

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

NIGERIA: RELIGIOUS UNREST

17 May 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. 1/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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The Situation

Ethnic-religious hostilities broke out on 1 and 2 May 2004 in Shimkar and Yelwa in Plateau State. The conflict rapidly spread to the neighbouring communities of Zomo, Doka and Lupidi, Laraba and Unguwar Adamu. Many people were wounded and many houses were burnt. Many others, including women and children, were reportedly abducted from Yelwa and taken to Langtan-south and Mikan Local Government those who escaped fled to Nasarawa and Bauchi States for refuge.

On 13 May 2004, a total of 735 internally-displaced families were sheltered in school compounds, markets and mosques in Lafia town of Nassarawa State. This figure includes 1,543 displaced children.

About 2,770 internally displaced persons are also taking refuge in five camps in Bauchi State. Of the 33 people hospitalized in Bauchi, 22 died. Approximately 2,000 persons are also reported displaced in various parts of Plateau State. Despite the relative calm in Yelwa, thousands of its inhabitants have not yet returned; approximately 8,000 displaced people are taking refuge in the remaining un-burnt houses.

Following the Yelwa hostilities, the conflict in Kano State began on 10 May 2004; it escalated on 12 May 2004 in the Sharada area of Kano city resulting in more deaths. The Kano State Branch of the [Nigerian Red Cross Society](#) reported that 36 persons were killed and 598 injured, with a lot property destroyed. As a result, 17,087 people fled their homes; about 8,000 are seeking refuge in various police and military barracks. The situation is tense in spite of heavy police and military presence in some parts of the city.

The Nigerian Red Cross Emergency Team reported that about 500 people with bullet, machetes and arrow wounds requiring immediate evacuation and medical assistance were attended to and evacuated nearby hospitals (Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Murtala Mohammed Specialist Hospital, Mohammed Wase Specialist Hospital and Mohammed Sanusi Hospital). The following areas were most affected by the hostilities: Unguwar Uku Quarters; Hausawa/Zoo Road; Ja'en/Sharada Quarters; Bayero University Permanent Site, and Rijiyar Zaki Village/Gwarzo Road.

Red Cross Action

The Nigerian Red Cross team was the first to have access to Yelwa. Volunteers of the Plateau Branch evacuated 470 persons to hospitals and provided first aid and evacuated wounded people to medical facilities. The volunteers treated over 600 casualties, supported Shendam General Hospital with dressing materials, and provided logistical support by way of fuel and transport during the emergency operation. The Nigerian Red Cross is collaborating with ICRC and is currently coordinating the emergency operations in Nasarawa., Jos, Bauchi and Kano states.

In Kano, the Nigerian Red Cross immediately intervened through its Kano State Branch Zonal Officers and volunteers of the Branch Emergency Response Teams. The Branch mobilized 75 volunteers to assist hospital emergency units to provide psychological support and humanitarian assistance to the displaced. The Nigerian Red Cross also supported the hospitals with dressing materials and gloves for the treatment of the injured.

The Nigerian Red Cross response has been possible through its own pre-positioned materials and through emergency funds from the British Red Cross.

Coordination

ICRC

The ICRC sent a team to assess the situation in medical centres, hospitals and in the warring communities. It provided 16 dressing sets including three kits of Plasters of Paris sets to assist in the treatment of 500 wounded persons. Nigerian Red Cross has established a First Aid/Health post in Yelwa supported with dressing materials from the ICRC and drugs from the Federal government.

Federation

A joint Nigerian Red Cross, ICRC and the Federation mission is planned to further assess IDP¹ situations in Plateau, Kano, Nasarawa and Bauchi States to facilitate most appropriate response to their needs.

Government

The Nigerian Government mobilized the army and police to the disaster areas to restore peace and order. A relief team from National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) had also visited Yelwa for assessment. NEMA brought some drugs to the Red Cross First Aid Post in Yelwa and also distributed limited food and non food items to community leaders in Yelwa.

The Nigeria President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, visited Plateau, Bauchi and Nassarawa states; he declared a state of emergency in Plateau state on 18 May 2004. The Nassarawa and Bauchi state Governments intend to relocate IDP in their states to more appropriate places. The Plateau State Government provided medical kits to the Shendam General Hospital; however, the casualties, mostly from the Yelwa community, were unwilling to be admitted there for fear of attack.

¹ IDP – Internally displaced persons

Immediate Needs

The first field assessment by the Red Cross showed that emergency assistance in terms of medical, food and non-food items are required for the displaced persons. The hospitals in Kano are congested with victims; more dressing materials will be needed to treat them. The Kano Branch report indicates that IDP staying in various military and police barracks need food assistance i.e. rice, sugar, beans, salt and drinking water. Non-food items are also urgently needed i.e. mats, blankets, cooking pots, feeding utensils and toiletries.

Most of the houses in Yelwa and neighbouring villages were either burnt down or looted and will also be required to be rehabilitated for the displaced persons to return to their villages and towns. A rehabilitation assistance to complement government efforts to return the displaced persons is also required. About 1,000 families in Yelwa need long term support in food and non-food items when they return. The Nigerian Red Cross disaster preparedness stocks (pre-positioned materials), used in response to this emergency last week, need to be replenished.