

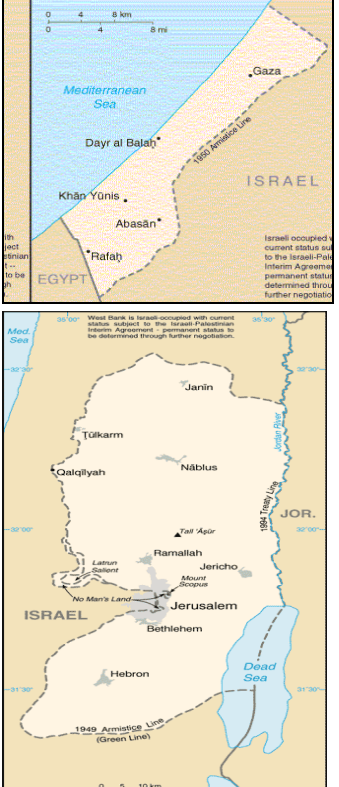


Health Action in Crises (WHO/HAC) Highlights - No 22: Monday, 16 August 2004

The WHO/HQ Department for Health Action in Crises aims to produce a running note on select current issues at weekly intervals. This note—which is by no means exhaustive—is designed for internal use and does not reflect the official position of WHO.

SUDAN	DARFUR CRISIS
 <p>A map of Sudan showing its geographical location and major cities. The map includes labels for neighboring countries: LIBYA, EGYPT, CHAD, C.A.R., DEM. REP. OF THE CONGO, UGANDA, KENYA, ETHIOPIA, and SAUDI ARABIA. Major cities in Sudan are marked, including Khartoum, Omdurman, Wad Madani, Al Fashir, Nyala, Waw, Juba, Nimule, Kinyeti, Al Qadafi, Kasala, Albara, Port Sudan, Sawakin, Wadi Halfa, and Halab. The Nile River and Red Sea are also shown. A scale bar indicates 0, 100, and 200 miles.</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hepatitis E is now among the major health concerns in Darfur. Between 22 May and 30 July 2004, a total of 625 cases and 22 deaths from acute jaundice syndrome were reported from health clinics in Darfur. Cases were identified through the early warning alert and response system (EWAR). Hepatitis E virus was confirmed by ELISA in 23 samples tested at the NAMRU3 laboratory in Cairo, Egypt.• A scaling up of all water and sanitation interventions is underway by UN agencies, NGOs, and partners in response to the Hepatitis E outbreak.• Following an agreement with a UN team in Asmara, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) will allow the vaccination against polio and measles of thousands of children who have been cut-off from regular health services.• There are continued reports of sexual abuse and exploitation of IDPs. Particularly vulnerable are women seeking firewood. Agencies are looking to identify alternative sources for fuel as part of their efforts to address the issue. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following the outbreak of Hepatitis E in West and South Darfur, WHO's response includes ongoing support to health and hygiene promoters in all camps through active case finding, provision of health messages, chlorination of water at the household level, and improving water and sanitation facilities. These activities are being carried out in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF, and other partners.• Following the agreement between the UN and SLA/JEM leaders in Asmara, WHO and partners are preparing for a synchronized 3-5 day polio sub-NIDS campaign in late August. This will be followed by a 7-10 day measles vaccination campaign (with Vitamin A supplementation) in SLA-controlled areas in September.• The WHO-supported oral cholera vaccination campaign in Kalma camp is complete; 43,000 of the camp's 48,000 inhabitants were vaccinated. Planning is underway for an oral cholera vaccination campaign in Mussei camp, scheduled to start 17 August.• In South Darfur, the WHO assessment of the ongoing rehabilitation of Nyala General Hospital revealed inadequate water supplies and the need for an improved electrical system to permit adequate treatment of emergency cases.• With the support of WHO, a team of nine epidemiologists departed to the Darfur to begin data collection for a survey that will provide more precise data on current IDP mortality rates.• WHO has now opened a sub-office in Abeche, Chad, and—in collaboration with UN agencies, NGOs, and other partners—initiated inter-country coordinated activities for Sudanese refugees in Chad and displaced people within Darfur. The current emphases are on (a) epidemiology and control of acute jaundice syndrome with fever in Chad (b) responding to the cholera epidemic in central Chad and preventing its further spread to refugee and host communities.• Funding for WHO humanitarian operations in Darfur has been provided by African Development Bank (AfDB), USAID, UK's Department for International Development (DfID), and the governments of Netherlands, Italy, US and Norway.

