

# Operations update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Republic of Congo: Wild poliovirus outbreak

Emergency appeal n° MDRCG006  
GLIDE n° EP-2010-000222-COG  
Operations update n° 2  
20 December, 2010

**Period covered by this Ops Update:**  
22 November to 16 December, 2010.

**Appeal target (current):** CHF 1,501,011;

**Appeal coverage:** 7.17%, representing contributions from the Canadian Red Cross, the British Red Cross and the Japanese Red Cross;

[<click here to go directly to the updated donor response report,](#)  
[or here to link to contact details >](#)

### Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on a preliminary basis on 15 November 2010 for CHF 1,501,011 for 6 months to assist 4 million beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF): CHF 200,000 was initially allocated by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support the National Society's response operation.
- Operations update no. 1 was published on 29 November 2010 to highlight the progress made during the first round of the anti-polio immunization campaign.



Red Cross volunteers sensitized the populations and encouraged them to get themselves vaccinated  
Photo: Congolese Red Cross

**Summary:** On 4 November 2010, the government confirmed an outbreak of wild poliovirus in the Republic of Congo. So far, the epidemic has already affected 524 people, killing about 219; i.e. an average lethality rate of 42 per cent. To support the Congolese Red Cross and Government to respond to the epidemic, IFRC released some funds from its DREF and deployed its Central Africa regional programme coordinator to cover the early hours of the disaster.

Round 1 and 2 of the three anti-polio immunization rounds that were planned by Government and its partners has now been completed. The IFRC Central Africa Regional Representation office (CARREP) has appointed an operations coordinator to Congo Brazzaville, and has also deployed a regional disaster response team (RDRT) member to support the Congolese Red Cross. As a result of the timely intervention of Congolese Red Cross volunteers, 132 per cent vaccination coverage was achieved in Pointe Noire during part 1 of the first round of the campaign. Part 2 of this round in Brazzaville and the rest of the country took place from 18 to 24 November 2010. Round 2 of the campaign took place from 3 to 7 December, 2010. So far, more than 1,000 Red Cross volunteers have been mobilized by the Red Cross and are actually working for the operation.

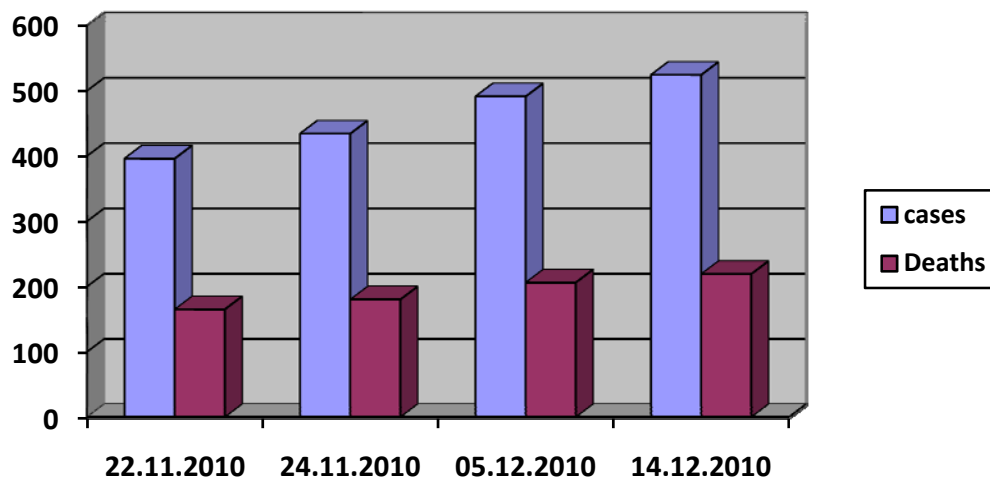
## The situation

The response to the polio epidemic in the Republic of Congo (RoC) continued as round 2 of the anti-polio immunization campaign was extended to all the 12 divisions of the country. An evaluation of round 1 of the campaign was organized by the Ministry of Health and Population. This evaluation revealed that the immunization coverage rate was very low in seven divisions; i.e. rates below 50 per cent. This was due to a deficit or lack of social mobilization strategy in such localities. In reaction to this, Government appealed to partners to intensify sensitization action in those divisions during round 2. Although the number of new cases has dropped, the lethality rate remains very high as shown in the following table:

Divisions	Cumulated number of cases	New cases	Cumulated number of deaths	Lethality
Pointe Noire and Kouilou	441	0	186	42
Brazzaville	25	0	11	44
Other divisions	58	04	22	42
<b>Total Congo</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>04**</b>	<b>219***</b>	<b>42</b>

Source: Ministry of Health.

