

# ***BENIN/GHANA/TOGO Health, Relief & Rehabilitation***

*14 October 1996*

*appeal no. 01.09/96*

*situation report no. 1*

*period covered: July - September 1996*

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*The repatriation of the Togolese refugees in Ghana and Benin has finally started and gains momentum especially in Ghana, mainly due to the cut in food aid and the timing. The focus of the Federation's assistance to operations in Ghana, Benin and Togo is beginning the shift from relief to development. All three National Societies have assumed responsibility for management and negotiations of operations, which are co-ordinated and supervised by the Regional Delegation in Abidjan or the Federation representative in Accra.*

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## ***The context***

The political crisis in Togo during the years 1993 and 1994 caused 120,000 refugees in Ghana, 100,000 in Benin and 100,000 displaced people in Togo itself. The three National Societies assisted the refugees with food aid, medical services, non-food items and management of the operations in their respective countries. While the situation calmed down considerably in Togo during 1995, some 25,000 refugees from Ghana fled from the ethnic conflict in the Northern region into the Central region of Togo. Early 1996 10,000 of them returned to Ghana, where they are part of a rehabilitation programme in the Ho district. In all three countries the National Societies are working in close co-operation with UN agencies, especially UNHCR and WFP, and with national and international NGOs. The Red Cross societies are in charge of management and distribution in all operations.

## ***Latest events***

The situation of the refugees originally covered by this appeal changed during the reporting period. UNHCR and Ghana Red Cross were confronted with the needs of returning Ghanaians from Togo, the situation of the Ghanaian refugees in Togo improved through rehabilitation, and in Benin food aid to Togolese refugees was suspended.

The structure of the Federation's delegations also changed. In Ghana and Togo the national Red Cross Societies are in charge, co-ordinated by the Federation's representative in Accra, while in Benin the National Relief Co-ordinator of the Benin Red Cross Society has replaced an ex-patriate delegate.

**Ghana •**

Since October 1995 almost 21,000 people have voluntarily left Ghana for their countries of origin. WFP, the supplier of food to the refugees, stopped delivery to Klikor camp (12,300 people) in order to reinforce UNHCR's policy of repatriation. Consequently the number of refugees in Klikor camp is also slowly decreasing.

GRCS assists Ghanaian returnees from Togo in six villages in the Ho district where the focus is on health education and sanitation. DANIDA offered to cover 90 per cent of the costs of KVIP toilets in these villages, if the communities could contribute the remaining 10 per cent.

#### **Togo •**

The focus of the assistance provided to 10,000 Ghanaian refugees in Northern Togo is on rehabilitation through training and provision of seed money for small businesses. In addition, all refugees receive food aid until they are self sufficient. Projects are carried out in co-operation with UNHCR, WFP and local government authorities.

The main events during the reporting period were the distribution of long awaited food aid and a feasibility study on income generating activities. The study highlighted the positive impact of the rehabilitation programme on the living conditions of all refugees and recommended a different approach to the repayment of loans. These findings are still to be accepted by Togolese Red Cross, UNHCR and the refugee committees.

Two five-day training courses were organised for management committees of the refugees, covering "How to choose and manage activities so as to enhance profitability". A total of 38 people were trained, including six from the local social welfare department.

#### **Benin •**

Food aid for the Togolese refugees in Benin (1,085 in Porto Novo, 7,930 in Cotonou and Comé) was suspended from the end of June. The refugees had been instructed by UNHCR that from July onwards they were expected to return to Togo, as their safety has been guaranteed by the Togolese government. Only in Comé, where 238 Togolese share the camp with 760 Ogonis from Nigeria, the end of the distribution caused uneasiness as the Ogonis are fully supported, whereas the Togolese only benefit from medical services and some assistance with household items.

The Togolese who decide on voluntary repatriation receive three times the normal monthly food distribution of rice, beans and vegetable oil, and 35,000 FCFA (CHF 85 CHF) per person. Reports from the two camps and the number of patients seen at the medical centres in Porto Novo and Cotonou do not indicate that substantial numbers are taking up the offer. A new assessment is scheduled for November.

Security at the Cotonou camp has been threatened by clandestine "refugees" as well as the slackening of security services provided by the government. The Benin Red Cross Society (CRBS) is presently trying to find a solution with UNHCR as the intermediary to the government.

The status of the Ogonis is still being negotiated between UNHCR and the Benin government. UNHCR aims to upgrade their status to that of refugees.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

#### **Ghana •**

According to statistics of the UNHCR office in Lomé, a total of 10,807 refugees returned to Togo in July and August. GRCS assisted in providing food packages to them on the agreed ratio of 18 kg of maize, 2.35 kg of beans and 1.35 kg of vegetable oil per person. Although WFP had cut their supplies, GRCS managed out of remaining stocks to provide for to the returnees. No more food packages will be available after October 1996. A total of 16.725 mt of maize and 1.225 mt of vegetable oil were distributed to 929 returnees in July and August.

GRCS volunteers continue with education in health and sanitation as well as with camp cleanup campaigns for the 12,300 registered refugees in Klikor. A complete rehabilitation of the sanitary structures was finished in July.