<p>IRAQ</p> 	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Health has requested assistance in responding to the increased number of injuries resulting from continued violence in Iraq. • Preparations for the Soil-Transmitted Helminiasis and Schistosomiasis Survey, to be conducted in September, are ongoing. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the MOH request for help in responding to violence-induced injuries, WHO procured and delivered to Baghdad emergency medical supplies, predominately I.V. fluid. WHO has also arranged for the emergency procurement of 1,000 doses of anti-diphtheria serum. • WHO is supporting training activities for the Soil Transmitted Helminiasis and Schistosomiasis Survey. • Forty kits for entomological surveillance for the control of malaria and leishmaniasis are being procured by WHO. These kits are worth US\$ 25,000. • WHO reviewed and approved training proposals in preparation for communicable disease training workshops to be carried out in different governorates in Iraq. Workshops will cover Hepatitis, HIV and communicable disease surveillance. WHO is providing technical and logistical support. • WHO supported 30 Iraqi doctors in attending the 21st Annual Conference of the Arab Medical Union in Europe, which took place in Istanbul from 6-12 August. • Current WHO humanitarian actions in Iraq are made possible through funding by the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and UNDG.
<p>WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP</p> 	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Palestinian Ministry of Health released its report on health status in Palestine during 2003. • The urgent need for vector control in Rafah was highlighted at an emergency health group meeting coordinated by the Ministry of Health and WHO. OCHA—in conjunction with the municipality of Rafah—will oversee all activities related to this issue. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From 3-11 August, four Community Mental Health trainers from the UK provided in-service training to staff from Bethlehem Psychiatric Hospital, Ramallah Community Mental Health Centre, and Hebron Community Mental Health Centre. This initiative is part of the long-term Community Mental Health training plan currently being implemented by WHO in conjunction with the MoH. • Health Inform—an initiative of WHO, the Italian Cooperation and USAID—issued its monthly newsletter (No. 51, 1 August 2004). The issue features reports on the situation in Beit Hanoun and the measles vaccination campaign, and highlights from the MOH report on health status in Palestine during 2003, among other items. More information: www.healthinform.org. • Current WHO humanitarian actions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been made possible by 2004 funding from USAID and AGFUND, as well as pre-2004 funding from ECHO and the Government of Norway.
<p>FLOODS - BANGLADESH</p>	<p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirty-nine of the country's 64 districts and 30 million of its 144 million people have been affected by abnormally severe monsoon floods. • Although waters are receding in many parts of Bangladesh, Government data underlines the continued severity of the situation, with more than 600 people dead and over 1.6 million people housed in temporary shelters. • Flood-affected populations are facing acute shortages of drinking water and sanitation facilities. Broken sewage systems and contaminated drinking water

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supply systems heighten the probability of water-borne diseases, as evidenced by the steady increase in diarrhoeal cases since the onset of the flooding.

- As of 14 August, a total of 163,833 cases with 76 deaths from diarrhoea were recorded in flood-affected districts. The numbers of new cases of diarrhoea and other communicable diseases are increasing in districts where floodwaters are receding. (Source: WHO and OCHA)

Actions:

- WHO continues to support national authorities in responding to the situation in affected areas. WHO has provided medicines, supplies, and technical and logistical support. An in-house flood crisis management team is operative in the WHO Bangladesh office. The team monitors the situation closely, identifying gaps and adopting preparedness measures to respond to urgent requests. District Medical Surveillance Officers from WHO/Bangladesh also assist District Civil Surgeons in surveillance and reporting.
- At the request of the Government of Bangladesh, a UN Flash Appeal for responding to floods was launched on 12 August in Dhaka. WHO—in conjunction with the Government and implementing partners UNICEF and UNFPA—launched the health and nutrition component of the Appeal. The total sum requested for health and nutrition was US\$ 34.8 million.
- The WHO component of the Flash Appeal stands at US\$ 11.6 million. Donations will be used for the urgent supply of essential medicines and drugs, health education, medical equipment and replacement of damaged evacuating assets.
- In order to bring the Flash Appeal for the floods in Bangladesh to the attention of the humanitarian community in Geneva, a donor meeting is foreseen shortly, date to be confirmed. WHO will participate.
- The Office of WHO Director-General has matched the contribution of the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office to assist in the immediate response to the floods in Bangladesh. Additional funds are urgently needed.

