

TANZANIA

ASSISTANCE TO CONGOLESE AND BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

CHF 12,162,000
105,000 beneficiaries

Programme no 01.12/99

The Context

Between early November 1996 and mid-July 1997, some 100,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo crossed Lake Tanganyika into Western Tanzania's Kigoma region. In addition, about 80,000 Burundians sought refuge in the same region. The Tanzanian government has granted asylum to these 180,000 people, allowing them to stay in the country. The 1996-97 refugees came on top of 43,000 Burundians who fled their country in 1993 and have since remained in Kigoma.

The Great Lakes Region as a whole is expected to remain volatile throughout 1999, because a major political breakthrough towards a comprehensive settlement is nowhere in sight. In this context, Tanzania (and, up to a point, Uganda) will be the only country in the region with the capability and the will to host refugees from its neighbours. The Tanzanian government has so far never refused to receive refugees, a policy that is likely to continue. Politically, the country is relatively stable and it has well-established structures to cater to refugee needs.

The Tanzanian Red Cross Society (TRCS) and the Federation anticipate that in 1999, few if any refugees will be voluntarily repatriated. Rather, there is a high probability of more refugees streaming into the country. Hence, the Red Cross must be prepared, above all in Western Tanzania.

The Operation

Currently, TRCS and the Federation are responsible for the care of more than 95,000 refugees in three camps in the Kigoma Region: Lugufu (Congolese refugees), and Mtabila and Muyovosi (Burundian refugees). TRCS also maintains an operation in the Ngara area, where the National Society, contracted by UNHCR, is catering to the needs of 112,000 Burundians in Lukole Camp.

In this context, Red Cross strategy for 1999 calls for an ongoing commitment to the current caseload of refugees, consolidating services and improving effectiveness and efficiency. Simultaneously, TRCS and the Federation must be prepared to cope at any moment with the next wave of refugees.

A key priority to implement this strategy is the continuing effort to further strengthen the capacities of TRCS, meanwhile relying on the National Society's experience gathered over the past five years. In addition, TRCS and the Federation will continue to work to improve the situation of the indigenous population in the villages surrounding the camps, particularly in the fields of health, water and sanitation.

Objectives

The overall objective of the operation is to improve the living conditions of both the refugees and vulnerable local people in Western Tanzania.

- To continue with the provision of humanitarian assistance to the refugee population through the maintenance of the current services, improving and further developing them where and when necessary.
- To assist the local population in the refugee host regions by improving the availability of health services and drinking water.
- To strengthen TRCS capacity in delivering services to refugees; to use the relief operation as a means to improve the National Society's administrative management structures and internal communication systems.
- To establish a viable disaster preparedness and response structure in Western Tanzania; to improve TRCS disaster preparedness and response capacity in general, enhancing its ability to react to any new regional or in-country emergency.
- To promote the establishment of new Red Cross branches and the dissemination of the Movement's principles.

Plan of Action

Under the terms of the London Agreement, concluded between the National Society and the Federation in April 1997, TRCS will continue to carry the operational responsibility for the refugee operation, with the Federation providing advisory and monitoring services. This set-up will allow for both optimal service delivery and accountability. In addition, the relief operation will be linked to the disaster preparedness programme in a bid to boost the response capacity of TRCS throughout the country.

- Relief

The main activity will be continuing camp management in Western Tanzania, including food distribution and administrative services. WFP will remain the main food supplier, and distributions will be based on WFP/UNHCR standard rations and norms. Non-food items will be distributed according to need in

co-ordination with UNHCR.

- Health, Water and Sanitation

The provision of basic health services in the camps will be continued. The existing primary health facilities will be gradually improved in order to better cope with the needs of both the refugees and the local population. With UNHCR, a clear referral strategy will be worked out. Health activities will include control of common communicable diseases and their treatment; maintenance of acceptable nutritional levels; strengthening reproductive health services; provision of accessible and safe drinking water; and the provision of proper sanitation facilities. Vector control will be continued and strengthened.

TRCS will also implement programmes in water and sanitation, health education and curative health services benefiting the local population in the host areas.

- Logistics

Good logistic support is imperative for a refugee operation of such a scale. The logistics department, run by TRCS and supported by the Federation, will continue to provide logistical and transport support. The services will consist of procurement, warehousing, fleet management and mechanical workshops.

- Disaster Preparedness and Response

Using the relief operation as a vehicle, the Federation is committed to the development of TRCS's capacity to deal with disasters through the build-up of material, logistical and human resources. Various courses have been planned to train TRCS staff, especially in logistics, as well as in disaster preparedness and planning.

- National Society Branch Development

The relief operation will also be used as a springboard to promote the establishment of local Red Cross branches. Efforts will include promoting the principles, ideas and values of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, as well as mobilising the local communities.

Resource Planning

It is planned to boost the interest of Participating National Societies in maintaining and increasing their funding efforts. Long-standing donors such as ECHO, the US State Department and others are expected to provide a secure funding base. As before, operating costs will be recovered from partners such as UNHCR and WFP.

Capacity

- The Operating National Society

Over the past years, Federation support has assisted TRCS to build up a vast body of expertise in running a large-scale refugee operation. Although the National Society can count on a

broad base of volunteers, the human resource capacity must be improved. Meanwhile, TRCS has succeeded in opening new local branches in the camp areas, indicating that the delivery of services has gained TRCS a good reputation. Based on this promising potential, the expectation is that the Federation can even further limit its role to advice, monitoring and support.

- The Federation

The complement of the Federation Delegation will be maintained at between 20 and 22 delegates - at least for the first half of 1999. Four delegates will man the delegation in Dar es Salaam, while the sub-delegation in Kigoma will remain the operational hub with six delegates, including the co-ordinators of the various technical departments. Four to five delegates will continue to work in Lugufu/Kasulu. The operation will rely heavily on support from the Regional Delegation in Nairobi, especially in the fields of water and sanitation, logistics and relief.

Co-operation

TRCS and the Federation will continue to work in close co-operation and co-ordination with the Government of Tanzania, UNHCR, and other organisations involved in the care for refugees. Co-operation with the ICRC remains excellent and will hopefully be expanded in the fields of disaster preparedness and tracing.