

NAMIBIA: ANGOLAN REFUGEES

8 August 2000

appeal no. 36/99

situation report no. 5

period covered: 1 March to 31 July 2000

Given the uncertainty of the situation and potential further influx of refugees from Angola, the International Federation intends to continue its support to the Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS), its direct involvement in the refugee programmes as well as its on-going capacity building efforts.

The context

The conflict in southern Angola continues to cause insecurity in the Angolan and northern Namibian border area, resulting in ongoing influx to Namibia of people seeking protection and assistance. After arriving, the refugees are moved from the border town of Rundu to Osire Refugee Camp approximately 671 kms from Rundu and 250 km from Windhoek. With the continuous fighting, the possibility of repatriation remains remote. During May, the refugee influx continued at an average of 100 per week and in June with as much as 300 people per week. At the end of July, the total camp population reached 12,560 with an ongoing trend.

The Namibia Red Cross Society, supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation), launched an appeal in December 1999, initially intended to address urgent needs in the areas of water, sanitation, shelter and preventative health. The NRCS and the Federation were subsequently requested by UNHCR to assume responsibility over all camp management. In the meantime, due to the continuing influx, the NRCS and the Federation revised the 6 months appeal and budget and expanded it to cover a period of 12 months. The current situation in the camp is stable.

After the main implementing partner of Osire Refugee Camp, the Council of Churches of Namibia (CCN), withdrew from camp management citing that the organisation did not have the capacity to

handle the increased case load of refugees, the NRCS, assisted by the Federation, became responsible for providing care and maintenance for the refugees. The NRCS assumed the role of an implementing partner (with UNHCR) as of 1 March 2000, pending the conclusion of a tripartite agreement. The camp management responsibilities cover most sectors i.e. water and sanitation, shelter, preventive health, education and logistics support, distribution of food and non food items as well as tracing and social services.

Latest events

At the very end of July, Namibian newspapers reported that up to 2,000 people are trapped between northern Namibia and southern Angola and are expected to cross into Namibia in a week's time. At the same time, two Namibians were shot and killed, while one female was seriously wounded at Muhopi village in the Masare constituency, about 23km east of Rundu by three suspected bandits from Angola.

Internal displacement of Namibian people who have settled along the Kavango river banks is ongoing due to continued attacks by suspected UNITA rebels. Planting of land mines on foot paths and gravel roads is the order of the day in the Kavango region.

Cross border attacks (allegedly by UNITA rebels in the Rundu area), continue to cause concern and instability, and the planting of land mines in this area has only increased the danger to the civilian population with some 103 persons seriously injured between January and July 2000. Recently, 4 people were killed and 19 were injured by land mines. A dusk to dawn curfew was introduced along the river, due to suspected UNITA incursions. In the beginning of July, five people were arrested for allegedly having assisted UNITA rebels, harbouring them in their houses. Abductions of civilians have also started to become a problem. Latest casualties were a family of 5, where two family members were abducted and later found dead in the Kavango River.

Negotiations with UNHCR about budgeting and clarification of roles have taken place with the support of the Regional Federation Delegation. The World Food Programme has also expressed interest in signing a tripartite agreement with UNHCR and Namibia Red Cross Society.

The Namibia Red Cross Society assisted by the Federation held a workshop on minimum standards (Sphere project) in the camp which attracted 30 participants including two UNHCR staff members. The topics covered water and sanitation, shelter, food and non food items distribution, humanitarian law and the code of conduct. The team working in Osire was able to compare the obtained camp indicators to the required minimum standards. The assistance in the camp met Sphere standards in all areas. Presently, the water supply has slipped from the required 15 litres to 12 litres but is expected to improve during the next month with intensified intervention. Maintenance of Sphere standards is, however, increasingly difficult in all sectors with the fast growing number of refugees.

Celebrations on Africa Refugee Day were held in the camp and attracted dignitaries from embassies based in Windhoek and the Ministry of Home Affairs. The theme for this year was the plight of African refugee women.

Ms Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State, United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration visited the camp in May. The American Government donated food worth US\$ 700,000 to WFP for the continued support of feeding the refugees at Osire Refugee Camp for the period August 2000 to January 2001. This assistance was most timely since WFP had stated that they had run out of resources.

Besides receiving technical visits from the Regional Federation Delegation, the Osire Refugee Camp played host to visitors from the German Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross, the Secretaries General of the region, and the Belgian Co-operation Representative from Harare.

