

## 1. ECOM

### Haiti

The escalation of the situation in Haiti is leading to increased insecurity. The situation is highly unpredictable, and it is difficult to build scenarios about how the crisis may evolve. At present the main problems are access to vulnerable populations, the increasing number of areas which become affected by insecurity as well as the fact that the Northern regions are completely cut off from the rest of the country. Humanitarian actors, that are present in Haiti, including UN agencies, NGOs as well as bilateral and multilateral donors, have been actively coordinating their initiatives since the beginning of this crisis. We thoroughly observe the current situation and exchange information regularly with organs of the Order of Malta in the region. In the meantime there will be no active involvement by ECOM.

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### Morocco

On Tuesday morning, 24 February 2004, a powerful earthquake with 6,3 on the Richter scale struck the Mediterranean coast of Morocco. Nearly six hundred are feared dead as reports say, several villages south of the resort town of Al Hoceima were badly damaged as mud brick houses have collapsed on their sleeping inhabitants. Wise like in Bam the most urgent priority is to search for survivors and to provide proper medical attention. According to the Moroccan civil defence early relief efforts by local and foreign humanitarian relief agencies are closely coordinated with the authorities. First aid kits, blankets, tents, mattresses and jerry cans have already been despatched to the affected population. As the local coordination mechanisms, search and rescue operations as well as relief measures are underway and well functioning, there is no immediate need for ECOM to become involved in the present situation.

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### High-class decoration of the Order of Malta for Guy van der Bruggen

Our sincere congratulations go to our Belgian colleague Guy van der Bruggen to whom has been awarded the "Cruce di Commendatore pro merito melitensi" by the Sovereign Order of Malta. With this high-class decoration, the Order appreciates his outstanding commitment on the occasion of various ECOM missions in Kosovo, Macedonia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Guy van der Bruggen is the first ECOM colleague to receive this remarkable decoration.

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### Bosnia-Herzegovina: ECOM provides medical care for pilgrims to Medjugorje

For the seventh time already, ECOM Germany provides medical care for pilgrims to Medjugorje/Bosnia-Herzegovina. Teams consisting of four volunteers (rescue assistants, paramedics and nurses) will support the local staff from 1 June until 31 October in the health centre. Foreign ECOM associations and relief agencies will take part as well. - From June until October 2003, 64 volunteers from Germany, France and Croatia gave medical assistance in 4.045 cases.

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**General Assembly in Cologne**

On 27 February, the presidents of the ECOM associations met at the headquarters of Malteser Hilfsdienst in Cologne for their annual meeting. The aim of the meeting was to realize a critical analysis of ECOM's operational status and to discuss the possible development of ECOM in the future. The ongoing development of the framework conditions under which humanitarian action is delivered and the experiences of the last ECOM operations make it necessary to review ECOM's operational capabilities in order to cope with the Order's intention to become a substantial member of the international community in the domain of humanitarian action.

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**2. AFRICA****Sudan, Yei: WHO states remarkable results for Malteser sleeping sickness project**

Recently, a WHO evaluation team visited the Malteser sleeping sickness project in South Sudan. In the past, people in Yei county had to travel long to get treatment. In the beginning of 2002, Malteser started the treatment of sleeping sickness in Yei. – The WHO evaluation states that Malteser has successfully developed a health system which offers an excellent health centre for diagnosis and treatment of infected people. The project implies successful active screening of the population through outreach activities, training of sleeping sickness assistants and community health workers as well as health education for community leaders, representatives of health services, churches, local authorities and local NGOs. The most outstanding result of our sleeping sickness project in Yei is a zero death rate of treated patients: "... the first time that such a good result is achieved", states the WHO evaluation report.

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**Malteser Germany's jubilee project "Water for Ariwara" still successful**

The level of contributions for Malteser's anniversary project "Water for Ariwara" keeps rising. With 70,750 Euro, Malteser groups of nearly all German dioceses have collected, 283 sources can be bordered and rehabilitated in Ariwara in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The pipes and walls for the rehabilitation of one source cost about 250 Euro. Each source provides about 250 people with fresh drinking water near their homes. – The official ending of the project will be on 22 March 2004 – the international World Water Day.

