

PAPUA NEW GUINEA:

Emergency relief, capacity building

20 January 1999

appeal no. 01.33/98

situation report no. 3

period covered: 1 December - 31 December 1998

Although the security situation on Bougainville slowed down operations, necessitating the rescheduling of the programme's implementation, distributions of resettlement packs to villages and medical kits to aid posts continued, as did work on water and sanitation and trauma counselling projects .

The context

Although the political situation on Bougainville remains complex and security is still a concern, the Federation / PNG Red Cross continued the relief operation which supplies basic tools and equipment to villages, and provides wide ranging primary health care assistance to aid posts and health centres.

Latest events

The peace process has been progressing satisfactorily despite minor setbacks caused by the PNG Government going into recess until July 1999. Both the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) and the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) have been working steadily towards the formation of the Bougainville Reconciliation Government (BRG). The PNG Government also recently agreed to support the formation of the BRG, a move viewed very positively by Bougainvilleans.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The projects on Bougainville are progressing well, although security issues have hampered implementation. This delay, plus slow funding for the appeal and then, in mid-year, the shift of focus to the Aitape relief operation, have made it necessary to extend the programme's implementation by six months, up to the end of August 1999. The Trauma Counselling and Water and Sanitation projects are now scheduled to begin in February 1999, and preliminary assessments are under way.

Village Resettlement Packs (VRP) •

There was no distribution of VRPs during the month due to security difficulties, but planning was finalised to recommence the distributions in early January 1999. Distributions to Bana, Telei and Wisai districts in South Bougainville are expected to be completed by the end of January.

Total packs distributed Jun - Dec 98	122
Total Village Assemblies supported	96

Total villages supported 477

Community Health Care Projects •

The emphasis in December was on preparing equipment items for distribution to 150 aid posts, and identifying cold chain requirements to facilitate immunisation programmes. Additional equipment bids were also placed for further aid post equipment, some obstetric equipment and items to assist people with disabilities.

The distribution of medical kits island-wide continued, but at a lesser rate than previously, as the PNG health service, brought almost to a standstill during the conflict, regains momentum.

During the month of December the following was achieved:

Medical Kits distributed	14
Field visits	8
Health interviews	5

Water & Sanitation Project •

Orders for equipment have been placed and assessment of aid post water sources is continuing, prior to the arrival of the water and sanitation delegate.

Trauma Counselling for youths and children •

The preparation of the trauma project assessment and training manual is well underway, with the field component scheduled to commence in early 1999.

Logistics •

Road transport remains a problem and consequently high sea and air transport costs will continue.

Security •

Operations had to be temporarily suspended because of the theft of three vehicles in three weeks. Work has resumed and the BIG has shown improved support in assisting the Federation to implement the projects within BIG controlled areas. Security difficulties seem to have eased. Close liaison will continue with all political parties to seek a resolution to these concerns.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Close liaison with AUSAID, EU, NZODA and the Peace Monitoring Group continues and harmonious relations exist with other agencies.

BIG/BRA, BTG: Good lines of communication are maintained with all parties, and project matters are regularly discussed.

During a UNHCR visit to Bougainville on 22 December discussions took place on refugees and internally displaced.

More media activity is being undertaken, with general dissemination of information on Red Cross as a priority.

Conclusion .

Despite limitations imposed by the fluctuating security situation, mainly in November and December, the programmes are progressing satisfactorily. It is hoped that as security improves, it will become easier to carry out the programmes in the near future.

This is the last situation report on Appeal 01.33/98. Programmes on Bougainville will continue in 1999 as part of Appeal 01.35/99, which also covers capacity building in the National Society and Aitape tidal wave post-disaster programme.

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