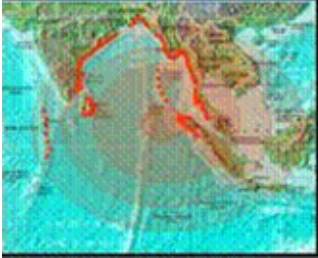




Health Action in Crises (WHO/HAC) Highlights - No 42: Monday, 17 January 2005

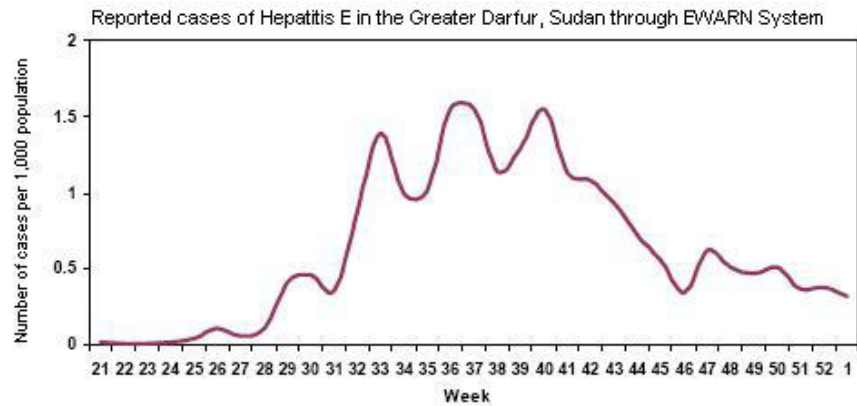
The WHO/HQ Department for Health Action in Crises aims to produce a running note on select current issues at weekly intervals. This note—which is by no means exhaustive—is designed for internal use and does not reflect the official position of WHO.

<p>SOUTH-EAST ASIA TSUNAMI CRISIS</p>  	<p>Assessments and events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key areas of concern are now emerging from the ongoing assessments in the wake of the 26 December 2004 Tsunami and Earthquake crisis. These include disease surveillance and response, dealing with injury-related conditions, access to safe drinking water, mental health and health system recovery,. • WHO's scope of work across the region remains to coordinate health relief effort, strengthen disease surveillance and provide technical assistance to rebuild the damaged public health network. • WHO is appealing for USD 67 million to meet the acute health relief effort and revitalize public health functions over the next six months. • The role of WHO and other UN agencies is to assist national and local authorities in their work to help affected people and rebuild damaged communities and systems. <p>For up-to-date information on WHO interventions in crisis-affected areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General WHO Tsunami Web site (updated daily) http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/asia_tsunami/en/ • Situation Report 19 (covering 16 January) http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/asia_tsunami/sitrep/19/en/ <p>For information on WHO financial requirements for the response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Flash Appeal: Summary of WHO Requirements http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/asia_tsunami/appeal/requirements/en/ • UN Flash Appeal: Tables of WHO Projects http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/asia_tsunami/appeal/projects/en/ <p>For an overview of WHO's strategy in crisis-affected areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting health following the Asian Tsunami http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/asia_tsunami/key_objectives/en/ • Presentation on WHO's response as of 6 January [pdf 3.57Mb] http://www.who.int/entity/hac/crises/international/asia_tsunami/en/nabarrob_040105.pdf
<p>SUDAN</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">- Darfur Crisis -</p> <p>Assessments and events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Immunization Days for Polio were launched on 10 January at an official ceremony in Nyala, which was attended by local administration and UN authorities. The campaign was extended from 3 to 6 days to ensure better coverage of all accessible areas. Preliminary reports indicate good coverage at approximately 95%. In North Darfur, the campaign was completed despite some difficulty in the implementation of monitoring in SLA held areas. In Buram, South Darfur, it experienced some difficulties and had to be interrupted. To provide vaccination for the 87,000 targeted children in the area, a mop-up campaign will be required. Due to insecurity, Faguli in Jabel Marra were not reached. • Contingency planning has begun following a number of confirmed cases of meningitis in refugee camps in Chad. WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF, MSF-Holland and the IFRC are coordinating the response to the outbreak. • A Mental Health team visited El Geneinain in West Darfur and Nyala, South Darfur, to assess needs and resources in both regions. • In West Darfur, the NGO Save the Children US has established a laboratory in Geneina Hospital and requested WHO to support with materials. • In South Darfur, WHO is considering to support with essential drugs and consumables the NGO Cordaid, which operates PHC services in IDP camps.

