



NEWSLETTER OF THE ORDER OF MALTA'S WORLDWIDE RELIEF SERVICE



**Malteser
International**
Order of Malta Worldwide Relief

April/
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2009

ON THE SPOT



BREAKING NEWS

AFRICA: DR CONGO — CARING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Malteser International Board of Directors re-elected

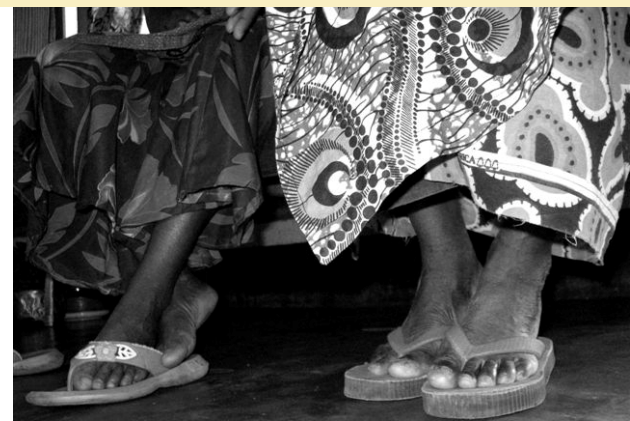
The General Assembly of Malteser International took place on 5 May 2009 in Lourdes on the verge of the annual international pilgrimage of the Order of Malta to Lourdes. We are glad to inform that all members of the Board of Directors have been re-elected unanimously.

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Since December 2007 Malteser International supports the Centre SOSAME for mental health in Bukavu. After over two decades of conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, more and more mental health problems are beginning to appear amongst people who have faced traumatic experiences.

With a capacity of one hundred in-patients the centre is the only hospital offering mental health services in South Kivu province, an area with a population of six million people. The outreach activities in the region and the work of the Centre SOSAME are supported by the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO).

Read the [whole story](#) on our website.



Malteser International supports traumatised people in the DR Congo. (Source: ECHO)

SUDAN — HEALTH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING IN NORTH DARFUR



Health education and awareness raising to prevent the outbreak of diseases in North Darfur.

In March Malteser International has trained 60 volunteers in Shangil Tabayi in North Darfur on personal hygiene, food hygiene, safe water and meningitis prevention as a reaction to an increase of diarrhoea cases in the region. After the trainings participants visited about 3,600 households in the rural area for awareness raising purposes. After violent clashes in Wada in February 37 Community Health Volunteers were trained and conducted house to house sessions to prevent the outbreak of diseases.

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More than 800 houses and latrines and a big number of animals had been burnt in the course of the fighting leaving behind cadavers and waste that pose a health risk to the population.

As part of regular community health education in the months of February, March and April 433 Community Health Volunteers were trained on nutrition and 354 Community Health Volunteers participated in awareness raising sessions on Immunisation and Ante Natal Care.

Community health volunteer trained by Malteser International.



WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY — AWARENESS RAISING IN KENYA AND SUDAN



TB awareness raising in Rumbek.

World Tuberculosis Day on 24 March 2009 was celebrated in Malteser International projects with a variety of awareness raising events.

Under the slogan “I am stopping TB” the action days seek to inform about cause, transmission, treatment and prevention of tuberculosis.



TB Fighters Football Club in Rumbek

In Rumbek, South Sudan, the staff organized, besides information for the public via leaflets, banners, personal discussion, drama and songs about TB and HIV, also a football match of the Gol International staff and Saint

Bakhita health centre staff organized a range of events: Through a radio show, songs, drama and personal testimonies of TB patients the message about the fight against TB was brought across.

In Nairobi the day was celebrated in the Kibera slums where Malteser International operates through the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF). Malteser International was recognized for its immense contribution in TB control in Kenya and contributed T-shirts to the occasion. Nurses and community health workers participated actively by giving speeches on TB. On this occasion Kenya was recognised for realising the WHO targets of 70% case detection rate and treatment success rate of 85%.



