

# On the SPOT

## 1. Africa



### **Food crisis in northern Kenya: Malteser International sends assessment team**

In Kenya, more than 2.5 million people are suffering from an acute food crisis which is caused by the failure of both rainy seasons in 2005; more than 30 people have already died during the last two months. The most concerned regions are in the north of Kenya, for example in Isiolo, which is about 150 km in the northeast of Nairobi. Since fodder and water have also become very rare, people are even pulling dry grass from the roofs of their huts to feed the calves. On 2<sup>nd</sup> January, Kenya's president, Mwai Kibaki, has declared a state of national disaster in the most affected areas and appealed for donations to alleviate the suffering of those affected.

Malteser International has immediately decided to send an assessment team to the north of Kenya. This team is led by the Regional Coordinator for eastern and southern Africa, Dr Jochen Bürkle, and will assess the urgent needs in cooperation with the dioceses of Isiolo, Masalal and Marsabit and the Ministry of Health.

Further information:

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### **Sudan/Darfur: Immunisation campaigns for more than 30,000 children**

The situation in Darfur is still tense because of continuous fighting between rebels and governmental troops as well as violence against the people inside and outside the camps. Due to the cold season, more and more patients suffer from acute respiratory diseases and diarrhoea. Furthermore, especially children under five and pregnant women are threatened by malnutrition.



As the immunisation rate is still low, people are even more susceptible to diseases. To improve the health care situation in the project areas in northern Darfur, Malteser International is regularly implementing immunisation campaigns: In the end of November, our teams have vaccinated more than 16,000 children against polio. This immunisation campaign was implemented on the occasion of the national immunisation days in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and WHO; another campaign will follow in January. Further 15,500 children could be reached with a measles prevention immunisation campaign that was arranged in cooperation with WHO in December 2005.

On request of UNICEF, Malteser International will also support a campaign against lack of iodine for children and pregnant women in its project areas in northern Darfur.

In the rural areas in the south of El Fasher, the provincial capital of northern Darfur, Malteser International has been providing basic health care services for about 80,000 people already since summer 2004. In addition to the regular supply of drugs and

medical appliances, we focus on epidemic prevention (malaria, measles, polio), trainings for the local medical staff, continuous routine immunisation and the rehabilitation of basic health care structures.

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## 2. Asia

### **Earthquake South Asia – Pakistan: Help via helicopter – Relief for 1,000 families in the Himalayas**

In addition to the assistance already provided for the people in the earthquake affected region in northern Pakistan and in Kashmir, Malteser International has started another relief programme: With the help of helicopters, 1,000 families - up to 8,000 people – in the Palas valley will receive winter-proven shelters, stoves and further relief items. These emergency shelters are made of corrugated galvanized iron sheets with a tunnel design. Another important focus of the current relief project is the provision of emergency shelters also for animals. The care for livestock and their overwintering is one of the highest priorities of mountain farming communities all over the Indian subcontinent. Without the provision of animal shelters, the farmers' resource allocation and options for starting the agricultural work in spring 2006 will remain low or even zero. This would eventually undermine their traditional agricultural and agro-pastoral livelihood strategies and then lead to the need of additional external support, e.g. grants and soft loans in order to buy new animals.



Country coordinator Claus Euler, who already worked for four years in the Palas valley in the framework of an EU project, states: „ People in this valley have been severely affected by the earthquake. First of all their houses have been destroyed by the earthquake. Now their lives are threatened by the winter which they have to survive in 2,500 meters altitude cut off from the rest of the world.” Without winterized shelter for themselves but also for their cattle the population will freeze to death or get severe diseases within the next weeks. Their only hope is humanitarian assistance coming via helicopters. However, the number of helicopters that can be used by relief organisations, is limited. Furthermore, the help via helicopter strongly depends on good weather conditions.



