

NIGERIA: SIERRA LEONEAN REFUGEES

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Latest events

Many Sierra Leoneans fled their country in the two months following the May 25 coup and fighting between the Sierra Leone army/RUF and West African peacekeepers . Since mid June, nearly 200 have arrived mostly by ship and many hundreds more are expected since most neighbouring countries have turned them away.

UNHCR has registered 179 of the 200 refugees who have arrived over the past three weeks . Initially, they were housed on a temporary basis with relatives and religious organisations. Some (43) have now been moved to the NRCS Oru camp, where 3,250 Liberian refugees have been living for the past seven years. An abandoned school on a neighbouring site has been identified since it will not be possible to house all the new caseload in Oru.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The International Federation and the Nigerian Red Cross (NRCS) intend to provide basic material support to 1,000 Sierra Leonean refugees for the next three months. This figure could increase dramatically if further fighting breaks out in Sierra Leone.

The operation will consist of identification of suitable accommodation for the refugees, transportation of refugees to the site and the provision of basic needs such as mattresses, blankets, stoves, pots and pans.

The National Society has provided two bales of second hand clothing, 50 blankets, 80 pieces of soap and 20 water containers. The Federation has assisted through the provision of basic drugs, some stoves and cooking pots.

Outstanding needs

The immediate needs include the provision of accommodation, mats (1,000), mattresses (100), stoves (500), cooking pots (1,000), plates and cups (1,000 of each), lamps (500), water containers (500) and assorted medical drugs. NRCS will purchase the items locally and distribute them to the refugees once they are on site. UNHCR will provide food and AREF (African Refugee Federation) will make available medical personnel.

For additional information, please contact Richard Hunlédé, Desk Officer on ++4122 7304314

Anne Leclerc
Acting Head
Appeals & Reports Service

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department