The Osire Red Cross Branch participated at NRCS Central Committee and Annual General Meetings on 23 and 24 June 2000 and were commended for their excellent work and volunteer spirit.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The NRCS assisted by the Federation continued to provide quality care and maintenance to the refugees according to the minimum standards as prescribed by Sphere project. One important contribution to the smooth-running of the operation was the final arrival of ambulances which are now operational in the camp.

Reception and Tracing •

The reception of refugees at Osire Refugee Camp is undertaken by the Refugee Red Cross Branch volunteers who are in constant touch with the authorities. During the period under review, a total of 1,969 new arrivals were attended to. Although the refugees arrived at awkward hours, the Red Cross volunteers and duty officers managed to receive them providing shelter, mattresses and blankets.

Tracing is an on-going activity. In the last five months, the NRCS received a total of 809 Red Cross Messages (RCMs) from the camp community resulting in 56 replies and 71 undelivered messages. The number of RCMs coming from Osire is low. The censoring of messages is done at a rather slow rate by the Namibian Police in the camp.

Water, Sanitation and Shelter •

Water

The geophysical survey of potential borehole sites was completed at the beginning of March. The drilling contractor moved on site at the end of March and the work started in earnest. A total of 37 boreholes were drilled within the record time (two weeks). The average depth of boreholes ranged from 46m to 50m. A total of 31 boreholes were equipped with Afridev hand pumps while the remaining 6 boreholes were reserved for the phase 2 water reticulation expansion. The construction of boreholes in the camp has been supported by the Netherlands, German and Belgian Red Cross Societies. In average, 300 people use one borehole. This current figure does not meet the Sphere standard of 250, but this can be explained by a delay in the confirmation of funds. The watsan project has now sped up and full achievements are expected for August in all areas.

The funds provided for the construction of boreholes also included training of 120 Osire Red Cross Branch volunteers in community based management (CBM) of water supplies. The volunteers are responsible for the installation, care and maintenance of the pumps in the community. The volunteers are also responsible for the construction of sanitary aprons around the water points which are funded by the Belgian Red Cross. The camp is divided into 21 blocks and each block has 10 trained pump minders responsible for 1 hand pump (and in some cases 2 hand pumps). Sanitary aprons on 31 water points have been prepared and 15 laundry areas are ready.

Phase two of the water reticulation expansion started at the beginning of May and work is in progress. Six submersible pumps have been installed in the boreholes which will feed into two 95 cubic metre tanks. The implementation of the project has involved refugees with and without skills as labour. The project is supported by ECHO and requires an extension of two months in order to be completed. As mentioned above, the confirmation of funds was received late and some materials required for the project have to be imported. In order to meet its Plan of Action, the Namibia Red Cross Society has

already ordered the required materials through the Regional Delegation. The Ministry of Finance has been approached to provide import tax exemption, for which the NRCS does not qualify.

Sanitation

The construction of family pit latrines and health education simultaneously gathered momentum with more families participating in the programme. At the beginning of the year, latrine coverage in the camp was below 3%. By May, the camp had improved tremendously to 95 %. Due to the increasing influx, this figure was reduced to 92 % at the end of July with a total of 565 latrines constructed (22 people per family latrine). This is slightly above the Sphere standard of 20.

The Team in the camp has stepped up the campaign to encourage the new arrivals to construct latrines with the assistance of refugee volunteers members of a team of trained latrine builders in the camp. A team of 45 volunteers (refugees) of the Osire Red Cross Branch together with the community have been motivated to construct their family latrines and pass on the skills learnt in construction to other members of the community. Family latrines have become popular in the camp as opposed to communal latrines hence the demand for more material. A total of 500 family latrines have been constructed by the community, however, the programme needs to be expanded as the refugee influx continues to increase every day. In order to increase the latrine coverage in the camp, a contractor was hired to empty and clean the communal latrines. In addition, vector control was successfully implemented with a total of 1,500 houses sprayed. Thirty six rubbish pits were built.

Shelter

Two hundred two tents were distributed and erected from March until June. The total number of tents distributed thus amounted to 700. The tents accommodated 8 people on average. At present, the camp is experiencing a shortage of shelter with the renewed influx from Southern Angola. Some construction material for permanent shelter purchased by UNHCR was distributed by UNHCR and the refugee leadership in Osire Refugee Camp. The construction work is in progress and 83 tents were recovered from the community and immediately distributed to newly arrived people. However, with the number of refugees increasing every day, additional support is required for more permanent shelter construction.

Warehousing/Distribution •

The Camp Red Cross team and the Osire Red Cross Branch undertook their first food distribution on 1 April 2000. Volunteers from Windhoek and Osire have been also active in the distribution.

