

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: EBOLA EPIDEMIC

18 November 2003

Information Bulletin N° 2/03

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: NA

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 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Appeal.

The Situation

The current Ebola outbreak which dates back to 13 October 2003 in Mbanza village - 18 kilometres from Mbomo, the former epidemic epicentre - is now officially confirmed by the Congolese Ministry of Health. According to the UN News Centre (17 November), the Congolese Ministry of Health reported one laboratory-confirmed case and ten epidemiologically linked cases, all of them fatal, in Mbomo district in Cuvette Ouest Department; this is according to laboratory testing carried by the *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement* (IRD) and the *Centre International de Recherche Médicales de Franceville* (CIRMF), Gabon partners in the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN).

These results have also been confirmed in the Inter-Agency meeting (acting as the Crisis or Coordination Team) held on Friday, 14 November in Brazzaville, in which the Federation participated. The epidemic toll is as follows:

- Number of total cases: 11;
- Number of total death cases: 11, nine in Mbomo and two in Mbanza
- Number of contact subjects in the district of Mbomo: 14 in Mbanza, two in Oloba and 73 in Mbomo); another contact subject (who fled from Mbomo) was found in Owo.

A contingency plan was worked out by the Government and submitted to partners for analysis, comments and proposals; the plan's content will be discussed during the next Inter-Agency meeting scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 18 November 2003.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

During the Inter-Agency Committee meeting at the Ministry of Health, which coordinates the committee and the upcoming operation, the Red Cross action was underlined by all the partners.

In the field, Red Cross volunteers continue sensitizing the population. The 124 volunteers trained during previous outbreaks are using the materials (radio, bicycles, boots, aprons, megaphones, etc) at their disposal and the techniques against the epidemic to mobilize and draw the population's attention to the risk of catching the disease and the importance of observing preventive measures.

Access to Mbanza by car is extremely difficult (more accessible from Gabon than from the Republic of Congo); however, volunteers walk to reach remote parts of the district. They expect more support from the national society headquarters, the Federation and other partners for a more responsive action: the epidemic is almost spreading all over the district.

Needs

As stated in the previous Information Bulletin – number 1/03 issued 11 November 2003 - the outstanding needs include:

- Deployment of a resource person and volunteers at the affected areas to update data and assess the very human, material and training needs of the Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi Red Cross committee members;
- Production of sensitization materials;
- Production of the volunteers' manual on Ebola Virus Hemorrhagic Fever;
- Provide the committees with protection materials, disinfectants and IEC (Information, Education and Communication) materials;
- Organization of refresher course for former volunteers (already 38 volunteers have been trained in Mbomo, 40 in Kelle, and 48 in Etoumbi) and training of new ones; and,
- Motivation of volunteers.

For a full description of the national society profile, please refer to the country-specific Federation web page for the Republic of Congo: [Click here](#) or refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=184>

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's [Annual Appeal no. 01.42/2003, Republic of Congo](#).