

# On the SPOT

**NEWSLETTER  
September 2005**

## 1. USA

### **Hurricane Katrina:**

#### **a) Malteser International supports US Malteser Associations**



On the 4th and 5th of September, a team of four Malteser International staff members left Germany with destination to the region of New Orleans which had been severely affected by the worst natural disaster in the history of the country, 'Hurricane Katrina', on the 29th of August. The main purpose of their journey was to provide assistance to the three United States Malteser Associations and to set an example of solidarity.

Katrina devastated 235,000 square kilometres (90,700 square miles), an area half the size of France or as big as Romania. Forty to fifty kilometres (25 to 30 miles) of Mississippi shoreline were obliterated. Four fifths of New Orleans ended up under water. At least 273,000 people made homeless by the storm were being put up in a variety of shelters in 16 US states.

The three US Malteser Associations are currently involved in relief activities and the planning for rehabilitation and reconstruction measures. The significant immediate relief services included already:

- the timely evacuation of all residents of the three assisted living residences for the frail elderly in New Orleans supported by the Federal Association
- the provision of food and personal grooming items and a rented warehouse to store further supplies in Jefferson Parish
- first loads of building and construction materials
- a one-week volunteer project for doctors from Baltimore
- much needed emotional support for vulnerable people who have been affected by the catastrophe

All three US Associations and further associations of the Order – among them members of Malteser International - have commenced successful fund raising drives. The activities of the US Associations will focus on assistance to the most vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups and make sure that the assistance will continue after media interest has declined.

#### **b) Job training and Reconstruction for hurricane victims**



The US associations of the Order of Malta established an office in Baton Rouge to coordinate further relief measurements, lead by project manager Osvaldo Marcenaro. Due to the fact that about two thirds of people affected by Hurricane Katrina are African American and out of them about 40 percent are illiterate, the support of the US Malteser Associations will not only include reconstruction measures, but also training. The US Malteser Associations plan to support victims of the hurricane that don't have any education and offer them free job training. The displaced persons that have lost everything and didn't have insurance to recover their belongings will receive basic life utensils. Radtke stresses that the relief measurements will support the poorest of the poor: "In corporation with the US Malteser Associations, the Catholic Charities New Orleans and the Catholic Community Services Baton Rouge we are

initially focusing to supply food and toiletries to the displaced people in the shelters.” Equally important is psycho-social support, says Radtke, because many people are deeply traumatized by the magnitude of the catastrophe. As soon as the infrastructure in New Orleans is starting to be somewhat fixed, Malteser International will have an office in New Orleans as well. “But this will take weeks. The smelling, toxic mud that makes many parts of the city inaccessible will have to be removed”, states Radtke.

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## 2. Africa



### Sudan/Dafur:

#### Community malaria epidemic prevention programme implemented

In the framework of its refugee healthcare project in North Dafur, Malteser International has developed an effective malaria prevention strategy that aims for people to seek early medical care and for community participation in malaria prevention campaigns. The programme consists of three pillars, namely information, education and communication. The aim is to create a form of ownership and control of the project for the respective population. Thus the Malteser International team in Dafur expects the people to change their behaviour in a long term perspective.

Malaria represents a major threat particularly for pregnant women and children under five. That is why Malteser International pays special attention to this most vulnerable group. As part of the prevention programme the team distributed intermittent preventive treatment and insecticide-treated nets for 2,800 pregnant women and 6,265 children under five.

In order to have correct figures of the impact of malaria and other diseases in the area it is equally important to establish a proper surveillance system at the health facilities.

Since July 2004 Malteser International is committed to improve the health care system for IDPs (internally displaced persons) and the population in North Darfur. At least 23,000 IDPs out of 420,000 displaced persons benefit from the provision of Malteser International's basic health services and preventive measures like the malaria prevention programme.

