



NEWSLETTER OF THE ORDER OF MALTA'S WORLDWIDE RELIEF SERVICE



**Malteser
International**
Order of Malta Worldwide Relief

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ON THE SPOT



NEWS IN BRIEF

NEW GUIDELINES

Malteser International has produced a new publication of operational guidelines for project managers in humanitarian aid. [Click here to download.](#) If you would like to order a printed copy then please contact us at info@malteser-international.org



VENICE SEMINAR

The Order of Malta's strategy seminar took place in Venice in January. During the course of the seminar the Grand Master, Fra' Matthew Festing highlighted the work of Malteser International and stressed its future importance to the mission of the Order.

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AFRICA: DR CONGO — MEDICAL RELIEF

In December rebels from the Lord's Resistance Army devastated the town and surrounding area of Faradje in the north east of the DR Congo. The general hospital was burned and looted of equipment and medicines and two further health centres were also burned. Up to 1,000 houses were burned with cases of kidnapping and rape also reported. Currently many people are being forced to live in churches, schools or out in the open.

Working with local partners—both NGOs and local authorities—and with the support of the European Union, Malteser International has organised the provision of 2.5 tons of emergency medical equipment and free drugs for health facilities in order to enable the remaining medical staff to treat the numerous wounded and to rehabilitate the health care services. Malteser International benefited from strong local support and gratitude for these measures which were realised soon after the



The airlift of supplies for Faradje is organised by a partner NGO.

attacks in late December.

The latest news from the area points to continued unrest and an increased flow of refugees within Malteser International's area of operation. The situation continues to be monitored. Malteser International has been supporting health structures in Faradje as part of its work in DR Congo since 2006.



Left: Local actors were of vital importance in the final leg of distribution.



Right: Devastation caused to homes by the LRA

For more of these stories, and other news visit: www.malteser-international.org and www.maltarelief.org



KENYA — IMPROVING TB DIAGNOSIS

By donating three water distillers for the district hospital in Kenya's central province and for two health facilities in Maragua and Kirinyaga districts, Malteser International ensures that the simple solution of using distilled water for TB diagnosis is implemented. The three distillers can produce 20 litres of distilled water per hour. Malteser International is part of a consortium in Nairobi and Kenya's central province which is responsible for increasing TB/HIV services and bring-

ing health care closer to the people. Recently, while supervising this project in central province Malteser International staff discovered that TB diagnosis (for which microscopes are used) was being done using river water. As the TB bacillus circulates in air, it could easily be found in non-distilled water. This was likely to lead to misdiagnosis followed by patients being given the wrong treatment and suffering the side effects.



Handing over one of the water distillers to the district hospital

SOUTHERN SUDAN — THE TREATMENT COMMANDERS

How two commanders in Maridi saved the life of one of their soldiers suffering from tuberculosis

One of the greatest challenges in the implementation and success of the tuberculosis (TB) projects in South Sudan is ensuring that patients do not default on their treatment. If treatment is stopped before a patient is fully cured then they are at risk from developing a form of TB which is resistant to normal treatment.

Malteser International has encountered a particular problem in the South Sudanese city of Maridi where it treats many soldiers in the hospital's TB ward. The particular problem is that soldiers are often transferred by their officers right in the middle of their treatment. Regular movement of troops is a common fact of life in South Sudan where the security situation is volatile and ever shifting.

Recently Malteser International has found a solution by encouraging commanders to become 'treatment supporters' for their soldiers suffering from TB.

This is the story of Marko Lomone from battalion 136. He was enrolled for the treatment in the Malteser

International TB ward in Maridi and his initial phase of treatment went well. When he was discharged, one of his commanders, Sergeant Jacob Deng volunteered to be his 'treatment supporter'. The commander was given basic training to enable him to monitor Marko Lomone's ongoing outpatient treatment. The commander even looked after the drugs personally and made sure that Marko could take them each morning for the remaining four months of his treatment. Marko complied well at first, however, as soon as he was feeling better he stopped taking the medicine but on the first morning this happened Sergeant Deng promptly tracked him down with the support of the battalion commander. After a further week of treatment, Marko again tried to default on his treatment but was tracked down, this time in a local brewery and drinking den. On this occasion he was ordered back to hospital and forced to stay put until his treatment was successfully completed at the end of November 2008. The commander came and picked him from the hospital amid cheering from other patients, fellow soldiers and medical staff alike.



