

DREF Bulletin Update



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

GUINEA: POPULATION MOVEMENT

DREF Bulletin no. MDRGN002

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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

Period covered by this update: 20 January to 20 February 2007.

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- A total of CHF 185,000 has been allocated from the Federation's DREF to respond to the needs in this operation.
- This operation is expected to be implemented over 3 months, and will be completed by the end of April 2007; a DREF Bulletin Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation.

This operation is 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.

Background and current situation

The 17-day general strike launched on 10 January 2007 by trade unions protesting against the high cost of living in Guinea (Conakry) later turned to a demand for change of government. The resulting violence left more than 100 people dead and about 400 injured. The escalating violence also led to food shortages, resulting in an increase in prices of essential products as well as a shutdown of most commercial activities.

After a short period of calm, violence erupted again in Conakry and other towns across Guinea immediately after the President announced the nomination of a new Prime Minister. The rejection of this nomination by the populations prompted the government to impose a 20-hour curfew as from 12 to 23 February 2007, by restricting movement to only between 16:00hrs and 20:00hrs. However, after complaints from the international community, trade unions and the opposition, the curfew was later relaxed to 12 hours. People were permitted to move but gatherings were disallowed and shops remained closed.

A total of 168 injuries and 12 deaths have been reported by the Red Cross Society of Guinea first aid operation, following the latest spate of violence. Hospitals are running short of blood and it is believed that the shortage has contributed to the number of people who are dying while undergoing treatment.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action so far

Since the beginning of demonstrations, the Federation country office in Conakry, together with International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), has been supporting efforts of the Red Cross Society of Guinea in providing first aid services. CHF 150,000 was allocated from the Federation's DREF in late January 2007; it allowed the national societies of Guinea and its neighbouring countries to work on preparedness for potential population movements. With support of the DREF funding, the Red Cross Society of Guinea has been able to assist the affected populations in Guinea (Conakry).

To date, Red Cross Society of Guinea has attended to over 400 people with minor and/or critical injuries, and handled bodies of 30 people killed during the first part of the general strike (from 10 to 27 January 2007); 18 people are still missing. ICRC has been supplying first aid kits to three provincial hospitals and surgical kits to university hospitals in Conakry.

The objective of the initial plan of action was **to contribute to restoring human dignity to the most vulnerable as well as improving the welfare of displaced populations**. To attain this objective, Red Cross Society of Guinea deployed 39 first aid brigades in strategic locations throughout the country. The brigades have attended to casualties and ferried them to different hospitals. For the safety of Red Cross volunteers, rescue operations usually take place after calm has returned and demonstrators have been dispersed. The national society has benefited from logistical support provided by ICRC, which has provided a fleet of 14 vehicles.

In Mali, a radio network has been established, covering the border regions with a high potential of population influx. The Mali Red Cross has reactivated its contingency plan and alerted four of its emergency brigades and National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) members for possible deployment. Refresher training for 25 volunteers has been conducted in Nyafwila and Kourémalé.

The Federation Regional Delegation in Dakar (Senegal) is providing support in Conakry while at the same time coordinating with the national societies of countries neighbouring Guinea. Some emergency stocks for 100 families (mats, blankets and bars of soap) have been repositioned in Sierra Leone, Mali, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire for use in the event of population movements.

Additional needs

The capacities of most neighbouring national societies have been strengthened, in terms of preparedness to respond to any influx of refugees. However, should the situation get worse, there is a concern that blood banks in health centres within Guinea will be depleted, especially since the National Blood Transfusion Centre is currently unable to satisfy the high demand for blood transfusions.

Since a high percentage of deaths are due to loss of blood, there is a need to reinforce mobilization and motivation of voluntary blood donations to replenish the banks, and eventually to save lives. Hence, the Federation has provided an additional CHF 35,000 from DREF to support the implementation of a revised plan of action. This brings the total amount allocated from DREF to CHF 185,000. The initial plan of action outlined in [DREF Bulletin no. MDRGN002](#) has been revised to include support to the Guinea National Blood Transfusion Centre.

Revised plan of action

Objective 1: To contribute to restoring human dignity to the most vulnerable as well as improving the welfare of displaced populations.

This was the objective outlined in the initial plan of action. Please refer to the section on "Red Cross Red Crescent action so far" for progress made under this objective.

Objective 2: To strengthen technical capacities of the Red Cross Society of Guinea in social mobilization for voluntary blood donation.

Planned activity:

- Conduct refresher training for blood donor club leaders.

Expected result:

- Blood donor clubs are functional to allow continuous mobilization of voluntary blood donors.

Objective 3: To mobilize the population to voluntarily donate blood to the National Blood Transfusion Centre as well as to mobilize the existing voluntary blood donor programme of the national society.

Planned activities:

- Organize 15 national days of blood donation with the National Blood Transfusion Centre (three days per geographic zone);
- Publish information, education and communication (IEC) materials, including flyers and posters, for sensitization and mobilization campaigns;
- Broadcast sensitization messages through the national media, mostly targeting rural communities by radio.

Expected results:

- The population is mobilized to provide voluntary blood donations to the National Blood Transfusion Centre;
- Stocks of blood at the National Blood Transfusion Centre are sufficiently replenished.

Impact

The Red Cross intervention has so far contributed to saving lives of those injured in the ensuing violence. The 600 trained Red Cross volunteers offering first aid services have contributed to saving hundreds of lives. Due to this, the Red Cross Society of Guinea has been acknowledged for its humanitarian work by the government, military and members of the public. Furthermore, coordination and networking between the neighbouring national societies has led to the formation of an early warning system among them.

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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 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>

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