

MINOR EMERGENCY



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

TOGO: CIVIL TRANSITION

Minor Emergency no.
05ME007
Update no. 4
3 May 2005

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 181 countries.

In Brief

A TOTAL OF CHF 135,000 (USD 112,600 OR EUR 87,200) HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) TO RESPOND TO THIS OPERATION. UNEARMARKED FUNDS TO REPAY DREF ARE ENCOURAGED.

Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider international support through an Emergency Appeal.

For information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (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 2005 Annual Appeal for Nigeria sub-regional programmes no. 05AA025 (which includes Benin, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria) – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA025.pdf. 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>

The situation

Severe civil unrest has prevailed in Togo, both in the weeks leading up to and the days following the presidential elections held on 24 April. Before the elections, a total of 81 people were wounded in Lomé, Sokodé and Kara, and in the Togo-Ghana border town of Aflao. (Source: UN-OCHA IRIN). Other areas affected by this unrest include Amoutive, Be, Doulassame, Cassablanca, Atikoume, Totsi and Bdidoadin.

Following the official announcement of election results, which declared Faure Gnassingbé the winner, supporters of the opposition candidate refused to accept the results, alleging election irregularities. The opposition leader declared himself president, and this has led to unprecedented violence and population movement into neighbouring countries (source: IRIN).

Operational developments

As of Monday 2 May 2005, UNHCR reports over 16,500 Togolese have left Togo and are seeking refuge in neighbouring Benin (9,000) and Ghana (7,500).

About 750 refugees have been taken by UNHCR and Caritas-Benin to the Comé camp, situated 66 km from Cotonou, Benin. Among these are 40 children aged 0-11 years, 33 of whom are unaccompanied. A family of 10 lost all their clothing when a candle caused their tent to burn down. Information received by Red Cross and RDRT team at the border shows that population movement will likely increase in the coming days.

Unconfirmed sources reveal that 22 people were killed and about a 100 people injured in the crossfire between the opposition and government supporters; nine of the wounded were treated in the Comé hospital. The Benin and Ghana borders are the most common borders used by the refugees, but the Benin border is more exposed because the Togolese opposition headquarters is located nearby in southwest Togo.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

During the early stages of this crisis, the Federation composed an assessment/evaluation team of four experienced delegates and RDRT members. They have deployed to Benin to help organize the response; they will then proceed to Ghana and Burkina Faso.

Volunteers of the Togolese Red Cross were immediately deployed under the leadership of the local committee presidents of Grand Popo, Comé and Lokossa. A total of 79 volunteers and care givers have been deployed in Hilacondji, Comé, Hilaconji and Lokossa. Other committees along the river border between Togo and Benin could become involved, as was the case in the 1994 crisis; some refugees could flee through the river in search of asylum.

National society officers took aprons and first aid materials to the volunteers who were essentially involved in registration and orientation of refugees, tent installation, distribution of food and non-food items, treatment of the wounded, assisting nursing staff, care of unaccompanied children, and security watch during the night.

After meeting with UNHCR representatives, the Red Cross of Benin and the Federation assumed responsibility for managing the Agamé refugee camp located near Lokosa town, 150 km from the capital Cotonou. This responsibility includes camp management, water sanitation and health. The camp currently hosts 1,300 refugees; a further 1,000 are being relocated from the border to this camp (3 May). Agamé camp is expected to be the main camp for Togolese refugees in Benin.

The Federation team will purchase and deliver some food items to the camp; there has been no food provision since arrival of the refugees a few days ago. Basic first aid items will also be purchased locally to facilitate the work of the team. Health kits are needed; exact quantities will be defined and communicated.

The Ghana Red Cross is implementing its contingency plan, developed in coordination with ICRC and the Federation during the initial stages of this crisis. The Federation team continues to monitor the situation in Ghana. Of the estimated 7,500 refugees that arrived in Ghana, most have been staying with friends and relatives; 387 refugees have been registered at the camp. The regional delegation maintains regular contact with the Ghana Red Cross; the Federation team will travel to Ghana once the situation in Benin is fully organized.

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Burkina Faso has reported little movement, as their borders remain closed and are strictly monitored and enforced. Nonetheless, the Burkinabe Red Cross has teams on standby in border towns.

Immediate Needs

The immediate needs include provision of food rations, water, sanitation and health. The Federation regional delegation for West and Central Africa, based in Dakar, is mobilizing the Central Africa emergency response water and sanitation (WatSan) team; their deployment is expected with 48 hours. The team already has some WatSan material and equipment that will be used for the operation.

Volunteer needs include:

- More RC volunteers
- First aid pouches
- Stretchers
- Aprons and RC T-shirts
- Incentives for motivational purposes

Needs for the care of refugees

- Latrines (a big need)
- Clothes
- Blankets
- Medicine
- Mosquito nets
- Mats
- Plastic sheeting
- Utensils

Coordination

The Federation works in close collaboration with other organisations involved in providing care for refugees: UNHCR, UNICEF, Caritas-Benin, Ministry of Interior (National Commission for Assistance to Refugees), and Ministry of Defence,

Financial support was given to the Comé team after consultations with the Executive Secretary and the national society disaster management coordinator. Contacts were made with authorities and representatives of the UN, disaster management and sanitation coordinators, and other institutions responding to this crisis. More structured meetings will be held as soon as all team members are in place.

The Federation team will soon finalize the negotiations and the initial part of the assessment. This will be evaluated, and may possibly result in the launch of an Emergency Appeal. If so, this is expected by 6 May.

For more about the national societies responding to this crisis, please click on the links below.

- Togolese Red Cross – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=170>
- Red Cross of Benin – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=209>
- Burkinabe Red Cross Society - <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=181>

Please also reference the prior reports associated with this Minor Emergency:

- Minor Emergency 05ME007 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05ME007.pdf
- Minor Emergency Update no. 2 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05ME00702.pdf
- Minor Emergency Update no. 2 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05ME00703.pdf

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