TB information unit in Kenya.

ASIA: INDONESIA — NEW PREMISES FOR CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY

In Northern Sumatra a kindergarten and four renovated community premises were opened on 20 April 2009. The community facilities that were rebuilt as part of the Malteser International community development programme serve as kindergarten, primary school and meeting place and offer enough space to conduct health activities and religious meetings.

Project coordinator Heinrich Rinke emphasised the smooth cooperation with the local partner organisation Hati Nurani and the initiative the communities have shown during the works. “We have learnt a lot through the monitoring and cooperation with Malteser International. As one result we were able to realise the project in only in three months,” Mr Ishan, director of Hati Nurana, says. Also the capacity in issues of coordination, mobilisation and communication with the stakeholders has increased, he further mentions. 62 applications for the kindergarten the community already have.

This kindergarten and rehabilitated community hall is the foundation for further activities in the community and an important step to strengthen community activities in the former conflict area and hinterland of Aceh Utara in North Sumatra.



Inauguration of new premises in Aceh Utara /North Sumatra.

MYANMAR — RECONSTRUCTION ONE YEAR AFTER NARGIS



One year after cyclone Nargis devastated large parts of Myanmar on 2 May 2008, reconstruction and rehabilitation works in the severely affected Irrawaddy Delta are still far from being finalised. Malteser International will continue its rehabilitation and reconstruction programme for population living in the region affected by cyclone Nargis at least until 2011. Focus areas of work are health care, water, sanitation and hygiene as well as disaster preparedness. Currently 320 local and 17 international staff members of Malteser International work in the country. During the past year, Malteser International’s aid reached about 1,2 Million people in Myanmar. - “An important objective of our projects is to secure a sustain-

Distribution of drinking water in the Irrawaddy Delta.

sustainable supply of drinking water for about 120,000 people in the Irrawaddy Delta”, reports Sandra Harlass, Malteser International coordinator of the Nargis rehabilitation programme in Cologne. “Furthermore, all reconstruction measures are embedded in a disaster preparedness programme at community level.” The project volume in 2009 as in the year before amounts to 2.34 million Euro. The reconstruction programme is financially supported amongst others by Caritas Germany and other Caritas associations, the European Union and the Federal Government of Germany.

For more pictures from Myanmar please click [here](#).



SRI LANKA – EMERGENCY AID FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Since March 2009 Malteser International has been working in several IDP camps in the Vavuniya and Mannar Districts and since early May also in Pulmoddai in the north of Sri Lanka.

Through their local partner Sarvodaya more than 2,500 emergency kits with hygiene articles and clothing were distributed.



Country Coordinator Gerhard Serafin with local staff in a camp for internally displaced persons in Vavuniya

Another 1,700 kits are especially designed for the most vulnerable groups of infants and pregnant women and were given to the hospital in Mannar to respond quickly when the need arises. A balance of 1,500 kits is kept in the stores and will immediately be given to the newly arriving refugees according to their demands. Additionally, three meals are being given on a daily basis to more than 3,000 people in one of the camps where Sarvodaya is running a field kitchen.

This humanitarian aid project is co-funded by the German Federal Foreign Office for a period of three months.

A local staff member of Malteser International reports back from a recent monitoring visit: “Each day 30 to 35 buses with refugees are brought to Vavuniya. Among the crowd are pregnant and feeding mothers carrying their infants. Most of them are dehydrated and exhausted. They didn’t change their clothes for many days and looked very unclean and tired. Some have lost their beloved family members while coming from the no fire zone to the cleared area by cross fire between the Government forces and the LTTE. Some were tearing and in a very depressed condition.”

Malteser International has included health and hygiene promotion, basic health training and psycho-social support in their activities. More than 70 highly motivated volunteers were trained to work directly with the IDPs. They take care of basic health problems like first aid and caring for sick and wounded people, they raise the awareness of personal hygiene and clean drinking water and they support the IDPs to cope with their psychosocial stress through traditional meditation and religious practices.

