

LIBERIA: PARTIAL EVACUATION OF FEDERATION TEAM

*Information Bulletin no. 2
10 April 1996*

Latest events

Over the Easter weekend (6-7 April), following the sacking from Liberia's ruling council of state of warlord Roosevelt Johnson, intense fighting erupted among rival factions in the capital, Monrovia. Early this morning (10 April), occasional shooting was still being heard from different directions, despite the reaching of a ceasefire agreement last night by the factions involved.

Tens of people were injured or killed in the gun battles, though the ceasefire appears to have eased tensions slightly. There are reports that some of the hostages taken over the weekend by the rival militias have been released, including some ECOMOG soldiers. The ECOMOG West African peacekeeping force is operating in cooperation with government troops and reportedly has recaptured the capital's airport. Nevertheless, the US Embassy is continuing to evacuate its nationals.

Meanwhile, the influx of people into the Mamba Point area has grown. About 15,000 people are now estimated to be gathered at Greystone, close to the US Embassy, and this spontaneous camp is without all kinds of emergency facilities. Around and within the camp, small markets have sprung up selling what little food is available at rocketing prices.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The National Society has established, under the supervision of the Federation, two first-aid stations in the Greystone area. Yesterday (9 April), 755 patients were treated there, 25 of whom were transferred to an improvised clinic at the ICRC offices. Most of the treatment provided by the Red Cross volunteers was for diarrhoea, malaria and of wounded and injured people, using medicaments also provided by the ICRC. These first-aid stations will operate on a 24-hour basis. To try to improve the sanitation and therefore health conditions at Mamba Point, tools have been collected from neighbouring houses to dig new latrines.

Three Federation delegates were evacuated today from Monrovia to Freetown, where accommodation has already been prepared by the Sierra Leone delegation. However, the Head of Delegation as well as the relief delegate will remain in Monrovia to monitor the situation and work with the Liberian Red Cross Society. According to the Head of Delegation, water may become a serious problem for the delegation if the situation in the capital deteriorates again. For the time being, the delegates have food and water for two days and diesel for seven days.

Richard Hunlédé,
Desk Officer, Africa Department

Bekele Geleta,
Director, Africa Department