

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

CAMEROON: SHIPWRECK IN KRIBI

18 April 2006

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 183 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin (no. 1/2006) is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

Activities undertaken are aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **In Cameroon:** Onana Pierre, Programme Coordinator, Cameroon Red Cross Society¹, Yaoundé; Email: bimbgwalio@yahoo.fr; Mobile: +237.768.55.29; Fax: +237.222.41.77
- **In Cameroon:** Daniel Sayi, Federation Acting Head of Central Africa Sub-Regional Office, Yaoundé; Email: daniel.sayi@ifrc.org; Phone: +237.221.74.37; Fax: +237.221.74.39
- **In Senegal:** Alasan Senghore, Federation Head of West and Central Africa Regional Delegation, Dakar; Email: alasan.senghore@ifrc.org; Phone: +221.869.36.41; Fax +221.860.20.02.
- **In Geneva:** Helene Ruud, Federation Regional Officer for Central Africa, Africa Dept.; Email: helene.ruud@ifrc.org; Phone +41.22.730.49.14; Fax +41.22.733.03.95

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.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

¹ Cameroon Red Cross Society- refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=41>

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The Situation

In the night between 21 and 22 March 2006, a heavy and violent windy rain fell in the coastal town of Kribi, Cameroon, causing a high tide. As a result, a wooden boat carrying approximately 300 persons and goods from Nigeria to Port-Gentil (Gabon) sank in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, near Kribi. According to some survivors, the boat was carrying passengers including nationals of Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire.

So far, only 25 people have survived the shipwreck; they include 22 men, 2 women and a little girl. The survivors are currently accommodated in a temporary shelter that has been set up by Cameroon administrative authorities along the Londji beach. Medical staff of the Kribi District Hospital provided first aid, with the support of Cameroon Red Cross Society (CRCS) first aiders.

Traditional fishermen, supported by the Cameroonian navy, are still recovering corpses from the ocean. Volunteers of the Ocean Division (Kribi) Committee of CRCS are also participating in the exercise.

Since many corpses are yet to be recovered from the sea, traditional fishermen and Red Cross volunteers will continue searching for them in the days ahead.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Immediately the disaster was announced, 11 volunteers of the Ocean Divisional Committee of the CRCS joined traditional fishermen and the Cameroonian navy to help in rescuing survivors and recovering corpses. The Red Cross volunteers have also been supporting the medical staff of the Kribi District Hospital in administering first aid to the survivors of the shipwreck.

The national headquarters of CRCS dispatched a team to supervise the operation and to distribute some blankets, clothes, food (rice) and generic drugs (against cough, malaria and first aid).

The needs

There is an urgent need to assist the 25 survivors who are in a very delicate health condition. The needs include: food items (cooking oil, rice, beans, sardine and salt); non-food items (blankets, mattresses, bed frames, mosquito nets, laundry soap, cooking utensils and clothes); portable water and first line drugs.

It will be timely to put a canoe at the disposal of the Ocean Divisional Committee of Cameroon Red Cross Society to ease the recovery of corpses, some of which may be found in swampy zones. The deterioration of corpses in the sea might affect the local populations who are mostly fishermen.

Medium term needs

The Ocean Divisional Committee of Cameroon Red Cross will later develop a more detailed nautical first aid Plan of Action.



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