Stretchers	30
Bibs	150
Communication equipment	

*Estimated total of CHF 5,000*

*For further details please contact :*

- *The Senegalese Red Cross in Dakar; Phone 00 221 823 39 92 ; Fax 00 221 822 53 69; email: :crsnational@sentoo.sn*
- *Anne Kirsti Vardtal, Phone: 41 22 730 4485; Fax 41 22 733 0395; e-mail: Vardtal@ifrc.org*

*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

Pierre de Rochefort  
Appeals and Reports Officer  
Donor Support Department, External Relations  
Division

Bekele Geleta  
Head  
Africa Department