

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

SENEGAL: CHOLERA

27 October 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 based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 27,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The Federation does not anticipate further needs. Un-earmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the 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

Cholera has broken out in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, for the first time in eight years, government doctors reported on Tuesday 26 October. Early warning systems were triggered when eight cases were reported in the suburbs around Dakar by health district officials. Cases are rapidly increasing and have reached a total of 95; they are due to low access to safe water and sanitation in the affected districts.

Despite the long absence of the disease in the capital, cholera in Senegal remains a primary public health concern. Between the beginning of the epidemic (11 October) and today (27 October), the Ministry of Health emergency surveillance system reports a total of 95 cases, 2 deaths and 72 hospitalized; see table on following page. Many sanitary districts have opened treatment and rehydration centers to increase the coverage of the population.

According to the Ministry of Health, the highly infectious water-borne disease had been reported in slum areas of Dakar, a city of 2.5 million people. The most affected places are in the Dakar suburbs of Pikine, Guédiawaye, Thiaroye and Colobane. "The cases came from areas where there are sanitation problems, inadequate water and waste management, stagnant water which all favors the spread of cholera," said Doctor Pape Salif Sow, the head of the infectious diseases department of the Fann University teaching hospital, where most of the cholera patients are being treated.

Senegal: Cholera; Information Bulletin no. 1/2004

The government campaign will focus on delivering public health messages through the media encouraging people to improve their personal hygiene practices by washing their hands with soap, avoiding food from street stalls and by avoiding drinking water sold in plastic bags.

The number of cases reported by the Ministry of Health is listed as below:

Health Structures	Number of cases
South District	29
District of Guediawaye	26
Center District	11
District of Pikine	10
North District	6
District of Mbao	5
West District	3
District of Rufisque	3
District of Bambey	2
Total	95

Source: Ministry of Health; Statistics for 27 October 2004

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Senegalese Red Cross Society,¹ as an auxiliary to the government health authorities intends to support the Ministry for the Public health in its fight. The national society will take advantage of its community based branch volunteer network to organize the delivery of key messages and IEC/BCC² materials. They will also advocate with community leaders on the precautions that need to be taken on both the household and community levels. Actions are targeted in the schools, the markets, water distribution points. Public will be sensitized with demonstrations of hand washing, cleaning of the latrines and water chlorination and washing of vegetables.

The Federation has approved funding of CHF 27,000 from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the initial response to this operation. Donors are encouraged to support this intervention by repaying this DREF allocation.

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 2004 Annual Appeal for Senegal, no. 01.38/2004, on the Federation website at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/013804.pdf.

Please note that the 2005 Annual Appeal for Senegal, no. 05AA032, is due to be launched on 23 November 2004; please refer at that time to http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05aa032.pdf. (This latter link will be functional only after the November launch).

¹ Senegalese Red Cross Society – refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=150>

² IEC – Information, education and communication; BCC – Behavioural change communication