

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

CHAD: REFUGEES AND RETURNEES FROM THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 20,000

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 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued for information only. While the Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time, CHF 20,000 was allocated from the Federation's DREF, and donor support to the DREF is encouraged.

The Disaster

In early 2003, following a conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR) between the soldiers of ex-President Patassé and of the present President Bozize, more than 15,000 people (comprised essentially of women and children) sought refuge and assistance in Chad. Among this group were many Chadians who had lived in the CAR for many years.

An assistance programme for the refugees and returnees was set up under the co-ordination of a crisis cell comprised of the Chadian Government and various humanitarian agencies and organizations operational in Chad. Whereas the option of a refugee camp was adopted for the refugees from the CAR, a programme was developed to resettle the Chadian returnees in their place of origin. The Chadian Red Cross (CRC) has taken an active part in this operation.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

At the request of the CRC, CHF 20,000 was released from the Federation's DREF on 19 March to provide the society with the financial means to support part of the resettlement programme for the Chadian returnees, with UNHCR also providing partial support as well. Since 18 March the French Red Cross has also contributed to the returnee programme and supported the CRC in transporting the Chadian returnees from the border across several hundred kilometres of desert to their places of origin. The CRC mobilized some of its fleet of vehicles and hired two trucks respectively of 20 and 7 tonnes that were needed to transport the people and their luggage in more humane conditions. Eighteen volunteers joined truck convoy to ensure adequate registration of these people, to administer first aid if necessary, and to distribute water and emergency first aid kits. This operation, which was initially expected to last 30 days, was prolonged by two months because of the difficult logistics and climatic conditions encountered in the desert.

From 18 to 25 March, the CRC transported 411 children (between 0-15 years-old), 201 women and 220 men, making a total of 832 people. Volunteers provided the returnees and refugees with emergency rations to cover their food needs during the first days after their arrival. In all 41,895 recipients were given family rations totalling 176.94 tonnes of cereals and cans of oil provided by WFP. A programme for distributing agricultural kits and seed-stock is planned in order to facilitate the return of an economic base for these returnees.

Needs

In order to help the Central African refugees in the camp to cover their nutritional needs the CRC has signed an agreement with UNHCR to assist with the distribution of food supplies. This programme will start in the coming days.

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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.