

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



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

## **BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, MALI, MAURITANIA, NIGER AND SENEGAL: HEAVY RAINS AND FLOODS - FOCUS ON MAURITANIA**

30 April 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**

**Appeal No. 20/2003; Operations Update no. 3 – Focus on Mauritania; Period covered: December 2003 to March 2004; Appeal coverage: 106.9%;** [Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List](#) (also available on the website).

#### **Appeal history:**

- Launched as a multi-country Appeal on 2 October 2003 for CHF 802,000 (USD 607,934 or EUR 520,406) for four months to assist 29,000 beneficiaries.
- [Operations Update no. 1 dated 9 December 2003](#) extended the Appeal for five months until 30 June 2004.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 25,000 for each of five countries (including Mauritania).

**Outstanding needs :** none.

#### **Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:**

- [Mauritania, 2004 Annual Appeal no. 01.36/2004](#)
- Emergency Appeal 05/2003: Mauritania Drought and Food Security (Completed/Closed).

**Operational Summary:** In response to flooding across the Sahel region from Cameroon to Mauritania, the Federation launched an Emergency Appeal on behalf of six national societies<sup>1</sup>, seeking to assist the flood-affected populations.

The operation in Mauritania originally focused on shelter construction, health, and water and sanitation in the areas of Gorgol, Assaba, Guidimaka, and Adrar. The operational plan and budget for Mauritania were subsequently amended to meet the needs of under-five children and breast-feeding women in Gorgol and Guidimaka who were rendered food insecure by the floods. This was accomplished through support to twenty-four community nutrition centres. In addition, over 10,000 persons were trained in improved hygiene and sanitation methods during this second phase of the floods operation, according to the original appeal objectives.

<sup>1</sup> The six national societies involved with this Appeal are: [Burkinabe Red Cross Society](#), [Cameroon Red Cross Society](#), [Mali Red Cross](#), [Mauritanian Red Crescent](#), [Red Cross Society of Niger](#), and [Senegalese Red Cross Society](#). (Click on the individual name to access the country-specific page on the Federation's website).

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

- In Mauritania: Mohamedou Ould Raby, Secretary General, Mauritanian Red Crescent, Nouakchott; Email [crm@toptechnology.mr](mailto:crm@toptechnology.mr); Phone 222.525.12.49
- In Mauritania: Richard Gens, Federation Head of Mauritania Delegation, Nouakchott; Email [ifrcmr01@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcmr01@ifrc.org); Phone 222.529.04.48; 222.659.45.65
- In Senegal: Andrea Wojnar Diagne, Federation Head of Sahel Sub-Regional Office, Dakar; Email [ifrcsn03@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcsn03@ifrc.org); Phone 221.842.23.41; Fax 221.842.23.40
- In Geneva: Mark Willis, Federation Regional Officer for West and Central Africa, Africa Dept.; Email [mark.willis@ifrc.org](mailto:mark.willis@ifrc.org); Phone 41.22.730.42.60; Fax 41.22.733.03.95

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>

## **Background**

During the emergency phase, the Mauritanian Red Crescent and the Federation provided shelter and mosquito nets to the affected communities, repaired water embankments and wells, and purified drinking water. Over the last four months – December 2003 to March 2004 - they launched the second phase of the program: Food Security and Sanitation. There were two major reasons for defining a new direction for the program:

1. Although weather conditions were better this year, the data published on crops assume a deficit of about 60,000 tons, all cereals included.
2. During the flood period, pastoral households lost 15 % of their livestock (about one out of seven). For a pastoral household, losing livestock means a total or partial loss of their source of income.

To provide food security assistance to the most vulnerable, 24 Community Nutrition Centers were established in the areas of Gorgol and Guidimaka, the most specifically affected provinces as a result of floods across the entire region. The participatory approach of the project was an opportunity to involve beneficiaries, Mauritanian Red Crescent local committee volunteers and local authorities ( Regional Health Offices, Town Councils, Prefectures) and hold each accountable for operational success.