UGANDA



Events:

- According to the most recent estimates by OCHA in Kampala, the total number of people affected by the humanitarian crisis in Northern Uganda is more than 1.8 million. UNICEF reports that 1.6 million of these are internally displaced women and children.
- There has been a marked increase in malaria prevalence, specifically in conflict-affected areas. Most malaria victims are children. Lack of access to adequate food, the dire water supply and sanitation situation in IDP camps, and exposure to harsh environmental conditions (e.g., as experienced by night commuters) are key factors. Pneumonia is also increasingly common among vulnerable groups.
- The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate for northern Uganda continues to rise, in some areas tripling the national average of 4.1%.
- Preparations are underway for an OCHA Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division mission to Northern Uganda and Kampala from 29 August to 2 September to meet with actors on the ground.

Actions:

- On 27 July, WHO participated in the Northern Uganda IDP Health Technical Support Meeting together with UNICEF and local health authorities. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain a deeper understanding of gaps in health care for IDPs, with a view of devising means to improve the situation. Key gaps discussed during the meeting include:
 - *Sanitation:* inadequate latrines; no health education; need for culturally specific sensitization to overcome rejection of latrines.
 - *Water:* broken bore holes; not enough water containers; some health units without any water supply.
 - *Disease surveillance:* lack of ICT support for surveillance system; lack of case definitions and educational materials; inadequate capacity for collecting and transferring data.
 - *Health workers:* lack of trained health workers in IDP camps;

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Reproductive health</i>: delivery kits not available; skilled personnel lacking; maternity units not functioning; family planning not available. ➤ <i>HIV</i>: overall lack of <i>prevention</i> activities; sexual violence; PEP services missing; condoms not available outside of health centres. ➤ <i>Immunization</i>: insufficient funding causing major setbacks; lack of equipment; child health cards needed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mission comprised of WHO representatives from the Regional Office for Africa and Health Action in Crises/HQ to further assess the health situation of IDP camps in Northern Uganda and advance intervention strategies is being planned.
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INTER-AGENCY INITIATIVES

- **Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP).** The next CAP sub-working group meeting will take place in Geneva on 17 August to discuss preparations for the 2005 CAP. WHO is a member of the sub-working group and will participate.
- **IASC Weekly.** Preparations are underway for the 18 August IASC weekly meeting in Geneva. WHO plans to participate.
- **Observance of anniversary of the Baghdad UN Headquarters Bombing.** A ceremony to observe the first anniversary of the bombing of the United Nations Headquarters in Baghdad will take place in Geneva in the presence of the UN Secretary-General on 19 August. The Representative of the WHO Director-General for Health Action in Crises will attend.
- **Nepal.** WHO will participate in the forthcoming Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Natural Disasters Pilot Project to Nepal from 18-22 August. WHO contributed US\$5,000 towards the overall costs of the Pilot Project.
- **Natural Disasters.** WHO is providing inputs to the UN Secretary-General's Report "International Cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance in the Field of Natural Disasters; from Relief to Development".
- **Preparedness.** The next meeting of the IASC Task Force on Preparedness and Contingency Planning is scheduled for 24-25 August in Florence, Italy (dates and venue to be confirmed). WHO is a member of this IASC TF and will participate.
- **Central African Republic.** WHO responded positively to OCHA's request for human resources for 2005 CAP assistance (to be confirmed) in the Central African Republic.
- **Sudan.**
 - The OCHA real-time evaluation of humanitarian response to the Darfur Crisis is expected to start in early September. WHO pledged US\$10,000 to support the process and will participate in the core learning group.
 - Representative of the WHO Director-General for Health Action in Crises plans to participate in the 17 August meeting of the IASC Task Force on Darfur. Items to be discussed include remaining needs for 2004, sectoral coordination, real-time evaluation and staffing constraints.

Please send any comments and corrections to kollert@who.int.

MAP DISCLAIMER: *The presentation of material on the maps contained herein does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or areas or of its authorities, or concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries. Map source: Perry Castaneda Library Map Collection, University of Texas at Austin.*

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