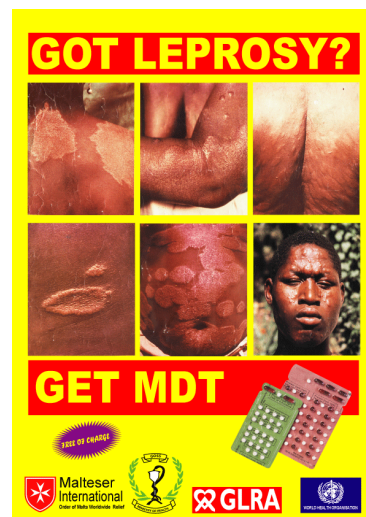
On the run from treatment - Marko Lomone

This is just one man, but the life of this soldier was saved! If other community leaders can take such an initiative, the default rate will go down, the lives saved will add up to many and the primary mission of Malteser International will be achieved.

SOUTHERN SUDAN — WORLD LEPROSY DAY 2009

On World Leprosy Day on the 25th January Malteser International in its project location in Yei organized a number of community events including drama performances, which always combined a serious message, conveyed through public address systems and brochures. Community leaders as well as former and current patients discussed subjects from discrimination against leprosy patients, to personal experiences with the dis-

ease. A radio talk show was another highlight of the event, in which issues concerning the dignity of sufferers were discussed and the need for greater community support initiatives was emphasized. During the course of the event Malteser International's leprosy projects in South Sudan were praised, while the message from Malteser International was for increased use of its leprosy screening programmes.



Leprosy education poster

SOUTHERN SUDAN — NEW TB/HIV CLINIC IN LASU

In January, Malteser International completed and opened a new tuberculosis and HIV clinic in Lasu, a commune south of Yei, with a population of about 25,000. This community is served by only one primary health care centre with a very limited capacity. The new clinic represents an effort to integrate TB treatment into the existing health care system and control of the clinic will be handed over to local authorities. The clinic can be used for both TB and leprosy diagnosis and treatment, which will be significantly improved, with positive impacts on follow-up treatment and fewer patients defaulting in their

treatment.

At the clinic's inauguration on 23rd January, both Malteser International staff and local dignitaries were in attendance. Local representatives spoke warmly of Malteser International's strong commitments and accomplishments in Lasu so far. One administrator addressed other community leaders and encouraged them to participate in referrals, and encourage people to seek treatment in the new clinic rather than travel to Yei. A local chief concluded his speech saying: "God bless Malteser International and its staff for ensuring that their promise became a reality".



Above: Speeches are given
 Below: The newly inaugurated clinic in Lasu

ASIA: AFGHANISTAN — EPILEPSY & LEISHMANIOSIS

In 2009, Malteser International will continue to provide financial support to its local partner in Afghanistan. The beneficiary is a clinic in Kabul run by the German Medical Service, which in 2008 helped over 2,300 patients suffering from leishmaniosis and epilepsy. The clinic, which is run by the brothers of the monastery of

Triefenstein, plays an important role in this field as governmental structures are unable to cope with the need for these services. Malteser International left Afghanistan in 2007 and no longer has its own structures there, but through measures such as these, medical relief can continue to be provided.



Diagnosis and treatment in the clinic

INDIA — FROM FLOOD RELIEF TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Following the floods in Bihar, northern India, in the summer of 2008, Malteser International has now finalised its emergency relief measures. The focus now has switched into the vital field of disaster preparedness, with projects that will continue to ensure that local populations are better equipped to survive and overcome future flooding. Malteser International's projects have so far tackled the lack of safe drinking water, which is often the cause of disease following flooding, by raising village wells onto a higher platform. Early warning systems have been implemented, and search and rescue teams established, trained and equipped in order to help

manage future evacuation and rescue missions. The success of these measures was seen during flooding in September 2008, when the availability of life boats and rescue teams successfully protected local villagers, and even assisted neighbouring villages.

Further measures continue to see the most vulnerable homesteads being raised above flood water levels, while the families are placed in temporary shelters. These measures are implemented through a Cash for Work scheme which in turn offers employment in communities where livelihoods were often swept away. The region of Uttar Pradesh, at the Nepalese border is an area that frequently



Village well raised above flood water levels

suffers from floods and where disaster preparedness is urgently needed and where Malteser International continues to implement its disaster relief projects.

