

# **GUINEA: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

19 May 2000

*appeal no. 01.03/2000*

*situation report no. 1*

*period covered: 1st January - 31st March 2000*

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## ***The context***

At the end of the first quarter this year, there were approximately 500,700 refugees on Guinean soil, made up of 373,000 Sierra Leoneans, 126,000 Liberians and 1,700 Guinea-Bissauans, with little hope of early repatriation, except for the Guinea-Bissauan refugees who may be able to return home towards the middle of the year.

The Red Cross Society of Guinea/Federation aim is to provide assistance to the refugee community in the following forms: distribution of food and non-food items, social welfare services, water and sanitation initiatives, and repatriation activities, in co-operation with the UNHCR. The presence of large numbers of refugees in the country has dramatically increased levels of vulnerability, particularly in communities which have hosted a high percentage of refugees for some ten years. The Red Cross Society of Guinea/Federation are therefore striving to complement traditional distribution activities with social welfare and counselling services, together with income-generating projects aiming to promote self-sufficiency for the most vulnerable -- who include both refugees and the local population.

## ***Latest events***

For the year 2000, the RC Society of Guinea/Federation mandate in the Forécariah region, outlined in agreements with the UNHCR, is the distribution of food and non-food items in all eight camps, together with social welfare work in three camps: Farmoriah, Kaliah I and Kaliah II. An additional camp is planned, grouping the current refugee populations in Dianéyah, Layah and Dakhagbé. In March, a joint mission by the RC Society of Guinea/Federation, UNHCR, IRC and GTZ visited a proposed new site in Ansomanyah (7 km. from Forécariah).

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refugees await the possibility of repatriation and in N'Zérékoré, activities are running at a low ebb, since agreements with the UNHCR have yet to be formally concluded.

Over the quarter, there have been no security incidents of any note; however, the atmosphere is tense in Guinea partly as a result of changes in neighbouring countries -- the military take-over in Côte d'Ivoire, and the recent Presidential elections in Senegal -- together with mounting pressure for the release of the main opposition figure in Guinea, Professor Alpha Condé, jailed since December 1998.

On 18th and 19th March, the Secretary General of the Federation, Mr. Didier Cherpitel, together with the Director of the Africa Department, Mr. Bekele Geleta, visited the Red Cross Society of Guinea and the Federation Delegation. On this occasion, an assembly was organised, gathering members of the National Society's National Executive Committee, the Presidents of the Communes in Conakry, six Ministers who are members of the General Assembly, members of management, Federation Delegates and resource persons.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

### ***Boké w***

#### ***Guinea-Bissauan refugees***

The Red Cross Society of Guinea has the entire responsibility for all aspects of camp management in Boké -- health and social activities, the installation and upkeep of wells, and schooling. Medical consultations take place three times a week in the camp, and serious cases are referred to the local hospital. In January, additional medical examinations were carried out in light of the possibility of repatriation. Three teachers chosen from the refugee population are responsible for coaching the children. First aiders continue to carry out health awareness sessions on a regular basis.

One food distribution took place on 10th and 11th February, when rations for a two-month period (rice, bulgur wheat, peas and vegetable oil) were issued to 214 families.

### ***Forécariah w***

#### ***Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees***

Distribution sites were set up in each of the camps and an office was constructed at Kaliah I camp from which social activities will be run. Its inauguration took place on 8th March. Work has also begun on the construction of a women's centre in Farmoriah camp. In Kaliah II, building of shelters continued with a total of 73 shelters completed by the end of the quarter. In Kaliah I and in Farmoriah, 20 new social workers were recruited from the refugee population. Six social advisors are available for the three camps. A training programme was held for the social workers, focusing on Red Cross knowledge, the role of a social worker and the concept of vulnerability.

Distributions of food provided by the WFP took place between 27th and 31st March in the 8 camps in the Forécariah region. Distributions of non-food items continued in Dikourou, Layah and Dianéah camps. Hygiene kits were distributed to 1,000 women of between 12 and 55 years of age in Kaliah I and II camps.