The relief measures will be implemented in cooperation with a local NGO working in the Palas Valley. With the support of the Palas Conservation and Development Federation, we also prepare primary health care activities. The existing basic health care units either collapsed due to the earthquake or the equipment needed is not available in these remote mountain valleys.

Malteser International is currently running winter relief programmes and basic health care projects on the ground in Pakistan and in the Indian part of Kashmir. On a long-term basis, we also plan the rehabilitation of health care centres and houses as well as income generating measures.

Further information:

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## **Sri Lanka I: Tsunami rehabilitation in the south: Drop by drop, roof by roof – Rainwater harvesting to overcome water shortages**

Even along the tropical coastline of southern Sri Lanka, drought-like seasons occur year by year after the monsoon season and lead to severe water shortages. After a successful pilot project in summer and autumn 2005, Malteser International will now start a comprehensive water project for the population in the Hambantota, Matare and Galle Districts in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. Rainwater will be collected from the roofs of the houses and then be stored in tanks of different sizes for the dryer season. Up to 3,000 families will benefit from these improved water storage capacities until 2007. - In December 2005, Malteser International and its local implementing partner organisation “Lanka Rain Water Harvesting Forum” received the approval for additional funds by UNICEF and all three parties are looking forward to extending their cooperation.



Major activities of this project will be the rehabilitation and improvement of the traditional existing rainwater harvesting systems as well as the capacity building of local masons and other craftsmen in demonstration centres established within each district. Then, these techniques may be implemented and used on the long run. The project will also improve the overall sustainability of water resources and bring a substantial relief to the population in the south since they still suffer from Tsunami impacts on the local water supply resources and infrastructure.

This rainwater harvesting project is a continuation of our focus on rehabilitation efforts and the water and sanitation sector in particular. It also proves our commitment to stay in disaster affected regions, even when other organisations are pulling out.

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## **Sri Lanka II: Project implementation under unpredictable security situation**

Maren Paech, project coordinator in Sri Lanka, describes the security situation in the country as unpredictable: „In former times attacks were directed towards army bases, nowadays the civil population is also targeted. Even at the beach where families, friends and students used to spend their free time in the evening, the situation has turned insecure.” Violence and attacks have spread all around in the Trincomalee District according to Paech.



Nevertheless, project activities are being continued as far as the security situation allows. “I hope that the situation will calm down now”, says Paech who is – among many other projects - also responsible for the rehabilitation project in the village of Seenanveli financially supported by the soccer club FC Bayern München. After several “hartals”, political strikes called upon again and again by different political actors, the office of our partner organisation TDDA (Trincomalee District Development Association) has now opened again for project business. Our local partners even know the civil war conditions and can assess the current situation; they always

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look for options for the final beneficiaries of our Tsunami rehabilitation projects: the fishermen and their families along the coastline. TDDA was lucky to have ordered construction material in time since - sooner or later - the dense political situation may influence further supplies to these remote areas and prices will definitely increase.

For the time being, Maren Paech and our team have built up a proven base for direct project communication with the TDDA management and thus the project implementation and the construction of houses and community infrastructure in Seenanvelli will continue. These rehabilitation measures are complemented by a concept of integration and reconciliation with the means of football activities for the youth of different ethnic groups. First encouraging steps had already been made during the summer and autumn of 2005.

Further information:

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### **Afghanistan: Care and education for Kabul's street kids**

In December 2005, Malteser International started a new project to cover the needs of children between five and twelve years spending most of the day unattended in the streets of Kabul. - In cooperation with the local partner organisation CCARD (Cooperation Center for Afghanistan's Reconstruction and Development) and with support of the Afghanistan-Hilfe Paderborn and Malteser teams from Moers (Germany), this new project with the total volume of 31.000 EUR was launched in December. During the next seven months, CCARD will offer daily care services, school supporting lessons and social education as well as a daily hot meal for 160 children from poor families. Alone in the western part of the capital, over 15,000 families still live in utter poverty; 2,500 families live without a father; around 1,000 children have even lost both parents and experienced traumatic events preventing them from attending school on a regular basis. The project will help them to recover, to find a way back to normality and together take the first steps towards a better and more secure future.

