

# 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 لجمعية الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## ZAMBIA: POST-ELECTION UNREST

17 October 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 185 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. Based on further updates and details from an ongoing assessment, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider support through DREF.

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.

### The Situation



Zambia held parliamentary, local government and presidential elections on the 28 September 2006. The election day was generally peaceful as there were no incidences of violence. However, tension began mounting when the announcement of results began. The initial slow pace in announcing the results caused significant anxiety among opposition supporters as they suspected the delay was to allow for tampering of results in favour of the ruling party. As more results were announced, it became apparent that the ruling party's candidate was about to be re-elected. This situation appeared to enrage the opposition supporters who began rioting in protest against the results on 1 October 2006.

*Photo left: Cover page of "The Post" showing one of Lusaka streets on 3 October 2006. Also visible is a ZRCS first aid volunteer in action.*

Sporadic skirmishes were recorded in the capital city (Lusaka), in Copperbelt Province and Livingstone, leading to injuries and damage to property. At the peak of the unrest, roads were blocked by protestors, businesses and houses remained closed, and several structures were looted or set on fire. In Lusaka, police used tear gas

to contain the riotous mob in most parts of the city.

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While Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS) staff and volunteers were providing first aid assistance to casualties, three Red Cross vehicles were stoned and their windows smashed.

Although opposition leaders appealed for calm, the situation is considered likely to remain very tense for the coming months.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

Before the elections, the ZRCS – with support from the Federation country delegation – had drafted a contingency plan in which the most likely scenario was described as a situation with potentially serious clashes in high-risk regions such as the Copperbelt, Lusaka, Southern, Luapula and Eastern provinces. Based on the contingency plan, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) donated some emergency items (stretchers, aprons, Red Cross flags and first aid kits among others) to the national society. These were distributed to branches in areas at the most risk in order to enhance their response capacity. In addition, financial support was provided by both ICRC and the Federation to support planning and provision of transport at the NS's headquarters and branches.



*One of the ZRCS vehicles stoned and damaged during the violence.*

During the 1 October 2006 violence, the ZRCS assisted a total of 45 casualties in Lusaka and 61 in Livingstone. In addition, reports received from the ZRCS branch in the Copperbelt indicated incidences of violence to which the Red Cross volunteers responded. A task force composed of the in-country disaster response team has been set up in Lusaka, while response teams have been mobilized in selected districts outside the capital.

The Secretary General of ZRCS issued a press release, in conjunction with the Federation and ICRC, to sensitize the community about the Red Cross and Red Crescent Fundamental Principles and the need to allow Red Cross safer access to casualties. The national society plans to enhance the first aid skills of its staff and volunteers in areas at risk so as to maintain a minimum level of preparedness to respond to eventualities for the coming months, as it is expected that the political situation will remain very tense. Emergency stocks and resources that were initially mobilized have since been depleted and need to be replenished.

### **Coordination**

The ZRCS is coordinating with the Federation and ICRC in-country and regional delegations to provide support to the persons affected by the violence. During the peak of the clashes, daily Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement coordination meetings – involving the ZRCS Secretary General, the Federation acting head of country delegation and the ICRC head of mission – were held at the national society's headquarters. These meetings will continue on a regular basis in order to provide guidance to the technical task force. In addition, a mechanism is being developed to enable smooth information exchange with the National Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Lusaka, and where possible, in the provinces.

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