Further Information:

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**3. ASIA****Iran: Counselling for local relief organizations**

In the beginning of March, project manager Carsten Stork leaves for Kerman/Iran. During three months he will counsel Iranian NGOs on project management. By supporting the set-up of Iranian NGOs, Malteser Germany makes an important contribution to improve the disaster preparedness in the earthquake region. Furthermore, Malteser assists in rehabilitating the destroyed city of Bam by building or rehabilitating 15 health houses for about 23,000 people. 20 containers serve as temporary schools for more than 400 pupils. Malteser has established a special fund which helps Iranian NGOs to support deprived groups like women, handicapped people and children.

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### **India, Malia/Gujarat: Inauguration of Dalit girl hostel**

On 15 February, a big inauguration ceremony was held for the new girl hostel in Malia/Gujarat. The hostel will enable 100 girls from extremely poor families to attend secondary school. Before, school education for girls beyond 6<sup>th</sup> grade was impossible as schools were unreachable for the girls from their dispersed small village homes. The education of girls from extremely backward families means an important contribution to the development of poor and marginalized families and – of course – to the development of the young women themselves.

The following day, a small village with 29 families also celebrated the inauguration of their newly rebuilt houses; their former houses had been completely destroyed by the earthquake that hit Gujarat in 2001.

Both celebrations were filled with great joy of the people – stating that the new houses financed by Malteser Germany were more than they had been dreaming of for generations. The Dalit population of Malia generally live of hard day labour in the fields belonging to landowning higher cast people or of seasonal work in the dreaded salts pans of the gulf of Kutch.

In Malia, Malteser Germany up to now has supported the construction of more than 150 houses.

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### **Cambodia: Malteser took over Malaria control program from MSF**

In the districts Along Veng and Trapang Prasat in the Eastern part of Oddar Meanchey, our Malteser team took over the activities of "Médicins Sans Frontiers" (MSF). In this jungle covered part of the province, malaria is still the main cause of death since the population is very unstable. Here, Malteser fears a new threat in HIV/Aids due to the recent opening of the border with Thailand bringing along the establishment of brothels and prostitution.

Therefore, Malteser plans to open a clinic for sexually transmitted infections. In the border town O'Smach we are currently running such a clinic successfully.

Already since 1999, Malteser Germany supports the provincial health authorities in the province of Oddar Meanchey, mainly with financial support from ECHO (European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office). Oddar Meanchey is one of the poorest and less developed provinces of Cambodia.

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## **4. CENTRAL/ EASTERN EUROPE**



### **South-Eastern Europe: Long-term cooperation with UNHCR continues**

The successful and long-established cooperation of Malteser Germany with UNHCR (the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) in South Eastern Europe continues in 2004 as well. Four new treaties were signed in January. Apart from income generating measures for ethnic minorities returning to their home countries, especially cross-border projects for refugees returning to Croatia and Macedonia are within the focus of Malteser's relief programmes. By giving small credits, jobs can be created and productivity can be increased in existing workshops and firms. Malteser supports repatriates by transporting their belongings and in getting necessary documents.

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**5. STAFF****Angola: Farewell to Teresa Lleo-Alama, medical coordinator in Kuando Kubango**

Teresa Lleo-Alama, medical coordinator in Kuando Kubango/Angola, has resigned in the end of December, giving over her duties to Raquel Barrientos-Aurelio from the Philippines. Barrientos-Aurelio has a master in public health and has worked as a nutritionist in Angola already. Sonja Vogelsberg is now member of the Angola team, having gathered several years of working experience in the Malteser headquarters in Cologne as well as in Ariwara. Our best wishes go to Teresa Lleo-Alama and a warm welcome to Raquel Barrientos-Aurelio and Sonja Vogelsberg.

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