Awareness and information sessions took place for unaccompanied handicapped and elderly persons, and awareness sessions were also carried out around water collection points, places of worship and public areas by the team responsible for social activities in Farmoriah. Sanitation, STDs and AIDS were the themes of an awareness campaign in Kaliah I and II camps. It is planned to set up a centre for the elderly in Kaliah II and traditional theatrical groups are being formed in Farmoriah.

Renewed refugee registration was carried out between 10th and 17th March with the assistance of 78 Red Cross officers and volunteers. Statistics show that a total of 21,193 refugees are currently present in the eight camps in the region.

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## **Guéckédou w**

### ***Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees***

In January, a joint evaluation was made of the social welfare programme in Guéckédou by the Red Cross Society of Guinea, the regional Branch Office and the Federation Delegation. An assessment of the sanitation project was also carried out in January since results had been particularly poor in December. Conclusions indicate that the Red Cross Society of Guinea needs to further familiarise the Guinean authorities with the initiative in order to secure their support for it. As a result of the review, a new management system has been put in place. In March, 380 m<sup>3</sup> of refuse were collected and 592,000 guinean francs (CHF 740) were generated. In addition, two blocks of latrines were inaugurated on 24th February, providing income of 785,000 guinean francs (CHF 981) in March.

Over the quarter, the social programme concentrated on advice and guidance, together with individual assessment, in order to ensure the relevance of vulnerability criteria and to provide appropriate assistance to those assessed as most vulnerable. In February, this resulted in 473 home visits, 642 people received in the social programme offices and the evaluation of a total of 344 cases. In March, 1,221 beneficiaries were offered advice and guidance and 122 individual cases were evaluated.

In Macenta, the National Society/Federation are involved in managing the provision of meals to refugees in hospital, as well as the management of a "transit house" where food is provided for people awaiting hospitalisation or convalescing. This centre also provides temporary individual assistance (meals and accommodation) for vulnerable cases.

In February, the awareness-raising team carried out sessions in six of the camps in the region on the following themes: STDs and AIDS, malaria, diarrhoeal diseases and family planning. A theatrical group made up of refugees illustrates through dance and sketches the different issues raised. The social counsellors and a team of volunteers from the Red Cross branch of Macenta assisted with the transfer of 9,380 Liberian refugees from Daro camp to Kouankan camp between 14th February and 23rd March. Distributions of mats and soap also took place.

In early March, the Red Cross Society of Guinea/Federation, under an agreement with the UNHCR, took on responsibility for a one year programme of medico-social assistance for refugees from the Kissidougou and Macenta area. A health post has therefore been opened in Massakoundou camp, to be manned by qualified Red Cross personnel. The Red Cross covers medical care expenses for refugees treated in health posts and hospitals, and also ensures the care of refugees referred to the hospital in the Prefecture or those requiring evacuation to Conakry or elsewhere. In Macenta, beneficiaries comprise former refugees, some 30,000 Liberians living in small camps and villages, and 9,380 Liberian refugees who have just settled in Kouankan camp. In Kissidougou, the beneficiaries are some 35,000 refugees, mostly Sierra Leoneans, the majority of whom are living in the Massakoundou refugee camp.

## ***N'Zérékoré w***

### ***Liberian Refugees***

There is at present no Federation Delegate working in N'Zérékoré. The Red Cross Society of Guinea has nominated a co-ordinator who is responsible for the implementation and follow-up of Red Cross activities in the region. The RCSG/Federation work in three main service areas: social activities, health and sanitation. The social welfare component seeks to provide advice and guidance to refugees and to evaluate individual cases in order to take care of the most vulnerable according to well-defined criteria. An important part of the social work concerns the identification of non-accompanied children. The health component mostly comprises awareness work and the implication of the community, while sanitation activities concentrate on the maintenance of water sources and their management by the community.

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In February, the N'Zérékoré office worked with the UNHCR in anticipation of the future repatriation of refugees to Liberia.

