

Guinea Conakry: Sierra Leonean refugees

**appeal no: 20/98
7 July 1998**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,900,000.-
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 200,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 6 MONTHS***

Summary

A further influx of refugees from Sierra Leone into southern Guinea has brought refugee numbers up to 200,000 and overwhelmed the capacity of international aid agencies providing relief in the region. The Guinea Red Cross Society and the Federation plan to provide food and shelter materials in a first phase and follow this with community services in the refugee camps.

The Disaster

Recent fighting between ECOMOG forces and AFRC/RUF armed forces in north-eastern Sierra Leone and alleged reprisal campaigns by the latter against the local Sierra Leonean population have triggered a new influx of Sierra Leonean refugees into the prefectures of Gueckédou, Kissidougou and Faranah in southern Guinea.

There are now 200,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in the region of Gueckédou. Since March, the UNHCR has registered 77,000 new refugees in the area, which was already sheltering 121,000 Sierra Leonean refugees who arrived between August 1997 and March 1998.

Among the refugee population, 4% are women heads of family, 3% are elderly people, 2% are physically disabled, 0.5% are unaccompanied children, 1% are chronically ill and 0.5% are victims of violence. Several thousand have been severely mutilated or are suffering from malnutrition. The great majority are completely destitute.

Most of the refugees are accommodated at some 40 sites, housing between 100 and 21,000 persons each. The largest camps are at Fangamadou (20,352), Kilomba (21,367), Nyaédou (14,906) and Massakoundou (14,994).

The region affected by this new influx has also taken in 132,000 Liberian refugees since December 1989, of whom only 25,000 have returned home since the beginning of a spontaneous, voluntary repatriation earlier this year.

Community projects benefiting both the refugees and the local population are urgently needed in view of the economic difficulties confronting the villages hosting such a large number of refugees.

The Response so far

Government Action w

The government is responsible for medical services for the refugees.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

The current situation was anticipated by the International Federation in its Emergency Appeal 98 (EA) for Liberia and Region (Programme 01.07/98). It warned: "It is quite possible that Guinea will have to face a further massive influx of refugees. Guinea Red Cross/Federation must be ready to get involved in relief activities." Because the situation could have developed in any of several ways, the EA made no budget provision for an eventual operation. This appeal does not therefore duplicate or overlap with any EA funding requests

The GRCS/Federation assessment missions have established the number of beneficiaries and their needs. The local branches of GRCS have been put on alert to start the operation as soon as resources are forthcoming.

Other Agencies' Action w

UNHCR, in addition to its protection mandate, is in charge of co-ordinating assistance to the refugees. To cope with this new influx of refugees it is maintaining the pre-existing partnerships and the distribution of tasks set out in the agreements signed within the framework of the PARLS programme (Assistance to Liberian and Sierra Leonean Refugees). WFP and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) provide food and SECADOS takes care of some distributions. Water and sanitation needs are in the hands of GTZ, ACF and the SNAPE, and social assistance will be organised by SECADOS. Since April, MSF Belgium has been supporting the provision of water supplies, the construction of latrines and shelters, and medical care.

Given the present financial situation of UNHCR, and in order to respond to current needs, all these partners have had to reallocate 25% of their 1998 budgets which were drawn up before this new crisis. Once the emergency phase is over, UNHCR will be counting on its other current partners to cover anticipated needs in the fields of education, a micro-credits programme and agriculture.

At present, none of the camps has an agency responsible for the co-ordination of all services within the camps (camp management, sanitation, water and food distribution). As the current partners are unable to provide an adequate response to this additional, growing caseload, there is an urgent need for a partner such as the Red Cross, which is very familiar with the area and has the structures and human resources with the necessary expertise in distribution and social action.

Co-ordination w

The existing structures of co-operation and co-ordination in the operational area between GRCS, UNHCR, WFP, GTZ, ACF, SECADOS, etc., will apply to this new operation. GTZ has offered to assist GRCS/Federation with warehouse and transport capacity.