The following diagram shows the evolution of the epidemic from 22 November to 15 December, 2010:



The diagram shows that while the number of cases keeps increasing, the number of deaths has remained stagnant at about 40 per cent. There is therefore the need to intensify the response and the sensitization of populations on basic hygiene practices.

## Coordination and partnerships

The Minister of Health and Population ensures the technical coordination of the response. Technical meetings are organized on a daily basis by the National Crisis Management Commission under the supervision of the Minister of State for Socio-cultural Affairs. WHO deployed a monitoring team to evaluate the areas not covered during the immunization campaign. This will enable the vaccination teams to organize catching-up sessions. The

Congolese Red Cross has set up a coordination team with the support of the regional resource person and the regional disaster response team (RDRT) member deployed to Congo Brazzaville by the Central Africa regional representation. The Total Company in Congo has mobilized funds to support the Congolese Red Cross in their social mobilization efforts through the French Red Cross Representation in Congo Brazzaville. In Pointe Noire, MSF France trained a few Red Cross volunteers and involved them in epidemiological surveillance. ECHO has also expressed interest in supporting social mobilization.

**National Society Capacity Building:** For the second round of the immunization campaign, 12 divisional supervisors, 86 local supervisors and 500 volunteers have been trained on sensitization techniques and on how to prevent poliomyelitis. These trainees developed Red Cross educative messages and leaflets, which have been used by Red Cross volunteers during the campaign.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Overview

With the support of the IFRC, the Congolese Red Cross has mobilized more than 1,000 volunteers. These volunteers have facilitated what can be termed “a door-to-door” immunization of the population as most people were caught on their way and vaccinated instantly.

### Progress towards outcomes

Emergency health and care	
<b>Outcome 1: To support the Congolese Ministry of Health in the assessment and evaluation of the current disease outbreak.</b>	
Output	Planned activities
Ongoing technical assessments and development of plans of action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deploy a vaccination campaign and disaster response health specialist for two months to support the Congolese Red Cross in implementing and revising the plan of action;</li> <li>Participate in assessments and coordination meetings.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 2: To support the government plan to vaccinate the entire population (3-4 million) with country-wide social mobilization activities and contribute to active case finding and referral.</b>	
Output	Planned activities
100% of the population is mobilized and attends the country-wide vaccination campaign, and at least 75 per cent of new cases are identified and referred to health care services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train 86 supervisors in social mobilization activities;</li> <li>Brief some 6,000 volunteers on social mobilization and make arrangements so that they effectively contribute to the vaccination campaign;</li> <li>Support efforts to detect suspect cases to be transferred to the care services;</li> <li>Disinfect or dispose of objects contaminated by patients at home, during transport, and in the health care structures.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome3: To build Congolese Red Cross capacity to manage and control the current outbreak and future occurrences of epidemic diseases</b>	
Output	Planned activities
The Congolese Red Cross is able to actively contribute to the prevention and management of epidemic disease outbreaks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train 86 trainers in epidemic control for volunteers;</li> <li>Deploy those 86 trainers as supervisors to the volunteers providing hygiene promotion in the field.</li> </ul>

**Progress:** With the support of the IFRC, the National Society mobilized 12 divisional supervisors, 86 local supervisors and 500 volunteers. They also mobilized sensitization materials such as 2,000 leaflets, 500 aprons, 100 T-shirts, and 30 megaphones with batteries. The 500 volunteers were deployed in the seven divisions where the immunization rate was low after the first round. Those divisions include Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire, Kouilou, Kinkala, Djambala, Dolisie and Impfondo. They conducted door-to-door sensitization, sensitized people in markets, schools, universities, churches and mosques. They also contributed to the campaign by actually vaccinating people and marking their fingers with indelible ink, and actively looking for suspected cases and referring them to health centres. To show appreciation for the achievement made by the Congolese Red Cross, the health authorities of the country took a decision on 2 December, 2010 to ask all divisional health directors to “insert at least 50 per cent of Red Cross volunteers in their social mobilization teams”. Thus, the Red Cross volunteers in the field have been divided into small teams of three volunteers each to be integrated in health teams. The following table summarizes the achievements during the second round:

