September 2004: Beslan, North Ossetia

As of 30 September, 48 people (including 24 children), remained hospitalised in North Ossetia. A total of 195, including 130 children are still undergoing treatment in Moscow and Rostov hospitals. Four children were sent to hospitals in Germany. 19 people, including 7 children died while being hospitalised. 277 deceased people, including 145 children have been identified, while there still remain 52 people (26 children) who are not yet identified. DNA analyses are on-going.

On 1 September 2004, about 1,300 people, mostly children, were taken hostage in school #1 in Beslan, North Ossetia. On September 3, the hostage crises ended in extreme violence with some 330 deaths (50% children) and more than 500 hospitalized initially.

Most of the victims suffered in the event in school No. 1 in Beslan received shot wounds and burns and required immediate medical assistance – mostly surgical and neuro-surgical. The district hospital in Beslan immediately started to receive patients in most critical conditions. The republican clinical, emergency and children hospitals in Vladikavkaz carried the main burden of accepting the majority of victims. Hospitals in Rostov-upon-Don also received wounded hostages from Beslan. Patients with most severe conditions were transported to Moscow with “Zaschita” emergency flights.

UN agencies (UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP), ICRC, RRC and NGOs (ARD, Help, Hammer Forum, MSF, PHO, IR, CPCD, Caritas, Care, World Vision, SDC/SHA), working in the North Caucasus, arranged immediate provision of drugs/medical consumables and other emergency assistance on the spot. The international community responded with supplying medical material for treatment of the victims in Beslan. In the first week already several cargo planes landed at Beslan airport from countries as the United States, Italy, Norway, France, Canada, Austria, Germany, China, Greece, Bulgaria and Poland carrying drugs, medical consumables and instruments, laboratory equipment, reagents, ICU equipment, X-ray sets, ambulances etc. The EMERCOM of Russia and the Ministry of Health of North Ossetia are in charge of monitoring and distributing humanitarian aid.

WHO, together with other international agencies
- assisted in the health sector coordination post Beslan incident
- kept track of incoming donations and updated twice a day a list of donations
- provided feedback to donors
- conducted initially twice daily hospital assessments in Beslan and Vladikavkaz
- held daily meetings in the Ministry of Health of North Ossetia to receive updates on patients and their needs
- facilitated the dispatch of trauma kits and burns dressing modules to Beslan.

WHO also facilitated the Norwegian Government funded donation of material for blood safety to the Blood Bank in Vladikavkaz and released funds to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry, Moscow, to provide posttraumatic care to hostages and their families in the first six weeks following the event.

In the aftermath of the event, posttraumatic care and psychosocial support became a major focus of national and international organisations.
in Beslan and Vladikavkaz. The process to establish psychological rehabilitation centres and provide training for health staff has already started.

EMERCOM specialists and experts from Moscow and Rostov, together with 50 local psychiatrists and psychologists were providing counselling services as from the first day in all the four hospitals. In the policlinic of Beslan the counsellors saw 120-150 people daily; the Republican centre for medical-social psychological assistance of the Ministry of Health set up a hotline; specialists from the Moscow Serbsky Institute of Psychiatry provided on the spot psychiatric and psychological assistance and organized lectures for health personnel.

The Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry is currently developing mid- and long-term programme of post-trauma counselling for affected children, their parents, teachers and health staff of North Ossetian hospitals and staff of the morgue. Local and international NGOs plan to compliment these efforts through targeted involvement of a larger number of mental health professionals in qualified long-term assistance to population, assistance to respective specialised local health institutions (e.g. establishment of the Republican medical-social psychological rehabilitation centre) and creation of independent psychosocial rehabilitation units. Part of long-term psychosocial rehabilitation is promoting peace-building activities – organization of mass campaigns, joint festivals, conferences and other arrangements aimed to include the people from Chechnya, Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

The federal government arranged for further treatment and rehabilitation of the children and their parents; a vast number of “sanatories”, (rehabilitation institutions) throughout Russia offered their services for these victims and their relatives.

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**INGUSHETIA AND CHECHNYA**

### Demography

According to the Danish refugee council, 46,498 Chechen IDPs (10,521 families) were registered for assistance in Ingushetia as of 31 August 2004. Out of those 19,784 IDPs (4,336 families) were registered in 177 temporary settlements, and 26,714 IDPs (6,185 families) in private accommodation.