The Centers have become focal points where families, with assistance from volunteers, receive education and information about hygiene, sanitation and community health care. Every Center developed an agro-pastoral project to diversify their sources and to prepare for future self-sufficiency of the Center. To help in the sustainability of the project, the World Food Program (WFP) has become a partner for a period possibly through 2007. This will make it possible to continue this activity with funding from the Italian Government fund. Beside their technical and financial support, WFP enabled the project to include a national program in partnership with the Ministry of Health.

The second aspect of the project related to water and sanitation activities in five cities: Rosso, Kaédi, Tiékane, Aleg and Atar. The volunteers of the Red Crescent assisted the communities in learning and implementing basic hygiene rules. This activity was carried out in partnership with the Regional Health Office (DRASS), and limited to a certain number of neighborhoods, and will be duplicated in other areas of the city once rooted in the communities' practices.

## **Operational developments**

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact**

#### **1. EMERGENCY RELIEF**

**Objective 1: provide shelter for the victims** (see Operations Update no. 1)

**Objective 2: provide mosquito nets for the victims** (see Operations Update no. 1)

## 2. HEALTH CARE, WATER AND SANITATION

### Objective 1: Train community workers to clean the environment and purify water

The first part of the program related to the training of community workers and water purification in five cities (Rosso, Kaédi, Aleg, Tiekane and Atar) is described in Operations Update no. 1.



These teams of 10 volunteers with the assistance of a supervisor initiated hygiene and sanitation work in the neighborhoods where they provided support to the victims. Organized from the local communities, the teams, together with the communities, conducted waste collection activities and initiated family education actions. Three out of five town councils, namely Rosso, Kaédi and Tiekane recognized the efficiency of the community work and involved the volunteers of the Red Crescent in the city teams. A monthly report is published by the hygiene and sanitation teams and is available from the Federation’s Nouakchott office. This publication reports on the collection activities and education/sensitization actions conducted. The billboard campaign carried out alongside this activity provided visibility for the project, but it is too early to measure its impact.

Number of collection and education/sensitization sessions

	December 2003	January 2004	February 2004	March 2004	Total
Rosso	0	8	8	8	24
Kaédi	0	8	8	8	24
Aleg	0	0	0	8	8
Tiekane	0	8	8	8	24
Atar	8	8	8	8	32
Total	8	32	32	40	112

Each individual volunteer supervised about 30 households of about seven members in size each. We estimate that 10,500 people received training and participated in hygiene and sanitation activities.



**Objective 2: Training Mauritanian Red Crescent local committee volunteers as nutrition aids**

Two training sessions were carried out in partnership with WFP and the MoH.

The first session was conducted for the supervisors of the Community Nutrition Centers (CAC)<sup>2</sup>. Each individual supervisor was responsible for 10 to 15 Centers (CAC). Training focused on nutrition, malnutrition and improving the nutritional status of the vulnerable groups. Two supervisors were trained in this respect: one to be responsible for the 10 Centers in Guidimaka, and the other one to be responsible for the 15 centers in Gorgol. Together with the doctor from the Regional Health Office (DRASS), the two supervisors will detect the malnourished among the children, monitor the nutritional development of the children and control the management of the Centers.

The second training involved nutrition aids. Twenty five people were selected by a committee made of members of the Red- Crescent local committee, the community, local authorities, and the staff of the Regional Health Office to take the training on nutrition. The training focused on nutrition and CAC management; during the workshop, they received equipment to conduct daily supervision of the malnourished children.

**Objective 3: Create 25 Community Nutrition Centers in the target areas for children under 5 and pregnant or breastfeeding women.**

In every commune, all children were measured and weighed. Following the pattern of thinness (height/weight/age ratio), 50 children assessed as malnourished were registered in the Center's lists. This operation was jointly conducted with the Mauritanian Red Crescent Regional Coordinator, the supervisor of the Center, and the local DRASS nurse or doctor. Thirty pregnant or breastfeeding women were selected in every CAC center. Town councils or prefectures provided free support for the CAC centers and food storage. The WFP nutrition department then checked the lists and data provided. The CAC provided 1,250 children and 750 women with assistance. Food delivery will start by the end of March, and will be repeated until end of year, following an evaluation of the project.



