

CAMEROON: CHOLERA EPIDEMIC

1996

29 August

Information Bulletin No. 2

The disaster

The cholera epidemic which broke out in neighbouring Chad at the beginning of June is now affecting the two northern provinces of Cameroon. Most of the inhabitants of this heavily populated region, which is in the Sahel desert zone, are farmers and stockbreeders.

The first signs of the epidemic were noted at the end of June in the area of Lake Chad and along the Chari River in the Far North province. The disease gradually spread to the major towns and is now also affecting the North province.

The situation as at 22 August in the Far North province was as follows:

Region	Number of cases	Deaths
Fotokol	147	13
Blangoua	38	6
Kolofata	24	4
Kousseri	224	21
Logone-Birni	47	2
Maltam	9	5
Mora	274	20
Total	715	71

These figures are from official sources; many cases have not been declared.

In the country's North province 800 cases have been declared, causing over 80 deaths. The worst affected towns are Bibemi, Pitoa and the town and rural area of Garoua.

Very poor hygiene in overcrowded living conditions and a lack of safe drinking water are largely responsible for the spread of the epidemic.

Government Action

The Government has already sent consignments of medicine to the North, enabling the local medical structures in the region to become operational.

Cameroon Red Cross / Federation Action

The Cameroon Red Cross is currently focusing its action on prevention and awareness campaigns for the general public, using its regular volunteer and first-aid teams. Leaflets have been prepared and distributed to the local population. The existing teams are being reinforced and additional teams are to be set up.

The Federation's Regional Delegation in Brazzaville has dispatched a medical delegate who will assist the Cameroon Red Cross in responding to the situation and co-ordinate Federation support.

Needs to be Met

The Cameroon Red Cross is also gearing its action to curative work. For this purpose, it urgently needs medical supplies (volunteers kits and medical kits).

A sum of CHF 25,000 will be allocated from the DREF to assist the National Society in continuing its operation. We ask sister Societies to provide support by covering the amount being advanced from the DREF and by meeting the purchase and transport costs of two complete cholera kits.

Other activities related to the supply of safe drinking water and the construction and protection of wells and latrines could be envisaged at a later stage.

The National Society is facing logistics problems as it intends to cover certain remote areas in the two provinces. Solutions are under consideration.

Budget (see attachment)

Conclusion

We would like to count on your quick response so that the Cameroon Red Cross can continue to assist the population affected by this epidemic and participate in bringing it under control.

Richard Hunlédé
Desk Officer
Africa Department

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department