Divisions	Number of volunteers	Number of local supervisors	Number of aprons	Number of megaphones	Number of leaflets	Immunization coverage after round 1 (%)	Immunization coverage after round 2 (%)	Remarks
Brazzaville*	250	22	-	09	-	106,9	118	The empty space indicates that the figures were not available at the time of compiling this report
Pointe Noire*	75	12	87	04	150	131,2	114,86	
Kouilou*	25	05	30	02	200	43,4	101,00	
Bouenza**	-	-	-	-	-	57,2	-	
Cuvette**	-	-	-	-	-	63,0	-	
Cuvette ouest**	-	-	-	-	-	66,1	-	
Lékoumou**	-	-	-	-	-	33,4	-	
Likouala	40	05	50	02	200	48,7	-	The empty space indicates that the figures were not available at the time of compiling this report
Niari	30	07	40	02	200	86,7	-	The empty space indicates that the figures were not available at the time of compiling this report
Plateaux	20	05	25	01	60	21,6	89,00	
Pool	25	05	30	02	200	36,2	44,3	
Sangha	35	07	45	03	250	32,0	106,8	

\* Divisions covered by the Red Cross; \*\* Divisions not covered by the Red Cross

**Challenges:** During the meeting for the evaluation of the second round of the campaign, it was noted that some areas have not been covered. These are riparian populations and river transporters. Some churches such as Eglise du Réveil au Congo prevented their faithful from accepting the vaccination. There is the need to recruit and train an additional 100 volunteers in those localities to intensify sensitization ahead of round 3 of the campaign. So far, Red Cross volunteers have registered 310 cases of people rejecting the vaccine and have convinced 200.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion	
<b>Outcome: To support efforts to prevent the further spread of the acute flaccid paralysis disease among the highly exposed population of Pointe Noire through the promotion of health messages to some 4 million beneficiaries.</b>	
Output	Planned activities
1 million beneficiaries are aware of how to prevent falling ill from the disease.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit and train volunteers in health promotion;</li> <li>Conduct volunteer training days to carry out hygiene promotion activities;</li> <li>Monitor and evaluate the health promotion activities.</li> </ul>

**Progress:** No activity has been carried out in this sector so far. Two regional resource persons (one from the Central African Republic (CAR) Red Cross and the other from Cameroon Red Cross) have now been deployed to RoC to support the host National Society in the implementation of the operation. The resource person from CAR is a medical doctor, and the one from Cameroon is a Federation-trained water and sanitation specialist.

**Challenges:** There is the need to deploy 912 volunteers for hygiene promotion and sanitation activities in the most exposed neighbourhoods of Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and other divisions.

<b>Capacity building, communication, advocacy and public information).</b>	
<b>Outcome: Congolese Red Cross branch capacities are strengthened to facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of planned activities at all levels.</b>	
<b>Output 1</b>	<b>Planned activities</b>
The branch structures of the 12 departmental committees are reinforced, and staff capacities are enhanced. (E.g. operational structures in place).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the branches to restructure to support operations.</li> <li>• Support the branches to recruit capable personnel to manage the branch in support of the operation.</li> </ul>
<b>Output 2</b>	<b>Planned activities</b>
Offices are appropriately equipped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the three regional branch offices in rehabilitation efforts.</li> <li>• IT equipment and furniture for the three regional branches to support the operation.</li> </ul>
<b>Output 3</b>	<b>Planned activities</b>
Staff and volunteers received training and the capacity of three regional committees is improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training of three branch officers in charge of the regional committees on planning and on procedures for administration, logistics and finance.</li> <li>• Training of volunteers of the three regional committees on CBHFA.</li> </ul>
<b>Output 4</b>	<b>Planned activities</b>
The activities are planned, implemented, and reported on effectively and efficiently, and branch capacity enhanced (e.g. progress against timelines).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical support and training provided in grants administration and reporting, along with specific technical knowledge.</li> </ul>
<b>Output 5</b>	<b>Planned activities</b>
The Congolese Red Cross and its volunteer activities are promoted, donors and partners are informed about the progress and adequate resources are generated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publishing articles and stories about the operation through national and international media.</li> <li>• Sharing communications bulletins with Embassies in Dakar and Yaoundé.</li> <li>• Posting supplementary news on the IFRC's public website and Congolese Red Cross website as well as on the IFRC's Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) <a href="https://www-secure.ifrc.org/dmis/index.htm">https://www-secure.ifrc.org/dmis/index.htm</a></li> </ul>

**Progress:** The communications team of the Africa Zone office produced a photo and video reportage on the operation.. Two articles and a film will be published in international media. Two training sessions have been organized to train 44 members of the Congolese Red Cross on epidemic monitoring and evaluation in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. Supervision aids have also been developed during these training sessions.