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<sup>2</sup> Community Nutrition Centre (in English); Centre d'Alimentation communautaire-CAC (in French)

Community Nutrition Centers in the Gorgol region

Wilaya	Moughata	Commune	Number of CAC centers
GORGOL	M'BOU	Lehrach	2
		Chelket Tiyab	1
		Terengel Moulaye	2
		Tikobra	2
		M'Bout	2
		Edebaye guelaye	2
		Foum Gleita	2
		Souva	2
Total			<b>15</b>

*Wilaya = Region*

*Moughata = Prefecture*

Community Nutrition Centers in the Guidimaka region

Wilaya	Moughata	Commune	Number of CAC centers
Guidimaka	M'BOU	Lehraj	2
		Ould Yengé	2
		Souvi	2
		Ould Bonni	2
		Buanze	2
Total			<b>15</b>

**Objective 4: Sensitize communities about health education**

This activity will start early April 2004.

**Objective 5: Set up an agro-pastoral micro-project in every CAC.**

Every center has set up a micro project of seeds multiplication, gardening or cattle rearing. All the projects were submitted to the Mauritanian Red Crescent Headquarters, which examined and amended, then submitted to our partner (WFP) for co-funding (food for work). Although this new approach somewhat delays the launching of the activity, this will allow it to continue for a longer period. All these projects may get support from WFP until 2007.

**Federation Coordination**

Mauritanian Red Crescent is member of the national crisis unit and participated together with the Federation in meetings to collect data, organize and coordinate a response as a result of the floods. In consultation with the different actors - the Government, the UN WFP, NGOs (MSF, Oxfam, Medecins du Monde-MdM), the Federation in Nouakchott coordinated the response of the Movement (Mauritanian Red Crescent, French Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Federation).

**WFP and MoH**

During the coordination meetings, it was noted that the regions of Gorgol and Guidimaka in the Southern part of the country which were particularly affected by the floods had not received any food security support targeting the children and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Here, losses in livestock and crops were over 18%. The Federation and its partner, the Mauritanian Red Crescent, reviewed their program and decided to established community nutrition centers. By doing so, they become a partner of the WFP and the MoH in the Food Security area, which would enable them to continue their action beyond the period provided by the Appeal. A renewable one-year contract was signed which could run up to 2007. This participation also provided the opportunity to highlight the value of the Mauritanian Red Crescent with respect to the national society's relevant Ministry. A new commitment by the MoH towards the Society was made after a private meeting. This commitment will be effective as of a meeting to be held in May 2004 to define the role of the Mauritanian Red Crescent in community health care.

### **International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Partners**

While they are generally more focused on the fight against AIDS, French Red Cross participated actively in the meetings and provided logistic support for the operation. As a direct result of such coordination the French Red Cross offered to financially support a doctor to lead the health department at the national society headquarters. The Italian Red Cross has been in Mauritania since 1997, and active in three areas: nutrition, Integrated Development Projects, and agripastoral micro projects. Italian Red Cross naturally offered to share its expertise in nutrition. In this respect, a Italian Red Cross delegate is expected to come for April-May to supervise and evaluate the CAC projects and create agripastoral projects. ICRC focused on the areas where the Mauritanian Red Crescent operated in order to conduct information and dissemination campaigns.

### **National Society Capacity Building**

This operation made the Mauritanian Red Crescent more visible and enabled them to re-establish contacts with several partners and consolidate the structures at the headquarters, regional and local levels.



### **1. Partnership**

With this program, the Ministry of Health endorsed the new dynamics of the Mauritanian Red Crescent and accepted to contemplate a meeting to implement [ARCHI 2010](#), the Federation's health strategy for Africa. This will allow the Mauritanian Red Crescent to play a role in the health care area, which it lost over the last few years. WFP has signed a partnership agreement with the Federation and the Mauritanian Red Crescent for the program implementation. This is a new opportunity for the NS to approach now UNICEF and WHO. During the operation, Mauritanian Red Crescent had collaboration with Mdm, MSF, OXFAM, and World Lutheran Funds (WLF). This collaboration was fruitful and may be repeated.

