

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

SUDAN: KHARTOUM UNREST

3 August 2005

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. 1/2005 is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance at this time.

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The Situation

The death of Dr. John Garang, the leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), in a helicopter crash sparked riots and fears for the sustainability of the peace agreement in Sudan. According to news reports, Garang, six of his companions, and a crew of seven died over the weekend after the Ugandan presidential helicopter he was travelling in crashed in bad weather near the remote and mountainous border region of Sudan and Uganda. Members of Dr. Garang's SPLM and the government in Khartoum have vowed to maintain the peace agreement that Garang helped create and was on the verge of implementing. But as news of his death was confirmed, thousands of Dr. Garang's supporters took to the streets of Khartoum, in the north of Sudan, looting shops, starting fires, and clashing with police. There were reports of violence in the south too. Over 30 people have reportedly died as a result of the violence.

Dr. Garang's death stunned the region, where Sudan's neighbours had joined forces to help bring an end to Africa's longest-running civil war, spanning 21 years. Sudan's President Omar Hassan al-Bashir expressed confidence the power-sharing peace accord would remain intact. Dr Garang and Bashir were due to form a new government by 9 August 2005.

Following an appeal by the SPLM vice chairman and the late Dr. Garang's deputy, General Salva Kiriir Mayardit, who has been appointed to succeed Dr. Garang, Khartoum remained relatively calm on Tuesday 2 August 2005. However, the atmosphere remains tense. The government in Khartoum has declared a curfew between 6.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. There are also unconfirmed reports of people leaving Khartoum due to the riots.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) has been monitoring the developments since the reports of the helicopter crash. Following the riots the national society's Khartoum branch mobilized 111 volunteers. With support from an ICRC ambulance and a vehicle from the SRCS national headquarters, the SRCS Khartoum branch administered First Aid to 113 injured people, 12 of whom were transported to hospital. The national society has also confirmed the deaths of 15 people during the riots. Media reports indicate that the total number of dead has risen to more than 30 people.

Though unrest subsided on 2 August 2005, the Khartoum branch has put several First Aid teams on standby. Details of unrest in Juba and the intervention of the SRCS are not yet available.

Coordination

While telecommunications between Khartoum and Nairobi have been sporadic and internal communications often interrupted, the connections between Khartoum and Geneva have apparently been easy to establish and regular.

A security advisory was put in place for the Federation, bilateral and ICRC delegates, with work set to resume on 3 August 2005. The Sudanese Red Crescent has been working closely with the Federation and the ICRC. Two representatives from the British Red Cross international department were expected to return to Khartoum from Darfur on 2 August 2005.

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