

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

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: 10 June 2003 **RE-OCCURRENCE OF CHOLERA IN** **KASAI ORIENTALE PROVINCE**

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: None

This Bulletin is based on the latest update and details received from the field. The initial cholera operation was completed, with an ad-interim final report issued.

The Disaster

Kasai Oriental Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has experienced a sudden rebound of the cholera epidemic which was thought to have been eradicated in the mining villages surrounding the town of Mbuji-Mayi.

On May 30, there were 5,008 cases with 263 deaths reported, which represents a lethal rate of 5.25%. The figures were on the decline between May 12 and May 18, 2003 (20th week of the year) with only 23 new cases reported for the entire province, but an increase in cases was reported at the beginning of the 21th week (from 45 on May 26, to 64 on May 27, and to 84 on May 29, 2003). The majority of cases were from the mining zones of Luamuella and Bakua Tshimuna. Presently the overall number of cases reported is 129 with six deaths (source: Crisis Committee (Stop Cholera) meeting of May 30, 2003).

The Cholera Treatment Centres (CTCs) are overwhelmed with the increased number of patients. The Lamuela CTC has limited capacities with two shelter tents and a dozen beds. Supplies of disinfectant solutions and Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) are insufficient and are badly needed.

Government, humanitarian action

Since the epidemic started in September 2002, the Government set up a crisis committee called "Stop Cholera" which co-ordinates the operation and gathers inputs. It is composed not only of the Government health officials, but also of the representatives of humanitarian operational partners such as MSF-B, OXFAM-GB and the Red Cross.

The "Stop Cholera" Committee carried out an assessment mission on 27 May, 2003 in the mining zones which resulted in the following:

- hygiene procedures need to be reinforced, and with the lack of drinking water and latrines new bouts of the epidemic have developed; dissemination of basic hygiene rules must therefore be undertaken;
- there is a need to provide extra shelter and bedding material to accommodate patients;
- there is a need to increase the medical staff appointed by the Ministry of Health;

- there is a need to reinforce the existing centres with hygiene material, medicine and ORS, protective materials, vaporisers, etc.;
- there is a need to intensify social mobilisation and reinforce hygiene measures in mining areas.

To respond to this new occurrence, the Government has taken the following actions:

- reactivating of the crisis committee (now on a daily basis);
- appointment of the Tshilenge doctor to Luamuella where the situation is considered more serious;
- increasing of tents for the Luamuella CTC (provided by UNICEF);
- reinforcing supervisions;
- providing the CTCs of Luamuella and Matempu with inputs (solutions, ORS, chlorine);
- assessing the situation in the mining zones of Luamuella, Bene Kabimba, Bakua Tshimuna and Matempu to identify more concrete actions.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Over the last few months the Federation and the Red Cross have trained 150 Red Cross volunteers in CBFA (Community-Based First Aid) and in social mobilisation. Eighty-six others were trained by the ICRC and MSF, these volunteers will be involved in mobilisation work in the affected areas.

During the week of 1-7 June some 159,045 families who may have been in contact with the epidemic were sensitized (some 882,007 persons). Schools, churches and market places were targeted by Red Cross volunteers to concentrate their effort. 123 IEC sessions have been carried out and 139.756 persons sensitised.

The Red Cross volunteers have also been involved in disinfecting houses (2,643 to April 18) and burying dead persons (282), taking sick persons to CTCs, and water and sanitation activities with the construction of family latrines, public toilets and water points (with the support of the Canada International Development Agency).

The ongoing Red Cross operation will mainly consist of the following:

- the continuation of sensitization activities by the Red Cross volunteers in the most disaster-stricken mining zones;
- the reinforcement of operational teams (Luamuella and Bakua Tshimuna) through the mobilization of sensitization teams in the city of Mbujimayi;
- the briefing of Red Cross sections in mining zones to reinforce their operational capacity;
- the continuation of disinfecting activities of contaminated places, materials and dead bodies by Red Cross volunteers in the concerned mining areas;
- providing chlorine to the Luamuella CTC;
- providing the Luamuella branch with one spray, two megaphones with three boxes of batteries and one bicycle.

For further details please contact:

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