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- Between 11 December 2004 and 7 January 2005, a total of 180,923 cases of conditions under surveillance were reported, of which 15% (27,824) were Acute Respiratory Tract Infection (ARI) and 8% (14,011) Clinically Diagnosed Malaria. In the same period, there were 227 reported deaths, of which 13% were malaria-related and 6% due to ARI.
- Between 22 May and 7 January 2005, 18,036 cases including 169 deaths (CFR 0.94%) of suspected Hepatitis E have been reported from the Greater Darfur through the EWARN system. The weekly number of reported suspected cases of hepatitis E per 1,000 population, shown in the figure below, has steadily declined since peaking in weeks 35-40.



Actions:

- In West Darfur, WHO signed a contract with SMOH and Geneina Hospital effective January to March 2005. It includes support to key functions and provision of essential drugs, as stated by MoH national guidelines and in line with WHO international guidelines.
- In South Darfur, WHO is finalizing plans for the rehabilitation of Nyala, Kass and El Daein Hospitals. WHO has employed an engineer to follow-up the rehabilitation work for El Daein hospital. WHO is also supporting training in Internal Medicine and Surgery at Nyala Teaching Hospital and has committed USD 210,000 to Nyala and Kass hospitals over the next 3 months.
- Funding for WHO humanitarian operations in Darfur is provided by UK's Department for International Development (DfID), the Humanitarian Aid Office of the European Commission (ECHO), and the governments of Netherlands, Italy, Ireland, Norway, Czech Republic and United States.

WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP



Assessments and events:

- On 12 January, the Palestinian MoH and the West Bank Primary Health Care Directorate asked all health care providers, WHO, UNRWA and UNICEF to meet and discuss the management of the mumps outbreak in the Northern West Bank. Between April 2003 and December 2004, 2,470 cases were reported (documented clinically and serologically) in the Askar, Balata and Ein beit el ma'a refugee camps, for a total number of 4,000 cases reported by the MoH. Another app. 6,000 cases are considered as not having been reported due to the lack of an adequate surveillance system.
- The Palestinian National Authority has called on WHO for support regarding the lack of access to the sanitary landfill used by the Southern Gaza Region, access to which has been totally blocked since December 2004. Alternative sanitary landfills are limited and this will lead to accumulation of waste in populated areas which is thought by local authorities to create a threat to public health.

Actions

- WHO experts (HQ and EMRO) provided technical assistance to the MoH in defining steps to address the mumps outbreak. Recommendations included:
 - Vaccinating certain groups with high incidence rate (such as students from the University of Jenin, who reported 20 cases reported in the past two days);
 - Adapting in the future two doses of vaccination (at 12 and 18 months) using the same strain Orabi which proved effective.

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- WHO is following up with the Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority and with GTZ, currently working on a waste management project in Southern Gaza Strip, to examine the situation regarding the sanitary landfill. Through the UN Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO), WHO has also requested the activation of the current mechanisms within the UN system in order to meet the Israeli Authorities and advocate for a solution.
- A video conference between WHO West Bank and Gaza and WHO EURO was organized on 10 January to discuss future cooperation on “Bridges”, the Israeli-Palestinian public health magazine launched in December 2004. The following activities are envisaged:
 - Provision of written material on topics of common interest;
 - Collaboration on forum discussions and workshops organized by the magazine on specific themes of common interest;
 - Support to other initiatives such as joint training or academic exchanges that may result from the discussion forums/workshops.
- The report from the WHO expert who assessed the Palestinian Essential Drug List was distributed and action is being taken with the Essential Drug committee in order to follow-up on the recommendations.
- Current WHO humanitarian actions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been made possible by 2004 funding from USAID, AGFUND, and the Government of Norway, as well as pre-2004 funding from ECHO.

IRAQ



Assessments and events:

- WHO is currently compiling and analysing the data received from the recent assessment on access to quality health services conducted in Falluja, and carried out in coordination with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.
- WHO met with the Ministry of Health Focal Point for emergency preparedness and response to discuss the mechanisms for upgrading WHO support to activities related to access to quality health services.
- WHO met with the Family Medicine Committee of the MoH to discuss the development of a plan of action for the development of the family medicine approach – Mother, Child and Reproductive Health – within the country’s health services.
- WHO met with officials from the Ministry of Environment and H.E. the Minister of Environment to discuss nominations for training courses in Amman, the rehabilitation of the water quality control laboratory and various other issues connected with the implementation of the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund Water Quality Control Programme.
- WHO met with the Dean of Basra Medical College to discuss WHO’s role in supporting the College. Provision of books, journals and publications, in addition to technical support, for the capacity building of the college teachers was discussed.