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### **3a. United States of America**

#### **Hurricane Katrina relief: Home Renovation Program for families in New Orleans**

After many different options were considered, after several meetings and conversations, and after visiting the region and seeing first-hand the massive, widespread devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. The three United States Associations of the Order of Malta have decided to embark upon a Home Renovation Program that will put 32 families back into their homes in New Orleans.

Two sections hit hard by the hurricane and the flood is the Treme and Gentilly neighbourhoods. Treme is one of the oldest black neighbourhoods in the city and along with Gentilly are both poor areas. At the center of each neighbourhood are St. Peter Claver Parish and St. Leo the Great Parish, respectively. Monsignor Michael



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Traditional typical style of home 'shotgun'

Jacques of St. Peter Claver has already identified 40 families who will move back in and will work with the Order of Malta volunteers during the renovation process. No preference is given to race or religion, only that they be a needy family that is planning to come back and live in their home.

The American, Federal, and Western Associations have been joined by Malteser International; funds have been raised and continue to be raised for this effort. We will be joined by Rebuilding Together, an organization with valuable expertise in renovating homes of people in need, and by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. We will renovate 32 homes in St. Peter Claver and Saint Leo the Great Parish in New Orleans.

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### 3b. Central America

#### Mexico and Guatemala: Hurricane Stan relief Help for self-help in Belisario Domínguez and in Santiago Atitlán

In the period from 4 to 9 October 2005 Hurricane Stan has caused casualties and high damages across Central America and Mexico. The destructive force of the hurricane was further aggravated by heavy rainfalls that caused floods, mud- and landslides. In the region of Chiapas in the south-east of Mexico alone, a surface of 400,000 hectares producing corn and coffee has been devastated. The effects of the disaster are specially threatening the most vulnerable parts of the population, poor day labourers and their families.

The Mexican Association of the Order of Malta has reacted immediately to the needs of the affected population in the aftermath of the disaster and provided and distributed a total of 96 tons of food aid.

Given the need of long-term rehabilitation for the communities in Chiapas, the Mexican Association decided to establish a project in the locality of Belisario Domínguez which was literally swept by the hurricane and the rainfalls. 23 people lost their lives during the flooding of the town and 200 houses have been completely destroyed. The infrastructure was heavily damaged and a large part of the population lost their source of income due to the destruction of the surrounding coffee fields. Malteser International supports the Mexican Association in the set-up of a Tortilla production that will provide food assistance to 1,000 families. The project is meant to support the rehabilitation of the community on a long-term basis and the corn mill and "tortilladora" (machine for tortilla production) will be maintained by the local population after the end of the project.

The Association of the Order of Malta in Guatemala has also reacted immediately to the urgent needs of the affected population in the aftermath of the hurricane since the Association could rely on a number of volunteers who were able to assist the population in different ways.

In order to ensure the long-term rehabilitation of the affected regions, the Association has started a project in Santiago Atitlán that will provide major support for the rehabilitation of the social system, especially in the health sector. The project aims at



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improving the basic health care system as well as the provision of clean water and food security in Santiago Atitlán. Special attention is paid to the part of the population that had to be resettled in temporary shelters due to the destruction of housing space. Malteser International supports the Association in Guatemala in their efforts to improve the living-standards of the hurricane-hit population.

Further information:

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## 5. Others

### Training workshop of health experts in Asia

Facilitated by Malteser International headquarters Public Health Experts Dr. Peter Schmitz and Christiane Steinert 26 senior Malteser health staff from projects in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia and Vietnam met for a training workshop from 16-19<sup>th</sup> January in Chiang Mae, Thailand. They worked on interesting topics such as participatory approaches in community health projects, community based health insurance, contracting out of health services, trauma counselling, and bird flue.

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