

1. Africa

DR Congo: Malteser International welcomes UN appeal against mass rapes

Malteser International appreciates the appeal of UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland before the UN Security Council against mass rape in the Democratic Republic of Congo. 'It is time to end the suffering of the women', explains Ursula Mesmer, head of the Malteser International project in the province of South Kivu for victims of sexual violence. 'The Government as well as the rebels must resolutely take action against rape', she continues. On his journey through the Congo, Egeland had visited the project, spoken to several victims and shown himself impressed by the work of Malteser International and the local partners.



'It is good that finally the issue is recognised by the community of states', Mesmer points out. 'So far, hardly any of the committers have been prosecuted. With international help, the Congo now has to establish a legal framework to punish rapes.' Egeland especially criticised the impunity of the committers and demanded President Joseph Kabila to dismiss soldiers instantly who had demonstrably used sexual violence.

Since 2003 Malteser International has run a project for victims of sexual violence in South Kivu. Last year, the organisation provided medical treatment and psychological care for more than 9,000 raped women in specialised health centres. Additionally, a similar project has been started in the district of Ituri.

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Kenya: Project combating tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS expanded

Malteser International considerably expands its activities combating tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS in Kenya. Since 2001, Malteser International has run a project in the slums of Nairobi and supported eight health care centres with laboratories in order to make the on-site examination and treatment of patients possible. During the next five years, a similar project will reach 36 health centres, and the areas covered will go beyond Nairobi in two districts of Central Province. Decentralised examination, diagnosis and treatment in the slums have been proven to be important to combat TB effectively as many of the patients cannot afford any transport costs. The new project is funded with approximately one million US Dollars by USAID through a consortium under the lead of Pathfinder International.



Besides equipping laboratories providing TB treatment and VCT (Voluntary Counselling and Testing), the project also includes the training of community health workers who visit the diseased to ensure the continuous intake of the medicine. This is important to guarantee a successful treatment of TB as failure to take the tablets regularly can cause resistances. Regarding HIV/AIDS, the project provides for counselling, diagnosis and preventive measures. In schools and community centres, trained staff imparts knowledge about the types of transfers and ways to protect one-

self. They especially fight the widespread stigma of the patients infected with HIV/AIDS which isolates them from the rest of the society and discriminates them. In five years' time, Malteser International aims to reach about 1.4 million people with this project.

Further information:

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Sudan/Darfur: New catastrophe in Darfur – outbreak of cholera epidemic

After a recent escalation of the conflict in Darfur, Malteser International fears a new catastrophe in the Sudanese war-torn province of Darfur. 'By now there are already hundreds of thousands of people cut off from help – and we fear that the fights will escalate', explains Dr. Georg Nothelle, Head of Africa Desk of Malteser International, who visited Darfur lately: 'Additionally, the cholera broke out in the war zone. We fear that war and illnesses will destroy the medical minimum supply we have reached to date.' In Darfur, Malteser International supports the health care for about 115,000 people. Predominantly, they care for pregnant women, treat children and their mothers and combat cholera and malaria.



Malteser International has equipped the health care centres in the south of El Fasher, the capital of North-Darfur, with cholera medicine and drip solutions to treat diarrhoea and trained the staff. The cholera emerged in April in Sudan and, since then, has spread to the north of the country.

At the end of August, new fights between the Sudanese army and some rebel groups occurred north of El Fasher which broadened during the following days. As a response to the deterioration of the security situation, Malteser International arranged for even stricter security precautions, even though its project area is not directly affected by the current escalation.

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2. Asia

Cambodia: First results of a pilot project introducing a Health Insurance in Oddar Meanchey Province

On 19 September, a forum on Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) chaired by the State Secretary for Health took place in Phnom Penh. Representatives from NGOs that implement CBHI schemes in Cambodia had the opportunity to present their CBHI schemes to the audience. On this occasion, Mr Heng Kim Noeum, a long time member of the Cambodian staff, presented the Malteser International CBHI scheme.



This pilot project, implemented by the local partner NGO 'Cambodian Health and Human Rights Alliance' (CHHRA), has been running in four villages since August 2005. With the insurance, families can cover all services at the health centre, deliver-

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ies at hospital, transports to the hospital, hospitalization, funerals and house fires. The premium payment is carried out after the harvest, in some cases with rice as currency. The thus incoming money is used for loans to generate income as well as for health expenditures. One year after the project's introduction, 308 families are insured and the number of consultations in the hospitals increased in most months over 30 %.

The discussions during the meeting mainly focused on the differences between the various schemes of the NGOs, as the whole concept is still very new to the Cambodian health sector. Finally the link between CBHI schemes and health equity funds, that cover health costs for the very poor, was emphasised as future strategy for CBHI schemes in Cambodia.

Further information:

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Indonesia/Java: New phase of relief for earthquake victims

After the end of emergency relief following the earthquake on Indonesia's main island Java in May, Malteser International's field hospital could be closed at the end of August. All patients were either sent home or transferred for further treatment to other hospitals or rehabilitation centres with which Malteser International cooperates.



As there is still a need for health care services and rehabilitation measures, Malteser International is going to send a mobile team to the villages to treat those who were not or just inadequately treated after the earthquake and transfer those patients who are in need of an operation to the partner hospital. Malteser International together with local partners is becoming active in the field of rehabilitation and after-treatment as well. Finally, the organisation is going to build temporary clinics in the villages to ensure medical treatment for the village population until the destroyed health centres will be rehabilitated.

Further information:

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Myanmar: Malaria control project completed

Malteser International completed a 40 months' malaria control project in Wa Special Region, Shan State. The three project cycles, funded by ECHO, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department, aimed at reducing severe illness and death caused by malaria in the remote highland region. Four Malteser mobile teams travelled to remote villages across the southern and northern Wa Region. They regularly visited public market days offering free diagnostic tests and treatment for malaria thus raising awareness of the disease.

