

# ***NAMIBIA: ANGOLAN REFUGEES***

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## ***Information Bulletin N° 2***

### ***The Disaster***

The renewed conflict between the Angolan Government army (FAA) and UNITA has resulted in a refugee influx from southern Angola to northern Namibia. The influx began in early December, and over 8,000 refugees have arrived to date. Military action to gain control of Angola's Cuando Cubango Province, and the influx is expected to continue.

The newly arrived refugees established temporary shelters in the Namibian border town of Rundu, and are being initially accommodated and registered at a transit centre 65 kms from Rundu before being transported to the Osire refugee camp, located 671 kms from Rundu and 250 Km from Windhoek, the Namibian capital. Another two transit centres are to be established along the border to accommodate a possible increase in refugee arrivals. With the fighting continuing, the possibility of repatriation remains remote. The current refugee population in the Osire camps stands at 7,440, with daily influxes of between 50 to 100.

Conditions in the Osire camp are poor. Originally established for some 2,000 refugees, the new influx of Angolan refugees has overburdened camp facilities, with a resulting overcrowding of tents, overwhelmed health services, a lack of sufficient water, and a very low latrine coverage. The threat of an outbreak of disease or epidemics is of considerable concern. The rains which just started add to the already poor health and sanitary conditions. Food supplies, provided by UNHCR and WFP, appear sufficient at present, although the need for expanded supplementary feeding may be required.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Namibian Red Cross (NRC) branch in Rundu has been heavily involved from the outset in providing assistance to arriving refugees, in co-operation with UNHCR.

At Osire, where the Namibian Red Cross established a clinic in the early nineties, a Red Cross volunteer group consisting of refugees (some of which were formally Angola Red Cross volunteers) has been established. First Aid training has been given to 12 volunteers and first aid kits have been provided to reduce the workload on the clinic which currently has only one Ministry of Health nurse providing all the health services to the refugee community and to local people in the area. A major demand at the clinic is

for maternity cases for which there are no facilities. The clinic lacks proper sanitation and has no water supply.

The British Red Cross, with Department for International Development (DFID) support, is transporting 700 tents, due to arrive in Windhoek this week.

## *Needs*

A team from the Federation's Regional Delegation in Harare, accompanied by a Health Programme Co-ordinator from Zambia Red Cross and National Society staff, carried out a mission to assess the situation. the following immediate needs were identified:

- Shelter and/or family-sized tents are needed, along with blankets and cooking utensils;
- Health facilities and more trained personnel are needed. An ambulance is needed to transport referrals to the nearest hospital about 120 kms from the camp, and the clinic building needs to be expanded;
- A nutritional survey is required to determine supplementary feeding needs;
- Water supply expansion, family latrine construction, and vector controls are needed;
- Used clothes are needed for refugees especially children;
- Tracing facilities need strengthening;
- Social services needed for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, young children, the aged and disabled.

Meetings with UNHCR and the Government have confirmed concerns that recent events have strained their present capacity to meet the needs of the refugees. The National Society, with Federation support, has been encouraged to take a leading role in the response to the refugee influx under a standard tripartite agreement.

The National Society and the Federation's Regional Delegation are deploying a Regional Disaster Response Team, and expanding the present capacity of the Namibia Red Cross. In the interim, the National Society has deployed two full time staff in Rundu and Osire respectively.

An appeal is under preparation to provide emergency relief for 12,000 beneficiaries for 6 months.

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