

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

WEST AFRICA: CIVIL UNREST IN COTE D'IVOIRE

19 November, 2004

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 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 02/04) is being issued based on the needs below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 100,000 has been released from the Federation's Disaster Relief Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The Federation anticipate further needs, including unearmarked funds to re-imburse DREF. This operation will be reported on through the standard DREF update.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Côte d'Ivoire, once one of the most peaceful and economically stable countries of West Africa, has suffered from civil unrest in the past two years. After an eighteen month ceasefire, renewed clashes occurred, resulting in 64 deaths and 1,300 injured. Due to anti-foreigner sentiments and related security concerns, close to 6,000 western nationals have fled the country for their home countries or to other West African countries. African nationals living in Côte d'Ivoire and some Ivorians are leaving the country, crossing the borders into Liberia, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. Estimates on the number of refugees (including recent returnees) are not yet known, but UNHCR reports say that an estimated 13,000 people have already crossed the border into Liberia, and with new arrivals increasing by the day there are fears that this will have a potentially wider destabilizing affect throughout the region.

(map source: <http://www.reliefweb.org>).



Medecins Sans Frontier (MSF) has voiced concerns over the risk of a possible cholera epidemic if electricity and water supplies are not restored quickly. A considerable number of displaced persons also have only limited access to unfiltered pond water in an area where cholera is endemic. Reports indicate that cases of diarrhoea are already on the rise, especially among the 200 or so people who had fled their homes and were camped by the river or in abandoned buildings in the town of Bin-Houye, near the border with Liberia. In northern Cote d'Ivoire, health and water facilities were already overstretched due to the mass exodus of health professionals in September 2002 when the hostilities began. An estimated seventy percent are yet to return. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the doctor/patient ratio in this region is about 1:200,000 people. Similarly, four out of every five water pumps in the rural areas are reportedly not functioning.

The World Food Programme has warned that food supplies will be stuck in warehouses if the conflict persists – a serious concern in a country where about 800,000 people (out of a population of 17 million) are dependent on food assistance. It is feared that the situation may provoke mass population movements and a humanitarian crisis, leading to a further deterioration of conditions throughout the sub-region. Neighboring countries such as Liberia, itself having just emerged from a period of severe conflict, will suffer further.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

CHF 100,000 has been released from the Federation's DREF to support relief activities. The national societies and their volunteers in the five neighboring countries of Ghana, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea are already working with their respective governments at reception centers in providing basic assistance to those arriving at border towns.

The Ghana Red Cross Society has set-up a task force committee to manage the refugee influx. An assessment team has conducted a monitoring visit and fact finding mission to the border and set up two first aid posts in Elubo and Sekondi. The Liberian Red Cross Society has deployed a team from the local branch (Nimba chapter) to receive the returnees and refugees. Red Cross volunteers are helping in the registration of refugees and returnees in Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea. The Red Cross Society of Côte d'Ivoire has been assisting the injured in Abidjan and other cities, in collaboration with the ICRC. Red Cross volunteers have transferred patients from overcrowded medical posts to better equipped hospitals and supplied medicines and bandages.

In about four zones in France, 150 French Red Cross volunteers have been assisting the families arriving from Cote d'Ivoire with warm clothes, accommodation and other basic needs.

Below: photos of Red Cross of Cote d'Ivoire volunteers assisting injured in Abidjan

The Regional Delegation for West and Central Africa in Dakar has developed a plan of action for the next 10 days with the following main elements:

- deployment of Rapid Assessment and National Society Support Teams to all five neighboring countries, supported by Federation and national society staff, RDRT members, and other Movement partners on November 18. The teams will assist the national societies in their on-going operations.
- coordination and information sharing with UN agencies and other organisations through participation in inter-agency coordination meeting organised by OCHA and regional contingency planning
- coordination of all Federation Secretariat actions and support to national society activities on the population movement (Geneva Secretariat-Regional Delegation-Regional Offices-Country Delegations)



Depending on this and the results of the Red Cross assessment and support missions, the Federation's Regional Delegation will take further decisions on future actions, such as the development of a medium-term comprehensive Plan of Action. If appropriate, the Regional Delegation will assist the national society to define their role in the respective countries, and identify the support required from the Federation Secretariat.

Coordination

The Federation is represented in the region by the Regional Delegation for West and Central Africa in Dakar, Regional Offices in Dakar, Abidjan, Lagos and Yaoundé and Delegations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Chad and Congo. The Regional Delegation is part of consultation group in Dakar under the auspices of the OCHA. Several coordination meetings already took place attended by several UN agencies and NGOs to discuss the humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire, the potential humanitarian consequences and to develop a regional contingency plan.



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For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeals:

- Côte d'Ivoire, Appeal 01.22/2004 -http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/012204.pdf
- Mano River sub-region, Appeal 01.27/2004 -http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/012704.pdf

Please also watch for the 2005 Annual Appeals, due to be launched in Geneva on 22 November 2004.