**Challenges:** The following urgent needs of the National Society need to be covered urgently: support in the recruitment process of qualified personnel at the levels of their national headquarters and in local branches; rehabilitate structures, especially in local branches (Pointe-Noire and Kouilou); train Red Cross volunteers on community-based health and first aid (CBHFA); and train the executives of the National Society on administrative, logistics and financial procedures.

<b>Health education support</b>	
<b>Outcome: To support the Congolese Ministry of health to improve routine immunization at the community level.</b>	
<b>Output</b>	<b>Planned activities</b>
Maintain or increase coverage to over 90 per cent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit and train volunteers in CBHFA.</li> <li>• Organize health education awareness sessions at community level.</li> </ul>

**Progress:** The selection of the volunteers to be trained on CBHFA is ongoing in all the divisions of the country.

**Challenges:** There is the need to start door-to-door sensitization activities in all the divisions of the country in the days ahead.

Logistics support	
<b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most urgent and relevant humanitarian goods are procured, delivered and distributed equitably to those in need, in a timely, transparent and cost-efficient manner.</li> <li>• The operation obtains and uses effectively an appropriate transport system.</li> <li>• Standard logistics procedures are followed and reported upon while providing training and advice to the host National Society and IFRC delegates and staff as needed.</li> </ul>	
Outputs	Planned activities
<p>The coordinated mobilization of food and relief goods; coordinated reception of all incoming goods; coordinated warehousing, centralized provision of standard vehicles as required; and coordinated and efficient dispatch of goods to the final distribution points.</p> <p>The IFRC will also work with the host National Societies to support and build logistics capacity through training, workshops, and providing delegates to support the logistics function.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.</li> <li>• Set-up supply chain and control supply movements from point of dispatch to final distribution point.</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate the supply chain and provide reporting on performance.</li> <li>• Mobilisation and procurement activities will be coordinated by the Federation's Dubai-based Regional Logistics Unit (RLU).</li> <li>• Develop an exit strategy.</li> </ul>

**Progress:** A thorough evaluation of the situation and the needs by IFRC led to the launching of this emergency appeal. Two vehicles of the NS are currently being repaired with the funds of this appeal, and IFRC-Yaoundé is currently looking for two additional vehicles for the operation.

#### Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

A photo and video reportage on the operation has been performed by the communications team of the Africa zone office from Johannesburg. Two articles and a film will be published in international media.

## How we work

All IFRC 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 the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

## Contact information

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

- In **The Republic of Congo**: Christian Sédar Ndinga, President, Congo Red Cross, Phone: (Office)+242.057.770.456; (Mobile) +242.066.620.311; Email: [president.crcb@cosnac.org](mailto:president.crcb@cosnac.org) or [chrised\\_ndinga@yahoo.fr](mailto:chrised_ndinga@yahoo.fr)
- In **Central Africa Region**: Denis Duffaut, Central Africa Regional Representative, Phone: (Office) +237.22.21.74.37; (Mobile) +237.77.11.77.97; Fax: +237.22.21.74.39; Email: [denis.duffaut@ifrc.org](mailto:denis.duffaut@ifrc.org)
- In **Southern Africa**: Dr Asha Mohammed, Head of Operations, email: [asha.mohammed@ifrc.org](mailto:asha.mohammed@ifrc.org), phone: +27.11.303.9700, fax: + 27.11.884.3809; +27.11.884.0230;
- In **Geneva**: Christine South, Operations Coordinator for West Africa, phone: +41.22.730.45.29, Email: [christine.south@ifrc.org](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org)

*For Resource Mobilization and Pledges enquiries*

- In **IFRC Africa Zone**: Ed Cooper; Resource Mobilization and Performance and Accountability Coordinator; Johannesburg; Email [ed.cooper@ifrc.org](mailto:ed.cooper@ifrc.org); Phone: Tel: +27.11.303.9700; Fax: +27.11.884.3809; +27.11.884.0230

*For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries):*

- In **IFRC Africa Zone**: Terrie Takavarasha; Performance and Accountability Manager, Johannesburg; Email: [terrie.takavarasha@ifrc.org](mailto:terrie.takavarasha@ifrc.org); Tel: +27.11.303.9700; Fax: +27.11.884.3809; +27.11.884.0230

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