While awaiting the conclusion of agreements with the UNHCR, the team in N'Zérékoré concentrated on offering advice and guidance to refugees and on evaluating potentially vulnerable cases for assistance.

### ***National Society Development w***

The Red Cross Society of Guinea/Federation organised a series of training sessions with the leaders of the regional branches of Dubreka, Boffa, Téliélé, Dinguiraye, Koubia, Lélouma and Tougué and undertook the evaluation of income-generating projects financed by the Federation in Pita and Boké.

In order to reinforce the capacity of the National Society, the National Executive Committee, the ICRC, the Federation and the Ministry of Health carried out recruitment procedures for five regional co-ordinators to cover Guinea's geographical regions: ("High Guinea", "Low Guinea", "Middle Guinea", "Forest Guinea" and "Maritime Guinea"). Technical assistants for youth, health and social work were also interviewed. Between 8th and 10th February, a workshop was organised for the successful candidates who were briefed on National Society policies and the objectives of the technical departments before beginning work in early March.

Between 17th and 19th February, a workshop was organised by the ICRC in Mamou; the training sessions focused on the emblem, first aid emergency teams, international humanitarian law, and ICRC and Federation activities in Guinea.

The Red Cross office in the Commune of Ratoma promoted blood donation on 5th February at the Wanidara Health centre, which resulted in the recruitment of 40 voluntary blood donors. On 23rd March, a ceremony marked the laying of the cornerstone of the regional Red Cross office in Forécariah.

Between 13th and 19th February, a joint Red Cross Society of Guinea/Federation mission took place in the N'Zérékoré and Guéckédou regions, principally to assess the security situation, given the reduction in food emergency assistance in N'Zérékoré. On 12th February, a CBFA training workshop was organised in Forécariah for 20 participants from 10 regional offices.

An epidemic of measles broke out in five Communes of Conakry at the end of March. The National Society took part in a vaccination campaign which vaccinated 250,000 children aged between 6 and 59 months. The National Society put a landcruiser, a Red Cross driver and teams of volunteers at the disposal of the organisers between 28th March and 4th April.

## ***Outstanding needs***

The National Society/Federation urgently requires funding to assist 1,700 Guinea-Bissauan refugees for a four month period and to provide a repatriation kit to facilitate their reintegration in Guinea-Bissau. In addition, funding is sought to provide social and health services and to improve sanitation for 55,000 Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in the Forécariah region.

The Red Cross Society of Guinea/Federation seek to improve the living conditions of the Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees in the Guéckédou region by reinforcing self-sufficiency initiatives, setting up income-generating projects and providing social services. Thus, funding is sought for a six months' programme, targeting 125,000 beneficiaries. It will support revenue-generating projects, reunite separated minors with their families, raise awareness in relation to community sanitation, construct public latrines and encourage improved hygiene, ensure regular maintenance of water supplies, and identify the most vulnerable and assist them in seeking appropriate solutions.

In N'Zérékoré, funding is needed to assist 30,000 Liberian refugees in the key areas of community health promotion, social support for the most vulnerable, socio-economic integration projects, clean

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water supplies, sanitation and garbage-clearing campaigns, youth education, disaster preparedness and the promotion of humanitarian values.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The Red Cross Society of Guinea/Federation work closely with the UN agencies, particularly UNHCR and WFP. In addition to providing direct social services to refugees, the Red Cross Society of Guinea and the Federation provide a key outreach function for all other agencies working in Guéckédou, N'Zérékoré and Forécariah. Initial point of contact to identify needs are with the Federation/Red Cross Society of Guinea teams, who then refer them to appropriate government or NGO service provider i.e. Médecins Sans Frontières, which takes on Red Cross volunteers in the course of its work on epidemic control. The Ministry of Health takes advantage of the availability of Red Cross volunteers during national vaccination campaigns, such as the measles campaign in March, and to ensure first aid coverage of special events. During the quarter, the National Society/Federation/ICRC were called upon to participate in a sub-regional conference on armed conflicts in West Africa.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

Peter Rees-Gildea  
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Operations Funding and Reporting Department

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