

# MINOR EMERGENCY



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

Minor Emergency no.  
05ME020  
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*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

**CHF 25,000 HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) TO RESPOND TO THIS OPERATION. UNEARMARKED FUNDS TO REPAY DREF ARE ENCOURAGED.**

**This Bulletin (no. 1) is issued in relation to Minor Emergency no. 05ME020 dated 29 March 2005 – refer to [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?05/05ME020.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05ME020.pdf)**

*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

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*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's 2005 Annual Appeal for Senegal, no. 05AA032 - [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA032.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA032.pdf).*

### The situation

In February, a cholera epidemic was declared in Senegal, focused in Touba (about 200 km from Dakar). Recent government statistics reported 1,800 cases and 18 deaths during the period 21-27 March.

Touba is the site of the 'Grand Magal de Touba', a yearly Muslim pilgrimage. Following the pilgrimage, where over 3 million pilgrims visited the Muslim shrine of Touba, cholera has now spread nationwide as pilgrims return to their homes. The number of new cases doubled as pilgrims trekked to their homes in Bambey (520 cases by 2 April 2), Mbacké and Diourbel. The press has reported more than 50 cases in Mbour, 184 cases and 5 deaths in Kaolack, Thiès, Tivaouane, Saint Louis and Tambacouda.

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The situation is worsening daily as reports are being received of cholera throughout Senegal. The neighbouring country of Gambia has reported 30 cases and 3 deaths, despite a major campaign conducted by the Gambian authorities prior to the Magal. Four of the confirmed cases are carrying the Vibro Cholera.

The director of preventive medicine at the Senegalese Ministry of Health reported that nearly 3,400 cases of cholera, with 54 deaths, occurred in the different health districts throughout Senegal during the week of 28 March to 3 April. (Source: UN-OCHA IRIN). Another report by IRIN indicated a total of 4,000 cases as of 6 April, with a mortality of 1.5%.

### Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Senegalese Red Cross<sup>1</sup> mobilized 102 volunteers for the operation; 32 volunteers have already been implementing social mobilization activities since the prior outbreak in November 2004. Volunteers were deployed to Mbacké and Touba (50), Diourbel (20) and Bambey (32).

The Senegalese Red Cross conducted a major awareness campaign with the support of CHF 25,000 from a Federation DREF allocation. Population mobilization was done in more than nine *Daaras* (koranic schools), six mosques and about 90 homes, accompanied with the distribution of sanitation materials to the most vulnerable communities in the four targeted localities.

The 10-day campaign from 28 March to 6 April 6 consisted in a demonstration of hygiene promotion: hand washing, water chlorination, and hygiene for latrines and for the environment especially in public places.

Through peer interactions and door-to-door campaigns, Red Cross volunteers were able to visit the Diourbel jail and sensitized 375 detainees. The volunteers also visited nine water fountains where crowds of women usually gather. Several meetings were held with the local authorities for advocacy, while messages were disseminated by radio. The following non-food items were distributed:

Basins (20 litres)	Buckets (10 litres)	Jerry cans	Jars (1 litre)	Bottles (1 litre)	Soap
450	450	2,100 (175 cartons of 12 each)	175	160 cartons	4,392 bars (122 cartons of 36 each)

In Touba, tankers provided extra water for huge crowds of people sleeping in the open.

### Plan of Action

Given the spread of the epidemic to date, and in anticipation of two further pilgrimage events<sup>2</sup>, the Senegalese Red Cross and the Gambia Red Cross are finalizing their plans of action in their continued response to the epidemic. These plans will consist mainly of a vigorous advocacy campaign for high hygienic practices as a control mechanism, and distribution of educational materials to improve the health conditions at both main border-crossing points between Senegal and the Gambia.

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

<sup>2</sup> Gamou of Tivaouane (the Muslim celebration of the birth of the Prophet Mohamed), and the annual Christian pilgrimage in Popenguine, Thiès region (70 km from Dakar).

## **Coordination**

Immediately following the government's announcement of the epidemic, the government set up a crisis committee and asked for the support of religious leaders and partners. To avoid further propagation of cholera, the government disseminated by radio and television an injunction restricting all major gatherings until the situation is under control. Awareness campaigns and surveillance are being intensified. Patients receive free treatment in health institutions and instructions have been given to take charge of all suspected cases.

The Senegalese Red Cross is working closely with government authorities in the field; the Federation supports the national society in its activities.

In the Gambia, the national society is a member of the active surveillance system set by the Department of Health as consultation meetings are going on with local donors and partners to find means of controlling the situation.

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