Monthly rations distributed to the refugee community include maize meal, sugar, vegetable oil, salt, corn/ soya blend (CSB) and sometimes fish as well as non-food items such as toilet paper and sanitary pads for women. The food items give more than 2100 kcal per person thus conforming with the Sphere standards. Further to the distribution of food and non food items, a general distribution of clothes was conducted with a total of 26,000 pieces of clothes and 6,000 pairs of shoes. The clothes were donated by the Danish and Finnish Red Cross Societies. The camp clinic has been provided with clothes too, especially for pregnant women.

The Red Cross Team constructed a distribution point in order to ensure crowd control and proper distribution of all commodities. The NRCS team at Osire overcame the equitable distribution problem by making distribution scoops with the right measures whilst awaiting WFP and UNHCR to provide the standard scoops. New standard scoops have now been provided by UNHCR and will be available in August.

An in-house training course was held on 24 to 29 April at Osire Refugee Camp for the Namibia Red Cross warehouse staff in warehouse management and distribution of food and non food items. The training was conducted by an experienced Red Cross Relief Consultant from Malawi.

Below is a table showing quantities of commodities distributed since NRCS took over food distribution.

Commodities	April	May	June	July
Maize Meal (kgs)	98,793	115,329	115,329	125,870
Sugar (kgs)	5,458.8	6,534	6,534	1,522
Beans (kgs)	18,327.2	16,450	16,450	16,601.5
Corn Soya Blend (CSB) (kgs)	12,483.5	15,947	15,947	13,960
Vegetable Oil (lts)	7,500	8,613.6	8,221	8,516
Salt (kgs)			1,691	976.5

The only non food item distributed was soap (9,717 bars) in the month of June.

The distribution of salt and sugar for July was underscoped, due to the inadequacy of the scoops made by the Distribution Team for handling the items which had become slightly damp in the warehouse. Standard scoops are now in place for the next distribution. The low quantity in July is also resulting from the decision that refugees receiving incentives should not continue receiving food rations. They still receive non-food items when available.

Health •

The health intervention activities are well established in the camp. The Red Cross is responsible for preventive/public health and the Ministry of Health (MoH) for curative health. The two parties co-operate closely in order to ensure the maximum benefit.

The Red Cross Community Health Promoters (CHP) continue to give health education, mainly in personal and environmental hygiene, and to identify people in the community in need of health services. The team is well motivated and indicators (e.g. reduction of diseases such as diarrhoea) are showing that there has been an impact on the overall health situation in the camp. The compounds cleaning drive represents a very good sign of the willingness of refugees to accept the health education

	Under 5	Disease	5 years and over
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)	152	Upper respiratory tract infections (URTI)	177
Diarrhoeal Disease	101	Other gastro intestinal/endocrine	121
ENT & mouth	24	ENT & mouth	87
Skin infections	28	Musculo-skeletal	119
Other gastro intestinal/endocrine	36	Other Respiratory	-
Total revisits		Total revisits	34
Total New visits	413	Total New visits	857

messages. However, there is a need for continuous encouragement of behavioural changes since 10% of the camp population has never used latrines before. In the first three weeks of July alone, 210 sessions were held on health environmental issues targeting 3,782 individuals.

The CHPs are divided according to the number of blocks in the camp and in some cases 2 or more promoters work on a block. The CHPs are responsible for communicating health education messages. In the past few months, the CHPs work was centred on sanitation, camp environment and encouraging the use of latrines in general. The CHPs meet weekly to review progress and problems and discuss disease trends and weekly objectives.

Below is a table showing the top 5 diseases recorded during July:

A change in the disease pattern was caused by the cold winter in the last few months and general living conditions of the refugees. Clinic data reveal that upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) were on the increase during May and June, ranking number 1 in both age groups (under and above 5). The NRCS team at Osire did intervene through health education and distribution of winter clothes. Fortunately, in July, the number of cases of URTI decreased from 302 to 152. The number of diarrhoea cases has also decreased from 234 in June to 100. This means that the health education messages and distribution of oral rehydration salt (ORS) begin to show effect. Only the number of musculo-skeletal cases increased as a result of the bad health condition of the new arrivals.

The screening of new arrivals is also being taken very seriously as people come from different areas and thus may import different diseases. A subgroup of 8 CHPs has been selected to do the screening. Despite distribution of ORS, diarrhoea still remains the number 2 cause of morbidity amongst children under the age of five. An extensive campaign is being planned to educate the camp community on good hygiene practices.

Two cases of measles were detected and confirmed in the camp while another two cases among children above the age of 5 were not confirmed. The Red Cross Health Team in Osire, together with the Ministry of Health of Otjiwarongo district, carried out a massive campaign to combat the threat of an outbreak of measles in the camp by immunisation of children under the age of 5. A total of 3,800 children under the age of 5 were immunised hence, the Expanded Immunisation Coverage (EPI) was 100%. The volunteers were involved in checking the cards for immunisation status and referral to the clinic.