The GRCS also assists Ghanaian returnees from Togo in six villages in the Ho district. In co-operation with the local Ministry of Health, GRCS conducts education programmes on health, sanitation and mother and child care.

The communities are in the process of raising funds for KVIP toilets: if they contribute 10 per cent of the total cost, DANIDA will cover the remaining 90 per cent. GRCS is actively supporting the villages in raising funds.

A 5-day training workshop on disaster needs assessment for the GRCS institutional development took place in Ho from 8 to 12 July, attended by 46 GRCS staff. A follow-up workshop is planned for the end of this year.

The GRCS national Co-ordinator for the relief operation for the Togolese refugees attended a disaster management course at the Disaster Preparedness Centre of the Cranfield University in England during the period.

**Togo •**

Togolese Red Cross (CRTS) is the implementing agency for the rehabilitation and assistance programme to Ghanaian refugees in the Northern part of central Togo.

After long months of scarcity caused by an interruption of WFP stocks, CRTS restarted distributions in July, reaching 9,598 refugees. The full complement of 10,221 could only be reached in August as heavy rains in July prevented a group of refugees from reaching the distribution points.

<b>Food Aid</b>	<b>Amount per person per month (kg)</b>	<b>Total (MT)</b>
Rice	9	216.8
Beans	1.2	29.233
Vegetable oil	0.75	18.042
Sugar		1.1
Salt		3.636
<b>Non Food (Soap)</b>		19,373 bars

Some 255 women in 14 villages benefit from a small loan scheme which permits them to start income generating activities. Each project receives CFA 20,000. A study has shown that the income from these small projects is often used to cover more needs of the families than foreseen by UNHCR. As these are essential needs, profit and sometimes even capital is used to meet them. CRTS has been negotiating a lower rate of repayment of the loans to UNHCR.

Members of the management committees for income-generating activities recently took part in training sessions in income generating activities, book-keeping and management.

**Benin •**

Benin Red Cross manages a camp with 238 Togolese refugees and 760 asylum seekers from Nigeria in Comé, and another with 370 Togolese residents in Cotonou 5, as well as providing medical care for 1,085 refugees in Porto Novo and 7,560 in Cotonou.

During the period the following items were distributed:

<b>Food aid</b>	<b>Amount per person per month</b>	<b>Total (MT)</b>
Rice	2	7.36
Manioc flour	6	8.9
Beans	1.2	2.65
Salt	0.15	0.162
Fish	1.2	1.79
Sugar	0.5	1.09
Tomatoes	0.4	0.55
Milk *	0.4	0.06
Millet flour	4	7.44
Soya	2	4.43
Vegetable Oil	0.9	2.22
Onions		0.21
Spices		0.03
<b>Non food</b>		
Soap		1.50
Charcoal		39.15

\* Milk is only given to children, pregnant and lactating women, ill and elderly persons.

Most of the food items are bought locally with funds raised by a consortium of NGOs called PARTENAC (Partenaires en Action) from embassies and NGOs in Benin. These funds - CHF 122,000 since April 1996 - are channelled through UNHCR. Catholic Relief Services provided some flour.

During the period 16,197 patients came to medical centres in Comé and Porto Novo and to the dispensary in Comé camp. Some 60 % of cases were registered in Cotonou, where maternity care is available. A total of 479 people had to be transferred for specialist care. Malaria is the predominant disease (38% of all cases), followed by respiratory diseases (8%). One in ten patients suffers from sexually transmissible diseases, which is a great concern to Benin Red Cross. A plan is being elaborated at present to address the need for special care and preventive measures.

### ***Outstanding needs***

No outstanding needs for Ghana. Togo needs additional funding for new logistics expenditure (CHF 25,000), while Benin needs CHF 33,000 for additional expenditure in rehabilitation and institutional development.

Due to a larger number of returnees than anticipated in the Appeal, and the consequent lessening in the number of expatriate staff needed, the amount of funds needed has also dropped.

### ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

In all three countries external relations with the government, local authorities, UN organisations, especially UNHCR and WFP, and other NGOs have not changed during the reporting period.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

The repatriation of Togolese refugees in Ghana and Benin has finally started and gains momentum: While in Benin the number of remaining Togolese refugees is around 500, no such figures have yet been issued in Ghana. In Benin, a rehabilitation programme comprising training and seed money for the setting up of small projects is already planned. CRBS will be involved in this final chapter of the refugee operation, which will last well into 1997. Some 10,250 Ghanaian refugees will remain in Togo.

Over 200 female family heads are undergoing a successful programme of rehabilitation aimed at self sufficiency. This programme is designed for all heads of families and will last till at least 1997.

All three National Societies have resumed responsibility for management and negotiations in these operations, which are only co-ordinated and supervised by either the Regional Delegation in Abidjan or the Federation's representative in Accra. The focus of the Federation's assistance to the operations will shift from relief to development of the structures directly involved in the operation as well as the supervisory and co-ordinating bodies of the National Societies.

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