Malteser International is closely observing the complex situation and developments and liaises with all relevant authorities and humanitarian actors in order to continue the support the affected civilians and their increasing humanitarian demands. Provided that additional resources will be made available, the project activities may be extended.

Read an [Interview](#) with Gerhard Serafin on our Website.

STAFF: IN MEMORIAM— JULIETA CONROY PAZ, MEXICO

It is with deep sadness that Malteser International has learned about the sudden death of Julieta Conroy Paz, member of the Mexican Association of the Order of Malta and of the Mexican “Fundación de Apoyo Social” in the afternoon of 7 April 2009. With Julieta Conroy Paz Malteser International does not only lose a highly esteemed colleague, but also a very close friend and

convincing example of Christian faith and living. Her death means a big loss for all those who serve the poor and the needy under the sign of the eight-pointed cross. Julieta was one of us. We will deeply miss and never forget her. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family. May God rest her soul.

PORTRAITS OF OUR HELP — GERHARD SERAFIN, COUNTRY COORDINATOR SRI LANKA

A challenging job for the poorest of the poor

Gerhard Serafin, a tradesman, began to think about a career in humanitarian aid during his alternative civilian service. “I thought that there must be something else than bargaining and business affairs“, he remembers. A trip to Asia brought clarity: “The longer we travelled, the more we came into contact with the local population and I felt that I really want to work in such an environment with people living in extremely difficult conditions. After that journey, it was clear to me that I wanted to become a relief worker.”

Responsible for a transparent administration

Today he is responsible for a well working and transparent administration in the Malteser International country office in Colombo. “Most of the time, I am sitting at my desk calculating“, he smiles. “Of course, this is not what most of the people imagine when they think of a humanitarian relief worker, but our administration is providing the operational support that is absolutely essential for the implementation of successful relief programmes.”

Serafin sets up contracts with partner organisations, leads negotiations with local authorities and clarifies legal questions such as land rights after the tsunami. He is responsible for the supervision of local staff, purchases goods and takes care of logistics. “Every disaster relief activity requires relief items, contracts and all other material in sufficient quantity at the right place at the right time.”

“One has to know the cultural background”

One of the challenges for him is the training of administration staff of local partner organisations. “One has to know the cultural background of those organisations and their staff members to be successful in this job“, the expert explains.



Gerhard Serafin, Country Coordinator Sri Lanka.

“The best satisfaction after such a training is to see how a paper box full of receipts eventually changed into a genuine financial report which is accepted by well-known international donors.”

The goal of these workshops is to enable the local organisations to continue the development process even after the closure of Malteser International’s programmes in the country. “Finally, it is my job to work in such a manner that I will become redundant and that the partners can do all the required work on their own. And at the end we strike a balance to check if the results of my work here in Sri Lanka are transferable to the work in other countries.”

Personal commitment for people living in poverty

But until that moment comes Gerhard Serafin still wants to achieve a lot. “To be committed to helping the poorest of the poor and to work under often extremely difficult conditions is a challenge. But if I can contribute with my work to improve the living conditions of the people on a long term basis and in a sustainable way, I really like to meet this challenge every day.”

Read here an [interview with Gehard Serafin](#) on the situation in Sri Lanka.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RE-ELECTED

On the verge of the annual international pilgrimage of the Order of Malta to Lourdes in the first week of May, the General Assembly of Malteser International took also place in Lourdes on 5 May 2009. One of the main duties of the General Assembly is the election and discharge of the voluntary Board of Directors.

We are glad to inform that all members of the Board of Directors after their first quadrennial term of office – after having declared their preparedness for a further commitment – have been re-elected unanimously:

President: Nicolas de Cock de Rameyen (Belgium)

Vice-President: Comte Thierry de Beaumont-Beynac (France)

Vice-President: Geoffrey Gamble (USA)

Vice-President: Richard Freiherr von Steeb (Austria)



Vice-President: Amb. (ret.) Theodor Wallau (Germany)

Vice-President/ Financial Supervisor: Charles-Louis de Laguiche



The position of a sixth Vice-President is still vacant and kept free for a representative from the Asia/Pacific region. Our sincere thanks go to the previous and the new Board of Directors combined with our best wishes for their work within the next four years.