### **2. Capacity Building**

#### **Headquarters**

Four people from the headquarters participated in the program: the national programs coordinator, the health officer, one logistics staff, and one accountant engaged during the operation. These people underwent training offered by either the Federation or our partners. The regular meetings for information sharing provided opportunity to introduce a new working method in the headquarters of the Mauritanian Red Crescent. To improve the efficiency of the work, a new organization chart with clear-cut responsibilities was adopted. The logistics was improved, with repairs to office equipment: computers, emails, etc.

#### **Regional Level**

The new provincial coordinators were involved in the activity implementation. They ensured liaison between the headquarters and the local committees. They acted as advisors and facilitators for the committees.

#### **Local Level**

The local committees involved in the operation became active and visible. The community approach of the program brought them closer to the vulnerable groups in partnership with the regional authorities (municipality, prefectures, and DRASS).

## **Assessment and lessons learned**

### **Evaluation**

In partnership with the Italian Red Cross, the progress and impact of the program will be measured over the next two months (April & May).

### **Lessons learned**

The program has three components: emergency response, water and sanitation project, and creation of CAC.

#### Emergency Response

This fulfilled an identified, measurable, and quantifiable need, and provided relief to vulnerable groups. However, this operation was conducted in an unfavorable political context- during the period of presidential elections- and did not enable the Mauritanian Red Crescent to gain more recognition. The situation was likely under better control and had no major negative impact. It was also noted at this time that neither the government nor the Mauritanian Red Crescent had a disaster preparedness plan. Without any preventive actions or early warning system, it would be impossible to mitigate effects as a result of floods, but just acknowledge the scope of the disaster and respond by carrying out distributions to the most affected. There is no presence within the communities to assist and organize families. This gap hinders considerably the role of the Mauritanian Red Crescent.

#### Water and sanitation

Very quickly, volunteers were identified within the community and trained to carry out information sessions and hygiene and sanitation activities. This was well accepted and appreciated by the communities.

This activity, which is not very costly, uses volunteers from within the communities. It will have a real impact on changing behaviors. The current teams should serve as models for the duplication of this experience in the neighborhoods of the other cities of the program, then in the other provinces nationwide. This activity is part of the process to implement ARCHI.

#### Community Nutrition Centres (CAC)

This activity serves as a reference in Mauritania for community development. This is an integrated project to support malnourished children and mothers, and will help the volunteers of the Red Crescent to convey messages about health care, the fight against STD/AIDS, the humanitarian values. Children and illiterate adults can learn literacy and numeracy. CAC are places where communities can meet and organize themselves into cooperatives for the production and marketing of products from their micro projects. In brief, CACs are ideal platforms for the Mauritanian Red Crescent local committees to be in direct contact with the most vulnerable among the communities to implement the ARCHI strategy.

The most important indirect effect of the program is the opportunity to work closer with the Ministry of Health.

There will be a meeting in May in partnership with the Ministry to officially implement ARCHI.

This program triggered off a new interest in the Red Crescent.

### **Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

Numerous articles appeared in the local Mauritanian press which highlighted the important contribution made by Mauritanian Red Crescent towards meeting the food and hygiene needs of the flood affected and food insecure communities. This has helped to draw attention to the inter-linkages between flooding and food security. It has also bolstered the Society's reputation and highlighted its ability to draw international support. Copies of news articles are available through the Federation's Nouakchott office.

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APPEAL No. 20/2003

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

02/06/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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## CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->						802,000	TOTAL COVERAGE 106.9%	
FINNISH - RC		50,000	EUR	76,950	15.10.03			
GERMAN - GOVT		167,833	EUR	260,728	14.11.03		PURCHASE RELIEF GOODS	
ITALIAN - GOVT/DREF		250,000	EUR	385,750	26.11.03		MAURITANIA	
JAPANESE - RC		20,100	USD	26,572	08.10.03			
MONACO - RC		2,500	EUR	3,848	08.10.03			
SWEDISH - GOVT		600,000	SEK	103,500	10.10.03			
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				857,348	CHF		106.9%	

## KIND AND SERVICES ( INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

## ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	