

# ***Zambia: Refugee Influx***

**Appeal no:11/99  
4 May, 1999**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,707,000  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 25,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 6 MONTHS***

## ***Summary***

The recent influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has severely stretched the relief and assistance capacity of the government and the Zambian Red Cross Society (ZRCS). Following discussions with UNHCR, other UN agencies, and operational NGO's, the Federation has agreed to support the operation by providing assistance for camp management in Mporokosso, including relief item distribution, shelter, health education, logistical support, and monitoring and reporting. Given the uncertainty of the security situation in the DRC and the potential for further conflict, a key element in the programme consists of re-inforcing the capacity of the ZRCS to carry out disaster planning and preparation (contingency planning) in the event of a further influx.

## ***The Disaster***

On 4 March, an initial wave of some 4,000 Congolese refugees crossed the border into Zambia's Northern Province. A month later, estimates indicate that up to 25,000 individuals have arrived. A part of the influx fled from the Kalemie area in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the outset of the conflict in August 1998 and have been on the road since that time. Many stopped, seeking shelter and safety in Moba. On 15 November, as the hostilities escalated around Kalemie, many pushed on from Moba and moved still further south, along with those resident in and around Moba. In recent weeks, as Moba has changed hands between rebel and Congolese army forces, those south of the area determined to seek security in Zambia.

Months of living in the bush and sustained travel have seriously affected the health of the refugees. Conditions have been aggravated by the prolonged rains, affecting both the camp sites and logistics

show visible signs of malnutrition (confirmed by MSF) and related protein deficiencies. Any household resources which the refugees may have had at the outset have since been sold to obtain food. Sporadic cholera outbreaks have occurred, presenting an immediate short-term threat for the refugees.

A transit facility has been established in the far north of Zambia, in the village of Kaputa. The influx of 16,000 refugees to this centre adds to an existing local population of barely 5,000, and has strained the existing infrastructure and other resources to bursting point. Dispersed settlements of refugees in the immediate area, totalling some 3,000-5,000 persons, are being transported and encouraged to join those at the transit facility, in order to better provide urgently needed assistance. Thus some 500-700 new arrivals to the centre occur daily, with border crossings continuing, and many remaining dispersed and at risk.

The government of Zambia, in the contingency plans established when the conflict erupted in eastern DRC, has allocated land adjacent to the town of Mporokoso where a camp is being established. The facility will be able to accommodate a maximum of 25,000 individuals. Though fertile, the site was uninhabited bush and has required intensive efforts to prepare for the transfers, which started with approximately 430 people per day as from 19 April.

At present, fighting in and around Pweto (a boarder town in the DRC) increases and could lead to a further large refugee influx. This is a preoccupation the for Zambian government, the Red Cross, as well as operational partners.

## *The Response so far*

### **Government Action w**

The government and UNHCR (as the lead agency) have been co-ordinating the operation. Land was identified and designated for the refugee camp after the site formerly used for refugees in 1997 was assessed as being unsuitable. Government health facilities are providing additional support for those needs which cannot be met by the operational NGOs.

### **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w**

Based on experience with the refugees operation in 1997, the Harare Regional delegation, in conjunction with the Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS) had prepared for a new refugee influx by undertaking an assessment of the ZRCS preparedness (including updating contingency plans), and conducted three workshops to enhance the response capacity of the local branches in the border areas.

The entire branch office in Kaputa has been mobilised and over 50 volunteers are working daily. Activities in Kaputa include; cleaning/sanitation and chlorinating of occupied areas, latrines and heavily transited areas; construction (water facilities, dispensary facilities), road improvement; latrine construction; transit site clearing for new arrivals; recording (for Kaputa census/distribution purposes); and distribution of food and non-food plus associated warehousing and reporting.

In Mporokoso, the camp received the first transfer of refugees on 12 April. A road of 4 km has been cut into the camp site. The reception centre is fully operational and camp facilities (such as a health clinic) are close to completion. Some 200 Red Cross volunteers/workers have been involved with construction and camp preparation.