FAREWELL FOR DR. PETER SCHMITZ

With the end of April 2009 Dr. Peter Schmitz, Chief Medical Officer of Malteser International, has left the organisation to take over a new task with the German Development Department in Bonn, Germany.

Since the year 2000 Dr. Schmitz has extensively contributed to the profile and quality of the

organisation's health sector and beyond. He was one of the driving forces who achieved that primary care, HIV/AIDS and the link to TB among others were included into the profile of Malteser International.

His many years of experience in humanitarian aid and public health management made him an asset for the organisation, for which we are all very grateful. We wish him all the very best for his new working environment and private life.

Dr. Marie Theres Benner, will be the new Head of Public Health & Quality Management within



Dr. Peter Schmitz left Malteser International in April.



Dr. Marie Theres Benner succeeds Dr. Peter Schmitz as Head of Public Health & Quality Management unit.

Malteser International. Dr. Benner has been working in Thailand as a Health Coordinator from 1992 to 1996 and as Project Manager and later as Country Coordinator and Advisor for South East Asia from 2000 to mid-2005. Since July 2005 she has been active as Senior Health Coordinator together with Dr. Peter Schmitz in the Malteser International Headquarters.

STAFF POSTINGS

On 1 April

Eva Schöning, Germany citizen, started working as Midwife in Thailand.

On 22 April

Per Vogel, Swedish citizen, started working as Program Coordinator in Myanmar.

On 25 April

Maia McFadden, US citizen, started working as Primary Health Care Coordinator in Myanmar.

On 26 April

Dr. Denis Pirlot de Corbion, Belgium citizen, started working as Medical Coordinator in Myanmar.

WORLD HEALTH DAY: MALTESER INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS RESPONSE TO CYCLONE NARGIS

On 7 April the Ministry of Health in Berlin, Germany, invited health professionals and politicians to a conference to mark the World Health Day.

The motto set by the Ministry was 'What measures do we need to take in emergencies?' Dr. Marie Theres Benner from Malteser International was invited and contributed with a presentation on the response taken by Malteser International after cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in May 2008.

More than 100 participants came to the conference to share and to seek opportunities for networking.



Dr. Marie Theres Benner gave a presentation on the occasion of World Health Day. Source: Bundesvereinigung Prävention und Gesundheitsförderung e.V.

Read here the presentation given by Dr. Marie Theres Benner on the occasion of World Health Day 2009 [“Erfahrungen einer medizinischen Hilfsorganisation nach Zyklon Nargis – Myanmar“](#) (in German).

ITALY: 68 VOLUNTEERS WORK FOR EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

On 6 April an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale struck central Italy. About 280 people lost their life due, tens of thousands lost their homes.

Immediately after the catastrophe CISOM, the Relief Corps of the Italian Association of the Order of Malta, sent relief workers to the affected area.



Relief workers of the Order of Malta in L'Aquila.

With 68 voluntary rescue workers – among them six doctors, six medical assistants and 54 emergency medical technicians – the Order of Malta coordinated two camps for displaced persons.

On 15 April the Grand Hospitaller, Albrecht von Boeselager, visited the areas of Abruzzi affected by the earthquake and showed appreciation for the volunteers work. "The high level of organization, the atmosphere in the camps, the relative serenity of the people so affected by events demonstrate the quality of intervention provided by our volunteers. To them goes all our admiration and gratitude for their dedication" said Boeselager.

The Grand Master of the Order of Malta Fra 'Matthew Festing visited the two camps of Poggio di Roio and S. Felix d'Ocre on 23 April.

Read more on the website of the [Order of Malta in Italy](#).