

# On the SPOT.

**NEWSLETTER  
March 2008**

## AFRICA

### **DR Congo: Malteser International one of the leading agencies in the treatment of victims of sexual aggression**

In its press information released on 19 March, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) pointed out that in the past year almost 16,869 women that have been victims of sexual aggression were treated by different humanitarian organisations in South Kivu. In 2007, Malteser International treated 6,927 of these almost 17,000 women – a number representing almost 41 percent. That's why Malteser International turns out to be one of the leading agencies taking care of victims of sexual aggression in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Already in 2003, Malteser International started a particular programme to provide psycho-social and medical assistance to the numerous women and girls who were brutalized in the war. In cooperation with local NGOs, particular trainings are offered in order to sensitise staff on the issue. Next to the work in the centres, skilled counsellors go to see the victims in the villages, advice and encourage them to look for treatment. Many of the counsellors have been victims themselves and use their own experience to help others.



### **Kenya: High award for Riruta health centre**



Already in December 2007, the Kenyan National Leprosy and Tuberculosis Programme had chosen the diagnosis and treatment centre Riruta – supported by Malteser International - in the slums of Nairobi to be the overall best managed tuberculosis (TB) facility of the years 2006 and 2007 in the country. Now, on 20 March 2008, Dr. Joseph Sitieni, Head of the Programme, in a solemn ceremony presented the awards at the Riruta health centre. The awards comprised the cup, a certificate and a computer for data storage. Congratulations!

Since August 2001, Malteser International has been fighting TB in eight slums of Nairobi with a catchment area of 600,000 people. The diagnosis and treatment, the training of local staff in the health centres, the set up of laboratories and the education of slum residents are essential parts of the programme. The employment and further training of local specialised staff is the key to the success of the work in Nairobi.

## Sudan: Launch of “Stop Tuberculosis Campaign”

This year’s World Tuberculosis (TB) Day was an historical event for five counties in South Sudan. Malteser International, in cooperation with the county health departments, used the occasion of this day to create awareness on how to stop TB. In Western Equatorial State, public rallies were organised in Ibba, Maridi and Mundri West counties. In Central State, there were campaigns in greater Yei County and for Lakes State the day was marked in Rumbek town.

“I am stopping TB” was the theme of the day which saw many people accepting to take the individual challenge to participate in the fight against TB within the counties. Gatherings of hundreds of people were entertained by plays, puppetry, music concerts and football match competitions that passed various messages on how to stop TB. School children participated in writing competitions on how to stop TB in their community. Posters and leaflets on TB were distributed to the public and community leaders gave speeches that expressed their commitment to the “Stop TB Campaign”. They will also take the message to grass root levels in the villages of Payam and Boma.

TB remains a major cause of morbidity and mortality in South Sudan. Patients either don’t go for treatment or take the decision to seek for health care when it’s too late. Empowering the communities through awareness campaigns will enable them to get medical treatment at the earliest chance possible to reduce the burden caused by TB.

The Malteser International TB/HIV program in South Sudan is funded by ECHO and Global Fund.

## ASIA

### India: Swim trainings as community based disaster preparedness

Since December 2007, Malteser International, in cooperation with its local partner Sahayi, is organizing swim trainings for young people in the tsunami affected Alappad Panchayath in Kollam district, Kerala. Though very unexpected, many members of fishing communities in India can not swim which also caused many of the deaths when the tsunami hit.

After assessing the interest for swim trainings among the youth of Alappad Panchayath, Sahayi has selected 30 young boys and girls to participate in the classes. The goal is to develop their capacity to work as life-guards in their villages. The communities are situated between the Arabian Sea and a canal and therefore, the young people learn how to swim in the open sea as well as in the waters of the canal. The volunteers are divided into two groups; one is trained in the morning, the other in the evening, three times a week. The training is carried out by a qualified swimming teacher and life-guard and always starts with a structured physical exercise followed by swimming practice. The classes are very popular among the youth of Alappad Panchayath and the community members also show big interest: they observe the training and motivate the volunteers.



Another sign of the success of the project is the demand to extend the training for more young people. Therefore, Malteser International and Sahayi are now taking the next step: the trained volunteers are going to instruct the next future volunteers, therefore creating a self-sustainable cycle.

