

On the SPOT

1. Africa

South Sudan:

Medicines and personnel to fight diarrhoea and cholera

In the southern Sudanese city of Yei, the number of registered cases of acute watery diarrhoea rose up to more than 1,000 in the last couple of weeks. In order to face the outbreak that caused 22 fatalities so far, including three children, Malteser International provides medicines and medical equipment. Seven staff members of Malteser International projects around Yei now work at the municipal hospital, where all diarrhoea patients are treated since the beginning of February.

Already since 1997, Malteser International is running basic health care projects to fight leprosy, tuberculosis, HIV/Aids and sleeping sickness in the region.

The reason for an epidemic wave wowing across southern Sudan is the extremely bad exacerbation of drinking water supply, most of it being taken directly from the river Yei. In addition, 250,000 people depending on drinking water from the river Nile in Juba are threatened by a confirmed cholera outbreak in Yei, claiming 27 lives so far.

Problems rise with the growing number of internally displaced persons (about 4 million) who flee from or return to their homes. In most Sudanese cities they are living in precarious conditions. Already last year World Health Organization (WHO) stated more than 3,700 cases of meningitis in Sudan, of whom 124 died. Also last year the outbreak of yellow fever was confirmed in South Kordofan causing 121 fatalities.

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Lent Campaign 2006: 40 Euro for Bukavu/DR Congo

This year's lent campaign is dedicated to Malteser International project in Bukavu/DR Congo. Malteser International asks to put aside one Euro every day throughout the lent period so that a donation totalling 40 Euro can be made in favour of the women assisted in our programs in the province of South Kivu in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Bukavu is an area marked by a war devastating eastern Congo since more then ten years. In about 300 health centres Malteser International and local partner organisations provide medical care to the civil population. A special project in Bukavu is addressed to women who became victims of sexual violence during the war. Psychosocial attendance is added to medical care in order to cope with the trauma these women suffer.

Project manager Ursula Mesmer will accompany the lent campaign with a weekly letter from Bukavu. Similar to a diary she will describe everyday life in the project. You can read her weekly reports on the Malteser International website:

<http://www.malteser-international.org>.



Further information:

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Photo Gallery “Women in Congo”

On the occasion of International Women’s Day on 8 March, Malteser International and the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) draw public attention to the plight of women in the Democratic Republic (DR) of Congo with a photographic display entitled “Women in Congo”. Virtually unnoticed by the worldwide public, a merciless war has been raging in DR Congo for more than a decade. As in so many other conflicts, it is the women and children who bear an overwhelming burden of suffering. Photos and portraits by photographer Birgit Betzelt capture traces of the searing ordeals of these women, but also evoke the hope and resolution with which they strive to master their experiences.



“We see exposures of nearness and faith” says Ingo Radtke, Secretary General of Malteser International, with regard to the 25 photos which are accompanied by short texts and citations documenting the difficult situation faced by many women in war land Congo. “The confidence of the women coming to the health centres”, Radtke adds, “should not be taken for granted. A lot of women, who became victims of sexual violence during the civil war have been outcast by their own families”. In 2005 more than 10,000 women sought medical and psycho-social assistance in the health care centres cared for by Malteser International and financed by ECHO.



Nearly four million people died between 1998 and 2003 in clashes between armed factions. Until today, villages in the eastern part of the country are still being ravaged by militants. They plunder food supplies and drive villagers away from their land. Ten thousands of women and children have been and are still being brutalised and raped. The price they pay is the loss of their key role in family life, society and the national peace process. Large parts of the population no longer have access to health care services. Disease, traumas and financial distress inflict such dire hardship on the women, who are often described as pillars of society, that they cannot escape their plight unaided.

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2. Asia

North Thailand:

German Ambassador visits refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border

In the beginning of February, the German ambassador to Thailand, Dr. Christoph Brümmer, and his wife visited Malteser International’s “Health project for Karen and Burmese refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border”, financed by ECHO.



They showed very much interest in the medical work of Malteser International in the two camps Mae Ra Ma Luang and Mae La Oon. In the discussions with representa-

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tives of the refugees and of NGOs, emphasis was also put on the lack of perspectives faced by refugees living in the camps, some of them being detained up to twenty years already. Many inhabitants of the camps expect now new perspectives for their future from the better educational and vocational training opportunities allowed by the Thai government and of the resettlement programs of some western countries.

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South Thailand:

Successful project proposal for waste water treatment

Malteser International's project proposal „Wetland as waste water treatment in tsunami rehabilitation schemes“ was selected as a finalist for the 2006 Global Development Marketplace. Development Marketplace (DM) is a competitive grant program of the World Bank that funds innovative, small-scale development projects. Only 113 proposals of the 2,525 proposals from 55 different countries that were submitted for Development Marketplace 2006 were selected as finalists through a highly competitive and rigorous assessment process. More than 240 assessors from over 50 different organisations have taken this decision.



DM's primary objective is to identify and support creative ideas that deliver results and have the potential to be expanded and replicated. 30 to 40 proposals will finally be approved by the World Bank. To be among the chosen, project coordinator Ottilie Mooshofer will have to present the proposal to the jury in Washington in the beginning of May. Realisation of the project will cost approximately 118,000 Euro.

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Indonesia:

New houses and health care centres in Lhokseumave and Meulaboh

In two villages near Lhokseumave, Malteser International will have constructed 115 new houses until the end of February. 50 houses will arise in Jambo Timo and 65 are supposed to be officially handed over in Lancok. At the same time construction of 117 further houses will be started.



The first health care centre built by Malteser International and its local partners in the Nagan Raya district on the west coast of Sumatra has opened at the beginning of February. Two others will be finished at the end of the month. The national state health department has already employed staff for the accomplished health care centres. In addition, Malteser International previews the construction of two village halls which will be used for conferences, festivities and similar occasions.

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India: Preschool education in Gujarat



After the severe earthquake in 2001 many international organisations for the first time started projects in the Kutch region in the north of Gujarat. The traditionally rigid caste system is still practiced in this area and three groups are particularly discriminated: the Koli who are the original inhabitants of Gujarat, the Dalits, also called the untouchables, and the Muslim minority. Public reconstruction programmes excluded these groups in favour of landowners. That is why Malteser International concentrates aid on these very poor people.

Illiteracy is a wide-spread problem because children have to work in the fields or face social discrimination at school due to their origin.

In order to empower the poorest, our local partner organisation St Xavier's Non-Formal Education Society (SXNFES) is still active in three districts touched by the earthquake. 1,200 children are reached by a preschool program that prepares children at the age between three and six for later education. Also older children can come to youth groups where informal courses in writing and reading are offered. As malnutrition is frequent, a daily meal is also provided to the children.

Further on, the parents are sensitized to the importance of education for their children's future.

Only two years after having started this program, the number of poor children that are now sent to school has already risen significantly.

Malteser International will continue its work in Gujarat for another three years.

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