Since the refugees arrival in March, the Regional Delegation in Harare deployed a Water Sanitation Officer and Disaster Preparedness Delegate to assist the National Society in establishing the operation. The Regional Delegation team was further strengthened by a Regional Relief Co-ordinator from Nairobi to assist in setting up a system in Kaputa. A Relief Administrator delegate provided by Swedish Red Cross is now posted in Kaputa, organising the relief activities with the ZRCS. Further technical Delegates are being sought, and support to Mporokoso will continue to be provided by the regional DPP Delegate until the arrival of the new team of delegates.

CHF 30,000 was released from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) to enable personnel to be deployed and emergency purchases to be made.

### **Other Agencies' Action w**

UNHCR, as the responsible lead agency, convenes a weekly meeting in Lusaka. The International Federation and the ZRCS are working in close partnership with UNHCR at both Lusaka and the field levels.

WFP are providing the food and the transport and logistics capacity required to reach the beneficiaries.

MSF-Holland has been managing water sanitation activities at Mporokoso camp, as well as the health activities in the transit camp.

## ***The Intended Operation***

### **Assessment of Needs ●**

The Federation delegate currently in-country has been assessing needs with the ZRCS, though this task has been made difficult with the overwhelming number of refugees and the serious logistical problems involved with transporting food and non-food items to the area. Continued rains and poor roads have increased the logistics constraints.

### **Immediate Needs ●**

The immediate needs are in Mporokoso where the refugees are currently located in and around a transit centre. Food and non-food distributions have been complicated by the fact that there have been serious breaks in the supply pipeline, with poor roads made worse by late rains. Only 80% of plastic sheeting requirements have been met and shelter is being sought in public buildings, complicating further access to the distribution system. There is a need to prepare and disseminate training to the refugees to prevent further cases of cholera, as well as a need for equipment to provide clean water to the refugees.

The transfers of refugees to Mporokoso has provided the opportunity to undertake more accurate registrations, making more precise planning of the camp possible.

Priority is now being focused on operational support to the ZRCS in setting-up systems and an effective relief organisation. In responding to the immediate needs, the Federation and the ZRCS are responsible for operating the food and non food distribution systems, community based health activities such as health education, prevention and vaccination programmes and the construction of buildings.

### **Anticipated Later Needs ●**

UNHCR, the Federation, and the ZRCS will shortly conduct an assessment mission in order to identify later refugee needs. The Red Cross must also be ready to help in responding to a further refugee influx. UNHCR and the Government have already identified one other potential camp site should this be needed.

### **Red Cross Objectives ●**

The Red Cross will assist the Zambia Red Cross in meeting the needs of 25,000 refugees from the DRC for 12 months, and continue to provide effective, efficient camp management and services to 25,000 refugees in Mporokosso.

These services will include:

- { distribution of food and non-food relief items;
- { target food assistance to the most vulnerable groups, including children below five years of age, pregnant and lactating women, the elderly and the disabled.

- { provision of additional shelters to the refugees;
- { provision of 10,000 blankets, 15,000 kitchen sets, 200 family tents, 10,000 water tanks, and 400 MT of clothing to approximately 3,600 refugee families;
- { provision of community based health education, community-based first aid and PHC to 25,000 refugees in Mporokoso;
- { provision of logistical support to the on-going relief, water, construction, education, social and administrative services;
- { to continue facilitating the transportation of refugees from Kaputa to Mporokosso;
- { to be prepared and ready to meet short to medium term contingencies should a significantly greater refugee caseload occur;
- { intensify the levels of field supervision, monitoring and verification of beneficiaries for better targeting of resources;
- { build the capacity of the Zambia Red Cross for ongoing refugee and disaster relief management response, and continue improving the emergency management skills of the relief team branch staff and volunteers.

## *National Society and Federation Plan of Action*

### **Relief Distribution ●**

The Federation and the ZRCS will continue assisting the 25,000 refugees by distributing food rations consisting of rice, maize and vegetable oil provided by World Food Programme (WFP).