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs •

A GRCS/Federation mission in May established that the immediate needs are for shelter and food distribution and that planning should begin for social work in the near future.

Immediate Needs •

16,000 tarpaulins, 48,000 blankets and 48,000 mats are urgently needed by the GRCS to provide the refugees with shelter. Donations in kind of these items should be sent directly to the Federation's country

delegation in Conakry. Donations in cash will be used to purchase tarpaulins in Nairobi and blankets, mats, and soap in the region by the respective Regional Delegations.

The GRCS will need to reinforce its infrastructure for this operation. Additional vehicles, radio and office equipment as well as staff are required. A total of 115 first aiders and 15 staff will be involved in this operation. The National Society needs one Relief Administrator who will be in charge of supervising and training the local staff.

Red Cross Objectives •

- { To provide shelter for 200,000 persons.
- { To distribute food made available by WFP.
- { To provide social assistance to the most needy.
- { To enhance the population's capacity to cope with disasters.
- { To launch community programmes benefiting both the refugees and the local communities.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

Emergency Phase: July - September 1998 •

- { Provide shelter for 200,000 people.
- { Distribute food donated by WFP to 200,000 persons.
- { Mobilise a team of first aiders for the 40 camps, under the supervision of the national Relief-co-ordinator and a field delegate.
- { Reinforce the structures of GRCS in Gueckédou for implementing and monitoring the operation.

Phase Two: October - December 1998 ●

- { Continue the food distribution.
- { Recruit support staff and volunteers who will identify the most vulnerable and provide them with social support.
- { Identify health hazards and organise appropriate first-aid training for the refugees and local volunteers.
- { Introduce community activities that will improve the social and health environment, and involve young people and women in the camps: protection of water sources and wells, disinfecting latrines, training in health education, reforestation, and medium- and long-term socio-economic micro-projects.

A twice-monthly distribution of 200,000 pieces of soap is planned for the six months duration of the operation.

Capacity of the National Society •

The GRCS, with the support of its co-ordination unit in Nzérékoré, which now has eight years of experience in assistance to Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees, is well qualified to ensure co-ordination of the plan of action in the first (emergency) phase concerning human resources (supervisory staff) and distribution, accounting and reporting procedures. The Gueckédou RC branch can provide 40 experienced first-aiders to manage food and non-food items and has furnished premises that can serve as a basis for the operation.

For the second phase, as activities are gradually phased out at Nzérékoré as a result of the repatriation of Liberian refugees, the co-ordination unit will be able to release some supervisory staff and first aiders to Gueckédou to strengthen the operational capacity of the Gueckédou branch. The GRCS national Relief Co-ordinator will supervise the operation. Neither the GRCS nor the Gueckédou branch has sufficient resources for logistics, data-processing or communications.

Present Capacity of the Federation in Guinea •

The Guinea delegation is based in Conakry and has a head of delegation, an administration/finance delegate, a development delegate and seven local employees.

The field office at Nzérékoré consists of a desk officer for administration/relief and 17 local employees. In the first phase, Nzérékoré vehicles and radio equipment can be used in Gueckédou. For the extension of RC capacities in Gueckédou, more expatriates and local staff as well as office equipment, logistics and communications means will be needed.

Evaluation •

The GRCS national Relief Co-ordinator and the relief administrator requested in this appeal will guarantee the ongoing monitoring of the operation. The Regional relief delegate will be responsible for the mid-term evaluation and the final evaluation.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

As the Alert, issued on 11 June made clear, the situation in Sierra Leone is producing a major influx of refugees into Guinea-Conakry which is overwhelming the resources of refugee assistance programmes set up by international aid agencies earlier this year. The GRCS and the Federation require immediate support in order to come to the assistance of the refugees and meet their basic needs for shelter, hygiene, food distribution, social work and training.

For more detailed information please contact Richard Hunlede, team leader for West Africa on ++4122 7304314, email: hunlede@ifrc.org

Margareta Wahlström
Under Secretary General,
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber
Secretary General

C:\TEMP\2098.sam
09.07.98