THAILAND — MEDICAL CARE FOR REFUGEES



Basic health care as well as HIV treatment will continue to be offered in the camps. (Photo:Joerg Worms)

Recent financial support of 1.2 million euros from ECHO will help Malteser International to continue its health care programme for refugees on the Thai-Myanmar border. Furthermore ongoing financial support from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) enables Malteser International to offer access to HIV/

AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services for refugees in the same camps. Since 1993 Malteser International has been providing curative and preventative health care projects on the Thai-Burmese border. For 20 years refugees have been fleeing human rights abuses and violence in Myanmar.

OTHER NEWS — VENICE SEMINAR 2009



The Order's Delegates meet in Venice.

“It has been very successful,” the Grand Master of the Order of Malta, Fra' Matthew Festing, commented on the Order's International Seminar, taking place for the first time in Venice from 15 to 18 January, in which over 400 delegates from five continents participated. This was the largest meeting of the Order's leaders ever held, with the aim of assessing and sharing, from north to south, from east

to west, its future strategies.

In his introductory speech, the Grand Master stressed some of the Order's priorities among these were the extension and enhancement of health and humanitarian operations. In this context the importance of Malteser International was noted and described as an organisation “whose work is admired worldwide”.

STAFF PORTRAITS OF OUR HELP — LASANTHA HERATH

Malteser International employs more than 1,000 staff members worldwide. About ten percent of them are international expatriates, the others are local aid workers. In this month's edition of "Portraits of our Help" you can get to know one of these local experts, the assistant project coordinator of the water, sanitation and hygiene projects in Galle, Sri Lanka: Lasantha Herath.

When Lasantha Herath and his team of voluntary community hygiene educators come to the village of Mirissa, everyone leaves their house to welcome the Malteser International team. The welcome is very cordial. As hospitality is very important in this region, someone brings a drink and bananas for the team. "It is always a pleasure to have you here", the community representatives point out.

Mirissa is a village in the tsunami affected district of Matara in southern Sri Lanka. To reach their homes, the inhabitants - as well as the aid workers implementing projects in the village - have to climb up an extremely steep hillside which gets slippery after heavy rains. Lasantha Herath came here very often because Malteser International together with its local partner Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum was building rainwater harvesting tanks for the families living on top of the hill. Before they got the tanks, they had to climb up and down the hill many times per day to bring safe drinking water for their families. Even in the dry season, the precipitous path was hard to access

for elderly persons or pregnant women. In the rainy seasons, it was often too dangerous to go to collect water. Now, the tanks can be filled during the rainy season and provide clean water even during most of the dry season.

Lasantha always has an open ear for the questions, problems and ideas of the villagers. Today - just as the team wants to leave - a young woman with a baby boy in her arms calls for Lasantha and asks them to stop. Lasantha does so at once. The lady and her family just moved to the village and do not have a water tank yet. She admires the tanks of all her neighbours and would also be happy to get one. Lasantha climbs with her to her house and examines the case. "I can not promise anything, but I will really try to get this family a rain water harvesting tank. This is what really makes me happy", he explains, when he finally leaves the village: to build up helpful tools for the community that they really use and that really ease their hard daily lives. And if we can help more people for than we have planned at the beginning, this is even better!"

To do exactly this, Lasantha Herath left his job as a public health inspector. "I wanted to help the people in the coastal areas and I knew that I had the knowledge and the capacity to do so. That is why I applied for a job with Malteser International." Since 2005, the expert with a diploma in public health and a university degree in bio-sciences puts all his energy into the relief and



"After the tsunami, I went to coordination meetings with more than 200 organisations at a time."

rehabilitation projects of Malteser International. "After the tsunami, I went to coordination meetings with more than 200 organisations at a time. Today, nearly four years later, only a few are left and I am happy that I am working with one of them. In my opinion it is important not only to build up houses and infrastructure but to pave a way into a better future together with the communities. That is what I am working for."

STAFF ABROAD — NEW POSTINGS

On 01.02.09

Edvard Hoegner from Germany began work in India as a project assistant.

On 01.02.09

Basit Ahmady from Afghanistan began work in Myanmar as a programme administrator.

On 10.02.09

Minn Naing Oo from Myanmar, who has been working for Malteser International in Myanmar for six years, began work as deputy programme coordinator in Cambodia.

On 15.02.09

Jan Gruss from Germany began work in Sri Lanka as a project assistant.

On 15.02.09

Dr. T P Balathandan from India, began work in Myanmar as a project manager.

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