Due to the precariousness of the situation (the continued tense situation in DRC, additional refugee influx, climate (rain), and the generally poor camp conditions of the refugees), the Federation and the ZRCS are planning through this appeal to purchase urgently needed non-food items such as additional plastic sheeting, hoes, jerry cans, cooking pots, mugs, eating utensils and plates, and used clothes - supplies which will be distributed to the refugees.

Relief management training of 300 ZRCS staff and volunteers as well as of 50 refugees will be conducted through courses/seminars and on-the-spot supervision.

The ZRCS will maintain and work to try to strengthen services to the transit refugee population in Kaputa.

### **Community Health programmes /Community-based first aid ●**

Training of volunteers and refugees is planned, reducing the risk of disease and increasing the self sufficiency of the refugees in the camps. First aid kits will be required for this activity. The Zambia Red Cross, in close collaboration with the health delegate, will identify and train some 20 volunteers and 50 refugees to take care of this activity.

### **Water and sanitation ●**

MSF is implementing the water and sanitation activities, but the Federation and the ZRCS have been approached by UNHCR to consider taking this over by May 1999. For the time being, the Red Cross team of volunteers are working in close collaboration with MSF in helping to provide safe water to refugees. There is an urgent need for jerry cans in order to provide safe drinking water. With the technical support from the Harare Regional Delegation, an overall assessment on water and sanitation is underway

**Strengthening Disaster Response capacities ●**

The conflict situation in the Great Lakes Region is having an increased impact on the neighbouring countries. As planned in the 1999 programmes, the Regional Delegation in Harare, with the technical support of the Regional DPP delegate, will assist the Zambia Red Cross to draw up a disaster preparedness plan, which will include activities to prepare for a potential influx of new refugees. The delegate will assist the National Society through regional-based training, enhancing the staff and volunteers' skills in management and preparedness policies, and strengthening disaster management information systems, including the establishment of early warning and resource data bases.

**National Society capacity building ●**

Approximately 300 ZRCS staff will receive job strengthening training through seminars, meetings, and on-the-job supervision. The refugee community will be involved in relief distributions and training, and widespread dissemination of Red Cross ideals and principles will also take place.

**Capacity of the National Society ●**

Because of staff turnover, the ZRCS have few managers with experience dating from the 1997 refugee operation. Though seven or eight senior headquarters and branch staff have been deployed to the field to manage the operation, the lack of experience, the absence of satisfactory procedures, combined with the high number of refugees, leaves the Society's capacity sorely stretched. On the other hand, volunteers are available and manpower capacity can be effective with good leadership and direction by field managers.

**Present Capacity of the Federation in Zambia ●**

The International Federation deployed two Regional Delegates as a temporary measure. A Relief Administrator sponsored by the Swedish Red Cross is based in Kaputa working in close collaboration with the ZRCS, UNHCR and other partners. Due to the overwhelming numbers of refugees, the ZRCS has asked for the Federation's assistance to be increased. Accordingly, the Federation's delegation will work with and assist the ZRCS to assure that systems and procedures are in place and to cover accountability requirements for this operation.

The Regional Delegation in Harare will continue giving overall support and be available to provide technical and sectoral advice, including health, water and sanitation and refugee camp management.

**Evaluation ●**

Due to the volatility of the situation in the region, the Federation/Zambia Red Cross and UNHCR have planned to conduct a number of assessment missions. A further overall evaluation - including the eventual phasing out strategy of the operation -- will be conducted after six months.

**Budget summary**

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

The International Federation and the ZRCS will undertake this assistance programme to respond not only to the immediate requirements of the refugees, but also the longer-term capacity-building needs of the National Society. Given the evolving nature of events in the region, the capacity-building is considered a key component in the overall strategy of the Federation and the ZRCS.

*Should you need further information, please contact Richard Hunlede, Team Leader for Southern Africa Tel.: (4122) 730 43 14; e-mail: [hunlede@ifrc.org](mailto:hunlede@ifrc.org) and/or Jerry Talbot Head of Regional Harare, e-mail [ifrczw01@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrczw01@ifrc.org)*

Thank you in advance for your support.

Margareta Wahlström  
Under Secretary General,  
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber  
Secretary General