## Indonesia: Safe water supply for 569 households

In 2005, after the tsunami, Malteser International started working in Aceh Utara. Reconstruction and rehabilitation works concentrated on two destroyed villages along the coastline, Lancok and Jambu Timu. In the beginning, first emergency relief measures were carried out, and later on, house construction was started. Once the houses were built, Malteser International installed a 6.5 kilometres long pipe-system to provide drinking water for this region. After nine months of construction, the organisation now handed over a drinking water supply system for 569 households to the local water supplier. Due to the tsunami, the traditional water supply was not possible anymore. The water in the wells was too salty to use. Each household now pays a fee to the local water supplier for maintenance and repairs. The project was co-funded by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development through KfW Development Bank and additionally monitored by GITEC.



## Sri Lanka: “Window and door frame fixing ceremony” for new school in Islamabad/ Kalmunai



On 21 February 2008, a “window and door frame fixing ceremony” was held for the new school in Islamabad, Kalmunai Division, that Malteser International started to reconstruct after the tsunami. In Sri Lanka, this ceremony is held once the construction of a building has reached the level at which doors and windows can be fixed. This ceremony particularly honours the master mason who will be in charge for fixing doors and windows at the building. This function should protect the mason from any disturbances which might come up during the construction to ensure a smooth progress. For the ceremony, the head mason is covered with a white cloth which shows his purity of mind. The burning of incense sticks shall banish evil spirits. The mason cleans his tools and holds a pot of water while passing the incense above them.

Then, he enters the building through the first door frame with his tools and a chicken in his hands. All evil spirits and external influences are supposed to be taken out of the building by the chicken. The mason then leaves the building through the window and with a water pot in his hands he goes around the building to collect all external influences in this water pot. As a sign of destruction of the all bad influences he smashes the pot against a tree. The owner of the building, in this case Malteser International’s engineer on behalf of the Ministry of Education, shows his appreciation of the mason with a small gift – money laid in a leaf in the shape of a heart, covered with a white flower. With the “clean” tools, the mason fixes the first door frame to the building.

During the past five months, the hands of 50 labourers from different fields have constructed the substructure of the new primary school in Islamabad. The roof of the auditorium will be erected within the next month. – This project is mainly funded by RTL Television based in Cologne/Germany.

## STAFF

On 01 March, Maren Paech from Germany started to work as Consultant for local partners in India. She has previously worked for Malteser International in Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

On 27 March, Sharon Washington from Uganda started to work as Accountant in Sudan.

## OTHERS

### **Malteser International Film Premiere: WASH ! - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Projects of Malteser International in Sri Lanka**

On 13 March 2008, Malteser International presented its new documentary about its projects for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in Sri Lanka to the public as a contribution to the International Year of Sanitation. The campaign wants to highlight an almost forgotten, but most important issue for the health of millions of people, particular children. Each day, more than 5,000 children under five die due to bad hygiene.



With striking images, film author and director Martin Hilbert from Aquino Film shows that there is no need for an expensive technology in order to provide clean drinking water and a working waste water treatment. During the following panel discussion, Dr. Peter Schmitz, Chief Medical Officer of Malteser International, Professor Dr. Martin Exner, Director of the Department for Hygiene and Public Health at the University of Bonn/Germany and Dr. Manfred Konukiewitz from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development discussed the problems associated to contaminated water and possible solutions.

Copies of the film (in English or German) can be ordered at Malteser International's Headquarters, <mailto:info@malteser-international.org>. The German version of the film is already available for download on the Malteser International website [www.malteser-international.org](http://www.malteser-international.org), the English version will be available soon.

### **Malteser International Lent Campaign 2008: Sri Lanka – Commitment for a life in dignity**

In her final report for the Malteser International Lent Campaign „40 Euros for Sri Lanka“, the British water engineer Suzanna Lipscombe called for expanding the efforts for clean drinking water, functioning waste water systems and hygiene in Sri Lanka and worldwide. “The end of our Lent Campaign does not at all mean the end of our commitment for a healthy life in dignity,” Lipscombe says. “With your help, we will be able to further expand our projects and to help vulnerable groups in Sri Lanka and worldwide!”

With its Lent Campaign 2008, Malteser International is supporting 53 schools in the districts of Galle, Matara, Hambantota and Ampara. More than 16,000 school children get access to clean water and child friendly sanitation. Furthermore, the staff carries out educational sessions on hygiene and health issues. Suzanna Lipscombe reports: “For such a project to be successful and sustainable, we involve the children in all phases of the planning and implementation, so that they can then share their knowledge with their families.”