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## 3. Asia



### Tsunami: Progress in rehabilitation

#### a) Sri Lanka: Foundation stones for the new village in Seenanveli

The laying of the foundation stones for the first 20 houses of the new village of Seenanveli on the northeast coast of Sri Lanka has been celebrated with a hindu ceremony on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2005. The reconstruction of new permanent shelters for 63 families in the region of Trincomalee is part of the general rehabilitation programme which Malteser International is running in Sri Lanka. The reconstruction project is supported by F.C. Bayern Hilft e.V., therefore the children of the village

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were able to enjoy their first soccer training with a new soccer ball. Fortunately all the inhabitants of the Seenanveli survived the complete destruction of their village by the Tsunami tidal wave in 2004. The whole village community attended the ceremony which gave the starting shot for the reconstruction work. The decision to which families the first houses would belong was taken by a lottery system in which all the families took part.

A foundation stone was laid at the building site for every single house. Among others Maren Paech, the project coordinator of Malteser International and Mr. Lexman, the representative of the Trincomalee District Development Association (TDDA), the Sri Lankian partner organisation, helped to fill the prepared holes with the foundation stones, joss sticks, flowers and fruits. The gifts and the filling of the stones themselves with sand and rice symbolize the good wishes and hopes of the families who will later on live in the new built houses.

Further Information:

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### **b) Sri Lanka: Sambodhi home to be inaugurated soon**



On the 3rd of September, Dr. Jürgen Clemens from Malteser International and a group of twelve German students visited the Sambodhi home for disabled people in Galle, in southern Sri Lanka. The group together with Malteser International field-staff members Maren Paech and Rosemary Kikon, as well as Stefan Johag from Malteser Germany became witness of the progress which has already been made in the rehabilitation of the building. “With the support and donations of the German initiative 'Osthessen hilft Südasien' (based in Fulda, Germany) and the association ‘Die kleinen Patienten’ (Bonn, Germany) we were able to provide a new roof, a solid outer wall for the building as well as an interior design more suitable for patients”, states Clemens. A German artist will be in charge of the interior decoration of the renovated rooms. The completely renovated home will then officially be inaugurated in early November. The inmates, however, used to live there even when the renovation work was going on.

The students from Heidelberg - undergraduates in Geography and Development Studies - were impressed by the progress and operational character of the project but also concerned about problems during the rehabilitation progress. Due to a lack of construction material, because of the high demand in the aftermath of the Tsunami, the completion date for the home's renovation had to be postponed. This has also been necessary in order to ensure the quality of the construction which has been verified several times by Sri Lankan incorporated engineers.

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### **c) Nine months after Tsunami: Malteser International presents its relief programmes at the exposition „After Tsunami - How does rehabilitation work?“**

From 27 to 29 September, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development held the exposition „After Tsunami - How does rehabilitation work?“ in Berlin. Malteser International was present as a member organisation of “Aktion Deutschland Hilft”, an alliance of ten organisations which offers immediate and effective relief service. Aim of the exposition was to inform experts, sponsors and the public about rehabilitation measures nine months after Tsunami, the present situation in the countries and the programmes of humanitarian aid organisations.

Dr. Constantin von Brandenstein-Zeppelin, President of Malteser Germany, and Roland Hansen from Malteser International took part as well as Thomas Rottland and Olaf Paulsen who had worked for Malteser International in the Tsunami projects in Thailand and in Sri Lanka. They informed the visitors about Malteser International’s projects in the Tsunami affected countries (Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand).

Further Information: Roland Hansen, <mailto:roland.hansen@malteser-international.org>

### **d) Nine months after Tsunami: New Activity Report**

The new Activity Report (September 2005) gives detailed information about all emergency relief and rehabilitation programmes and projects run by Malteser International during the last six months in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand and can be downloaded from Malteser International’s website:

[http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser\\_International/en/61.02.News\\_Press/61.02.03.Downloads/documents.htm](http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/en/61.02.News_Press/61.02.03.Downloads/documents.htm)

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## **Further projects in Asia:**