Actions:

- In response to an urgent request from the Ministry of Health, WHO shipped 3,000 doses of rabies vaccine and 600 doses of anti-rabies immunoglobulin to the Vaccine and Sera Institute of the MoH on 9 January. Both items were confirmed received by 11 January, and were promptly distributed to all governorates, including Missan.
- WHO Iraq supported and facilitated the visit of two TB physicians from the MoH to the Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Jordan, on 12/13 January. An encouraging partnership between the two countries, this visit was held to arrange the treatment of Multiple Drug Resistant (MDR) cases in Jordan.
- WHO participated in a Regional Health Systems Development Workshop on access to quality health services in Alexandria, Egypt from 4 to 8 January.
- WHO participated in the first conference on Health Care Waste Management, organized by the Ministry of Health and supported by the NGO Première Urgence on 5 January, the conference was chaired by H.E. the Minister of Health.
- WHO facilitated the training on Food Safety of three MoH officials, which took place at the Kuwait Technical Research Institute from 8 to 12 January.

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UGANDA



Assessments and events:

- To counter the risk of spread of wild polio virus into Uganda from neighbouring Sudan—where 112 confirmed wild polio cases were reported between 10 May 2004 and 11 January 2005—the Ugandan MoH, UNEPI, UNICEF and WHO are implementing a “Preparedness and Response Plans for Importation of Wild Polio Virus into Polio-Free Areas of Uganda”. Activity planning meetings are held regularly at national level and include the participation of representatives of the MoH, UNEPI, UNICEF and WHO.
- A two-pronged strategy was defined, including:
 - Strengthening of routine immunization activities particularly for children under five, active surveillance at community level, and social mobilization by all available means.
 - Two rounds of Sub-National Immunization Days (SNIDs), synchronized with National Immunization Days (NIDs) in Sudan, are planned on 26-27 February 2005 and 3-4 April 2005 in 15 target districts, prioritized according to funding resources.
- Based on the experience of the 2000-2001 Ebola outbreak in Gulu District, the establishment of community-based early warning networks in specific districts is now considered a priority by all partners. Districts concerned would be those targeted by polio preparedness activities and where high levels of insecurity jeopardize access to health services and the interaction between health workers and community. It would ensure early detection and timely reporting to health authorities of alerts related to epidemic prone diseases and unusual health related events (e.g. unexplained community deaths).
- Following last year’s cholera outbreak in Gulu District, WHO is assisting district officials in the drafting of the outbreak report, including the assessment of the response, according to the WHO document “Cholera Outbreak: Assessing the Outbreak Response and Improving Preparedness”. Enhanced surveillance was discontinued on 4 December 2004. Since then, an average of two to three cases per week has been admitted to health facilities in the camps as well as in Lacor hospital.

Actions:

- WHO is facilitating cross border interactions through the WHO Sub-Office for Southern Sudan in Lokichokio.
- WHO Gulu is taking the first steps towards taking over the facilitation of existing Coordination Groups (Health, Nutrition, HIV). WHO met with:
 - The Director of District Health Services and District Health Team (MoH) and the Chairman of the District Disaster Management Committee;
 - MSF, to agree on the hand over of health sector coordination;
 - Other organizations (OCHA, UNICEF, ICRC, AVSI, etc.) in view of the upcoming coordination meeting.
- WHO Gulu will organize the Polio campaign briefing for organizations that were not involved in the MoH planning workshop in efforts to mobilize technical, logistic and human resources for Polio threat related activities.
- WHO Gulu provided medical support to the delegation, comprising national and local authorities, religious leaders, UN staff, attending the peace talks with the Lord’s Resistance Army on 28-29 December 2004. The mission was documented through movies and pictures.
- WHO participated to the Emergency Response Workshop organized by OCHA on 13 and 14 January on social services, human rights and protection, health and nutrition, food security, peace and resettlement, water and sanitation, and education.
- WHO is planning participation in the “District IDP Return and Resettlement Plan” workshop organized by the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) on 27 and 28 January.
- Funding for WHO humanitarian operations in Northern Uganda has been provided by Finland.