By the end of the project more than 69,000 people had been screened for malaria of which a quarter of patients, many of them children, were tested positive. All those

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diagnosed received appropriate treatment. In malaria hot spot areas 9,000 long-lasting insecticide mosquito nets were distributed. Furthermore, Malteser International placed emphasis on the sustainable improvement of local diagnostic services. 49 lab technicians were trained and equipped and partly integrated into the outreach teams or posted to rural health centres. The teams also conducted health promotion sessions reaching more than 31.500 villagers and school children, thereby significantly raising the awareness of malaria prevention and treatment.

The positive impact of this comprehensive malaria project was confirmed by an impact survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It shows that the reduction of malaria prevalence was perceived as an effective and welcome success by the local communities as well as by the local authorities. One villager's comment says it all: "Before, this Mong Kar area was the malaria area. But now we can't see anyone who has died of malaria". Malteser International's malaria control activities were integrated into an overall primary health care project implemented by the French organisation Aide Médicale Internationale in August.

Malteser International stays in the Wa Region to further assist the impoverished and vulnerable population. It plans to continue and extend its HIV/AIDS control project in the region that is implemented since July 2004 and funded by the Fund for HIV/AIDS Myanmar (FHAM-UNAIDS). A new project funded by the German Federal Department of Economic Cooperation and Development will help Malteser International to strengthen the water and sanitation activities in one northern district of Wa Region by focusing on better access to clean water and provision of sanitation facilities to villages and schools in need.

Further information:

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Thailand: 'On the borderline of hope' – Medical relief for refugees from Myanmar

On the occasion of Germany's "Refugee Day" on 29 September, Malteser International presents the film "On the borderline of hope" about its work in the refugee camps in the north of Thailand at the border with Myanmar. The film which has been realised with financial support of the European Union's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) in English and a German version can be seen on Malteser International's website: <http://www.malteser-international.org>.



Since December, more than 3,000 new refugees from Myanmar have arrived in the two camps in northern Thailand, where Malteser International assures primary health care. The population in the camps thereby grew by 10 percent. Therefore, the organisation plans to enlarge its programme in order to ensure the medical and sanitary provision of the two camps. In the camps, Malteser International runs two clinics and several out-patients-departments, fights diseases like malaria, examines pregnant women, mothers and children, trains midwives and community health workers and sets up water and sanitary installations. The project, which is financed by ECHO has started in 1993.

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For more than 20 years, tens of thousands of refugees from Myanmar (formerly Burma) have been seeking refuge in Thailand. After the recent wave of immigration, more than 150,000 refugees are living in camps in northern Thailand. They are mainly members of ethnic minorities. In Thailand, their status as refugees is not recognised; therefore they are fully dependent on foreign aid.

Further information:

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3. Europe

Lithuania: Conference results in strengthening of voluntary partnership structures

On 1 September, the annual conference on Lithuania took place in Osnabrueck. Representatives of the twelve partner groups from Malteser Germany discussed the future of the German-Lithuanian cooperation with representatives of the Order of Malta's Lithuanian relief service MOPT (Maltos Ordino Pagalbos Tarnyba), representatives of the Order of Malta and of Malteser Foreign Aid Service. Among the participants was the Secretary General of MOPT, Mr Arvydas Bružas, as well as the outgoing and the newly appointed ambassador of the Sovereign Order of Malta (SOM), Dr. Peter Freiherr von Fuerstenberg, respectively Douglas Graf von Saurma-Jeltsch.



Aiming at more economical and programmatic independence for MOPT, the conference focussed on adequate new projects and strategic concepts. Therefore, the success and development of recently established projects - as for example the 'home care service' which benefits elderly people - as well as strategies - for example regarding fundraising - were documented and evaluated. As a result, the German-Lithuanian cooperation will be deepened and the structural stability of MOPT fostered.

Further information:

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4. Staff

Staff Particulars

Ingrid Kelters, a medical doctor and public health expert from the Netherlands, began to work as the coordinator of the community health project in Samrong, Cambodia, on 15 September.



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5. Others

AIDS Policy and Practical Aspects for Implementation

The document 'AIDS Policy and Practical Aspects for Implementation' recently adopted by the Executive Committee of Malteser International points out the worldwide consequences of HIV/AIDS and presents the organisation's strategy to fight this disease.



'The daily death toll of AIDS is 8,500 worldwide', the document states. It outlines that every day about 14,000 people get newly infected. 95 % of the caseload is registered in developing countries. In those countries, AIDS provokes a 'social and economical disaster'. Causing the loss of a whole parental generation of politicians, skilled labourers, teachers and others, it destroys what was gained by decades of poverty alleviation. Hence, the paper declares, the disease is a problem of the whole society.

In its strategy, Malteser International recognises HIV/AIDS as major challenge for its work, at the same time acknowledging that HIV/AIDS is causing poverty and being caused by poverty. With special attention to the most vulnerable groups, the organisation seeks to improve access to diagnosis, treatment and care and to establish preventive measures as cross cutting tasks in all programmes and projects. It aims to realise a workplace policy with internationally valid guidelines. With its membership of 'Aktionsbündnis gegen AIDS' ('Advocacy Alliance against AIDS'), Malteser International positions itself clearly in the combat against AIDS.

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Annual Report 2005 now also in English available

Finally, Malteser International's Annual Report 2005 is also available in English.

From next week on, the document can be downloaded here:

www.malteser-international.org (=> News/Press => Documents for download)

To order the printed version, please call ++49 221 98 22 214 (Anke Barth) or send an email to: <mailto:p.kommunikation1@malteser-international.org>

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