### **Afghanistan: Day of the Refugee on the 28th of September “Afghanistan is still in need!”**



On the occasion of the Day of the Refugee on the 28th of September Roland Hansen from Malteser International reminds the public of the hardship of many Afghan refugees who return to their country: „A lot of Afghan people who fled their country 20 years ago are returning full of hope nowadays from Pakistan and Iran just to find their home villages in possession of foreigners. Without orientation they go to the cities where they lose any kind of social status and live as rural migrants in extreme poverty.“

According to Hansen it is crucial to support systematically communities with a high number of returning families. “Especially income generating measures and so called co-existence-projects are important. The purpose is to help returnees and people of the community to live peacefully together.” Nearly 100 of such projects were carried out by Malteser International since 2003 and supported by the UNHCR, the United

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Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. “Those projects are an ideal way to create and keep a peaceful environment and to support the civil society”, concludes Hansen.

In order to reduce the hardship of the returnees in Kabul, Malteser International once more gets ready to carry out a winter relief programme if necessary. The projects consist of the distribution of essential items like ovens, blankets and heating material for those people living in tent settlements of in ruins of the reception camps in Kabul.

Hansen is still worried about a creeping oblivion of the Afghan refugees’ hardship. “We urgently need donations for long-term aid projects. Already now we feel the scarcity of resources and I don’t think the rehabilitation process which will at least take 10 years to be accomplished has a proper financial backup. There is a danger that the well initiated work has no chance to be continued and will be stuck in a dead-end.”

According to UNHCR statistics also in 2005 the Afghan people with its 4million refugees count in the group with the largest refugee population worldwide. Only in 2005 UNHCR expects about 770,000 returnees in Afghanistan. Out of this group around 247,000 people will return to the central region of Afghanistan, where Malteser International aid projects are currently located.

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## 4. Europe

### Flood relief in Romania - Help for the victims in Odorheiu Secuiesc



Massive rainfalls in the end of August triggered a new tidal wave in already flood-torn regions of Romania. The community of Odorheiu Secuiesc and its six neighbouring communities have been severely affected by the rising water. Over 350 houses have been completely destroyed, nearly 2,000 houses were swamped. Infrastructure like streets, gas and water supply have been severely affected and a high number of people had to be evacuated. Malteser International helps the Romanian Malteser relief service “Serviciul de Ajutor Maltez în România” for the third time in this year to get relief measures into action. Thanks to a private donation it was possible to provide another 60,000 Euro for short and long term relief. The initiated measures aim at securing the livelihood of the evacuated population. These measures shall be realised before the beginning of winter, including:

- help for reconstruction and remediation of destroyed housing space by provision of dehumidifiers and construction material; after being used first of all for private houses the dehumidifiers should also help to dry and clean community buildings that serve as additional living space for the stricken population; the dehumidifiers belong to the Czech Malteser organization and will be used in a rotation system.
- support of livelihood generation by building up small economies, provision of agrarian equipment and tools as well as livestock.

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## 5. Others

### Malteser Foreign Aid: Annual Report 2004

Malteser International has now presented the Annual Report of the Malteser Foreign Aid Division for the year 2004 in a new layout. On 32 pages the report informs about more than 80 projects in Africa, Asia and Europe realised in 2004 by about 100 expatriates and 800 local staff. The project volume could be increased once again to a total amount of 18,6 million Euro in 2004 (2003: 18,0 million Euro). Furthermore, 2,400 volunteers from 130 German Malteser groups are engaged in partnership projects in 27 countries.

The German version of the Annual Report 2004 can already been downloaded from the Malteser International website:

[http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser\\_International/61.02.Aktuelles\\_Presse/61.02.03.Downloads/pressematerial.htm](http://www.malteser.de/61.Malteser_International/61.02.Aktuelles_Presse/61.02.03.Downloads/pressematerial.htm)

Printed copies can be ordered by: Janine Hammans, phone ++49 – 221 – 98 22 213, <mailto:janine.hammans@malteser-international.org>

The English version of the Annual Report 2004 will be published until the end of October.

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