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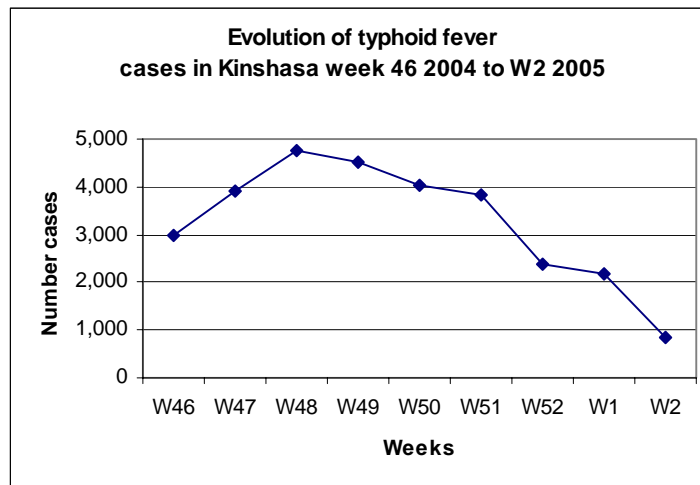
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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)



Assessments and events:

- Between 27 September 2004 and 11 January 2005, the typhoid fever outbreak in Kinshasa has affected 41,599 persons, and caused the death of 215 persons (CFR=0.5%).
- For the same period, the number of complicated cases (inpatients) are 713 with 201 deaths (CFR=28%).
- Very poor sanitary conditions and a lack of drinking water have been reported in affected areas. A crisis committee has been established to contain the outbreak and is carrying out health education activities and distributing medicine.
- Evolution of typhoid fever cases in Kinshasa between 1 November 2004 and 11 January 2005 is as follow:



Actions:

- WHO has assisted in providing health education and in strengthening of cases management.
- Current WHO humanitarian operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo have been supported by ECHO, Finland, Norway, and AGFUND.

INTER-AGENCY ISSUES

- **Tsunami disaster in Asia.** WHO participates in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force (IASC TF) meetings on the Tsunami Disaster. Meetings are held three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- **Colombia.** In support of the UN Country Team in Colombia, the OCHA Internal Displacement Division is undertaking a mission to Colombia from 17-27 January 2005.
- **Uganda.** From 17 January to 1 February, the OCHA Internal Displacement Division will field a mission to Uganda in follow-up to the Division's previous mission to the country in December 2004. The Mission will also assist the Country Team with planning for the possible future return and reintegration of IDPs.
- **WCDR.** From 18-22 January, the World Conference on Disaster Reduction will take place in Kobe Japan. The meeting aims to increase awareness, recognition and political endorsement for implementing disaster risk reduction and mobilizing local, national and international resources and to adopt a set of goals and policy measures to guide and stimulate the implementation of disaster risk reduction, both on what to achieve and 'how-to-do' risk reduction. WHO will participate.
- **CAP.** The CAP Sub Working Group will meet in Geneva on 18 January to discuss the guidelines for Flash Appeals, analyse the CAP Programme Kick-Off (Geneva, 11 January) and prepare for Montreux 2005. The meeting will also update on the Needs Assessment Framework workshop to take place in February 2005. WHO is a member of the CAP SWG and will attend.
- **Transition Issues.** The UN Development Group (UNDG)/Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Working Group on Transition issues will meet in New York on 18 January. The meeting will brief on post conflict needs assessment guidelines and the status of the guidelines on "handing over" coordination support from OCHA to other actors and update on resource mobilization, natural disaster recovery response, the Integrated Missions Study and next steps on the implementation plan. WHO is a member of the UNDG/ECHA Working Group and will participate.
- **Sudan.**
 - On 18 January, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on the Darfur Crisis will meet in New York. The meeting will provide an update on the humanitarian situation in Darfur and

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Chad and brief on the security situation and harassment of relief workers in Darfur. The meeting will also discuss mission planning following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. WHO is a member of the Task Force and will participate.

- On 19 January, the IASC weekly meeting in Geneva will provide a briefing on the Sudan peace process and its future implications. WHO will attend.
- **UNICEF.** On 26 January, UNICEF will launch its Humanitarian Action Report (HAR) 2005, which highlights the situation of children in more than thirty one countries in humanitarian crisis. WHO plans to attend.
- **Human Security.** OCHA's Human Security Unit will hold an operational level workshop in Geneva on 26 January on the new revised guidelines for the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. WHO will participate.
- **Framework Team.** The Chairman of the Framework Team will participate in a dialogue meeting in Brussels with the European Commission Directorate-General for External Relations to discuss countries and sub-regions from a conflict prevention point of view. WHO will provide input.
- **Humanitarian Response Review.** Preparations are under way for the first IASC Reference Group meeting on the Humanitarian Response Review in Geneva on 3 February 2005. WHO is a member of the Reference Group and will participate.

SPECIAL EVENT

- **Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Emergencies.** The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) issued a Statement on Gender Based Violence in emergencies, which is an important step forward to address gender based violence in crisis settings. WHO contributed.
- **Reliefweb.** On 18 January, OCHA launched the redesigned ReliefWeb site at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan.

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

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