



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

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: EBOLA

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: N/A

This Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. The Red Cross of the Republic of Congo, assisted by the Federation, is monitoring the situation, and depending on the evolving situation may allocate DREF or launch an appeal to respond to the needs.

The Disaster

Since December 2002, the Republic of Congo has experienced new outbreaks of the extremely dangerous Ebola Haemorrhagic Fever, with a total of 22 new cases recorded, resulting in 16 deaths. The epidemic began in the Mbomo hunting zone where the first Ebola epidemic raged in 2001 - 2002. The outbreak is characterized by similar clinical signs, including fever, diarrhoea, hemorrhagic syndrome, and intense fatigue. The outbreak is expected to continue as new cases are still being reported in the affected zone.

The situation is made more difficult by the inherent reluctance, misunderstanding, and mistrust of the local population, a lack of access to the affected area (particularly in the zone of Kellé), and the flow of local populations across borders.

Government Action

Based on information received from the Government and WHO on the current outbreak, the Ministry of Health has taken the following measures:

- Reactivation of the Comité Technique de Crise (Crisis Technical Committee) at central level;
- Sensitisation of health authorities (regional health directors of Cuvette Ouest and Sangha regions, head doctors of the operational districts of Ouesso and EWO, head doctors of medical centres of Kellé and Mbomo);
- Meeting with the members of Parliament and the managers of the Cuvette Ouest to request their support in sensitising the population;
- Dispatching on January 5, 2003 of a first technical joint mission (joint team of Ministry of Health, WHO, and members of parliament) with a view to support the mobilisation and sensitisation campaign of the population on the risks of the epidemic re-emergence of the Ebola Virus Haemorrhagic Fever, with the following specific objectives: deliver technical support to local committees in the districts of Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi; create a stock of care and protection material kits pre-positioned at the level of Ewo, Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi medical centres; brief the Red Cross of the Congo mobilisers who are one of the few organizations active in the field; supervise the sensitisation and mobilisation campaign in the districts of Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi; collaborate with the members of parliament delegates on the activities implemented in the field.
- Dispatching on February 7, 2003 of a second joint mission with one local Red Cross delegate to assess the situation, confirm the epidemic, take care of cases, and co-ordinate the sensitisation activities.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

- Meeting of the RoC Red Cross with the Federation Delegation and implementation of a response strategy;

- Carrying out from December 7 to December 19, 2002 of an assessment and support mission to the Red Cross local committees of Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi involved in the social mobilisation activities. This mission allowed: the reactivation of these committees; equipping the committees with 5 bicycles (per committee), information materials, office supplies, visibility materials (T-shirts and “dossards”), and financial support for volunteer motivation;
- * Participation in crisis technical committee meetings;
- * The participation of a Red Cross volunteer nurse (who has wide experience from having already participated in 3 previous missions in the zone) in the joint Ministry of Health - Partners mission of February 7, 2003.

Urgent needs

- Intensification of social mobilisation activities in the districts of Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi;
- Recruitment and training of additional volunteers for the two most concerned Red Cross committees;
- Reinforcement of logistic means through the provision of additional supplies, including bicycles and motorbikes, information materials, leaflets, posters, images boxes, and megaphones;
- Support in the form of protection and disinfecting materials.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact:

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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.

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