Together with families in extremely remote rural areas, Malteser International is also building rain water harvesting tanks with filters that catch between 5,000 and 8,000 litres of drinking water. “Until now, we were able to provide such tanks for almost 2,000 families. In total, we intend to reach more than 3,500 families,” Lipscombe says.

And she concludes her last report as follows: “I hope we will be able to continue with these activities in Sri Lanka, as not only is it fun and rewarding to work with children on such water, sanitation and hygiene projects, but it is also important since they are the future generations who will continue to practice what they learn here and share these mes-

sages with their families when they go home from school. These messages and the work carried out by Malteser International in Sri Lanka (and elsewhere around the world) is incredibly important and this should be continued not only with the children, but also with the teachers, schools, Ministry of Health and local partners such as LRWHF to build their capacity so they can sustain the good work for many years to come... We have only touched the tip of the iceberg and with your help we will be able to further develop our projects and serve these vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka!”

## Solemn Memorial Mass for the 78th Grand Master Fra' Andrew Bertie

On 7 March, the Solemn Memorial Mass for His Most Eminent Highness the Grand Master Fra' Andrew Bertie was celebrated at the Basilica Santi Bonifacio e Alessio, Aventine Hill in Rome. Next to Heads of State, Cardinals, Ambassadors and dignitaries from many countries, a small delegation of Malteser International also joined the Lieutenant ad interim, the Sovereign Council, the family of Fra' Andrew Bertie and representatives of the Order's Priors and Associations for this solemn event. After the Mass, the Sovereign Council received all who attended at the Magistral Villa.



## Fra' Matthew Festing elected 79th Grand Master of the Order of Malta



Fra' Matthew Festing, 58, from England is the 79th Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of Malta, elected on 11 March 2008 by the Council Complete of State (the Order's electoral body). In accepting the role, the new Grand Master swore his Oath before the Cardinal Patronus of the Order and the electoral body. He succeeds Fra' Andrew Bertie, who died on 7 February.

Fra' Matthew comes with a wide range of experience in Order affairs. He has been the Grand Prior of England since 1993 and in this capacity, he has led missions of humanitarian aid to Kosovo, Serbia and Croatia after the recent disturbances in those countries, and with a large delegation from Britain, he attends the

Order's annual pilgrimage to Lourdes with handicapped pilgrims. In 1977, Fra' Matthew became a member of the Order of Malta, taking solemn religious vows in 1991.

For further information, please visit the official website of the Order of Malta: [www.orderofmalta.org](http://www.orderofmalta.org)

## Malta I: Malteser International Annual Meeting - Board of Counsellors

On 28 February 2008, in the run-up to the Conference of the European Hospitallers (please see the following article), the representatives of the 20 member associations of Malteser International – the so-called Board of Counsellors – met for their Annual Meeting on Malta. Main topics of the conference besides the information about the general situation of Malteser International (strategy 2015, communication, rapid deployment units) were the further development and the financial situation of the relief service. Special emphasis was put on the fundraising situation and the evolution in the Americas. Nicolas de Cock de Rameyen, the President of Malteser International, and Ingo Radtke, the Secretary General, also presented their proposals with regard to a further internationalisation of the organisation via assessment trips to the project regions, an increased regional participation of the members and the recruitment of international staff.

## Malta II: XVI Conference of the European Hospitallers: Decoration for Mr Peter Loyd

During the XVI Conference of the European Hospitallers which took place in Malta from 28 February to 2 March, the former British Hospitaller Mr Peter Loyd was awarded the Medal of Merit of Malteser International in acknowledgment of his important work and support in developing Malteser International. – Congratulations!

In a series of lively discussions, the hospitallers shared information on the works they undertake both in European countries and the developing world, describing new projects set up during the last 12 months, reviewing the long-term programmes and considering strategies for the future. The President and the Secretary General of Malteser International informed the participants about the further development of the worldwide relief service of the Order of Malta for humanitarian aid in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Dr. Alfred Caruana Galizia, President of the Maltese Association of the Order, hosted the three day meeting which was led by the Grand Hospitaller of the Order, Albrecht von Boeselager.



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### Imprint

On the SPOT. - Malteser International Newsletter

Publisher: Malteser International \* Kalker Hauptstraße 22 – 24 \* D-51103 Cologne, [www.malteser-international.org](http://www.malteser-international.org)

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