In the area of reproductive health, an information/dissemination campaign is now ongoing in order to include more women in the programme. Family planning figures show that pills have been given to 100 and injectables to 86 women in the last five months.

A nutrition survey was conducted by the Red Cross Health Team. The results of the survey showed a global malnutrition rate at 8.2%, severe acute malnutrition was 1.6% and moderate malnutrition was 6.6%. Though the global malnutrition rate was within the refugee acceptable levels, there was a need for stringent measures to reduce the mortality caused by severe malnutrition at the camp. Therefore, a supplementary feeding programme was initiated to include a wet feeding ration for the severely malnourished children and dry rations for the moderately malnourished. Criteria for admission and discharge have been developed according to WFP standards. The wet feeding programme commenced with 79 malnourished children, out of which, 7 are acute and 72 are moderate. The number of beneficiary children increased to 84 in June when 7 were discharged having sufficiently increased their body weight. Children in the camp are routinely weighed once a month by CHPs. All who weigh less than 80 % of the expected body weight, are referred to the Feeding Centre. The Feeding Centre is managed by trained Red Cross volunteers supervised by the Health Co-ordinator.

In June, the mortality rate for the under 5 was 0.13/d/10000 while the general crude mortality rate was 0.12/d/10000. These figures are within the acceptable level of the Sphere standards.

During the month of June, ante natal care increased to 51 from 34 in May. The total number of deliveries increased to 19. This is a tremendous workload for two staff nurses.

A health sector co-ordinating meeting was held between the Ministry of Health, UNHCR, the Red Cross Health Team and the NRCS Secretary General. The health facilities in the camp continue to be overloaded with new refugees arriving in poor health on daily basis. There is a need for a Field hospital to be established since the population has increased threefold with only the government nurses there to handle the situation. The extension of the clinic is complete and the clinic is operational and the long awaited ambulance finally reached the camp.

Outstanding needs

While the first appeal is, in principle, fully covered, a large portion of the recorded contributions is based on a valuable British Red Cross in-kind donation of tents (a value of CHF 1.1 million). Without this contribution, the appeal coverage falls under 60%, and further cash is therefore urgently needed to implement the full range of planned activities.

The need for shelter cannot be overemphasised due to the ever increasing number of new arrivals in the camp. Support for this activity is urgently required. At the same time, sanitation facilities need to be provided and expanded, requiring additional cash and in-kind resources such as a field hospital, clothes, shoes and sanplats for easy construction of family latrines.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Embassies in Windhoek are kept in constant contact with the NRCS, in many cases through their respective PNSs. Regular meetings are held with the Government and UNHCR, and co-ordination meetings at field level have been instituted in order to ensure the smooth running of the operation, to avoid duplication of efforts and to promote sharing of available resources.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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NAMIBIA - ANGOLAN REFUGEES						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 36/99		PLEDGES RECEIVED			08/08/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL----->				2,128,000	01/01/99	126.26%
BELGIUM - GOVT/RC		150,899	EUR	237,289	04/26/00	WATSAN PROJECT
ICELAND - RC		2,000,000	ISK	4,366	01/12/00	
GERMANY - GOVT/RC		92,000	DEM	73,959	02/22/00	WATSAN PROJECT
GERMANY - RC		40,000	DEM	32,156	03/27/00	WATSAN PROJECT
FINLAND - RC		50,456	EUR	80,674	01/17/00	
MONACO - RC		50,000	FRF	12,290	12/30/99	
NETHERLANDS - RC		294,000	NLG	213,103	01/19/00	
SWEDEN - GOVT		400,000	SEK	74,360	01/13/00	
UNITED STATES - RC		35,000	USD	55,720	01/28/00	
UNITED STATES - GOVT. (PRM)		300,000	USD	472,200	03/15/00	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,256,117	CHF	59.03%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCL. PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
BELGIUM - GOVT/RC		6,087,250	BEF	234,797	10.07.00	CONSTRUCTION OF 13 BOREHOLES, 112 LATRINES
BRITISH - GOVT				1,125,000	01/10/00	TENTS
DENMARK - GOVT		248,466	DKK	51,000	01/11/00	for clothes, shoes, blankets, cholera kits
Finland	Delegate(s)			14,948	06/15/00	Year 2000
SWEDISH - RC		26,352	SEK	4,946	24.07.00	366 BALES OF SECOND HAND CLOTHE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				1,430,691	CHF	67.23%