### TB

On 2-15 August **IMC** held in Nazran a training course on TB detection, treatment and monitoring for 30 IMC and MoH representatives. The training was carried out by two specialists from the Central TB Research Institute in Moscow. Following this training, **WHO** chaired the TB coordination meeting on 18 August. Responsible officials from both Ministries of Health and other interested organizations discussed the overall TB situation in the North Caucasus and its current problems and future perspectives.

- analysed the efficacy of the WHO TB control and prevention programme in Ingushetia, its results, follow-up and monitoring activities.

- received updates of TB-related projects run by other organizations, focusing in particular on inter-organisational linkage and

- discussed improving family and community awareness on TB in the NC.

In continuation of the TB control and prevention programme in Ingushetia and in agreement with WHO, **WFP** continued providing the Republican TB hospital in Nazran with flour, oil and salt for in and out-patients. In the last three months, 8020 kg of flour, 841 litres of oil and 95 kg of salt were distributed to about 200 patients.
**WHO** delivered 5000 single-use test tubes to the laboratory of the Republican TB Hospital.

**Epidemiology and immunization**

In September, the Ministry of Health of Chechnya vaccinated 68,737 children up to 4 years old against measles. Due to shortage of vaccines coverage of only 69.6% was achieved.

Within the framework of its Expanded Programme of Immunization **UNICEF** procured 202 refrigerators, 142 cold boxes and 543 vaccine carriers for tertiary level health institutions in Chechnya. The equipment will be distributed to vaccination rooms in village health posts, schools and selected primary health care facilities mainly in Chechnya, but also in Ingushetia. 194,000 disposable syringes were also distributed.

**Health assistance**

According to the latest WHO update, humanitarian aid is provided in Ingushetia and Chechnya by 25 organisations through:

- health posts: 4 organisations in Chechnya and 6 in Ingushetia
- mobile medical teams: 2 organizations in Chechnya and 5 in Ingushetia
- drugs distribution: 10 organizations in Chechnya and 11 in Ingushetia;
- equipment distribution: 7 in Chechnya and 7 in Ingushetia
- support to individual patients: 8 in Chechnya and 6 in Ingushetia
- training: 12 organizations in Chechnya and 12 in Ingushetia
- psychosocial rehabilitation: 9 in Chechnya and 10 in Ingushetia.

A more detailed list is available in the Nazran office of WHO.

**IHI** organized a one-month (14 June-16 July) training for 13 doctors (specialists in anaesthesiology, functional diagnostics, neonatology and paediatrics) from Chechnya and Ingushetia in Warsaw, Poland.

From 29 July to 1 August **World Vision** carried out in Nalchik a training course on cardiovascular diseases for physicians of their mobile teams, and another one on first aid for nurses. The facilitators were IMC and IHI staff. One more training course, for WV gynaecologists on obstetrical and gynaecological care, took place on 10-13 August, also in Nalchik.

**Medicins du Monde (MDM)** continues the implementation of its Surgery and Rural Medicine Programmes in the Nozhai-Yurt district of Chechnya. In August, in addition to regular delivery of pharmaceuticals and medical materials for a number of hospitals in Grozny, Gudermes, Urus-Martan, Argun, Nozhai-Yurt and Kurchaloi, MDM supplied five operating tables, a cranioscope and a trauma surgery tool kit under the Surgery programme; scheduled supplies of medicines and medical materials were carried out for three district hospitals, two outpatient clinics and nine feldsher-midwife stations under the Rural Medicine programme.

**Agency for Rehabilitation and Development (ARD)** continues its 12 psychosocial rehabilitation centres in Chechnya attended by 260 children, 50 women and up to 60 adolescents.

**Hammer Forum** donated a lung ventilation device and several heaters to children hospital N2 in Grozny, laboratory equipment to city polyclinic N5 and city hospital N3, medical literature
and information to all its assisted health institutions in Chechnya and washing machines to six hospitals in Grozny.

In August, ICRC completed laboratory equipment/consumables supply to the central hospitals in Shali and Achkhoi-Martan districts of Chechnya. Regular monthly assistance was provided in July-September to ten hospitals in Chechnya (three of them in Grozny), one in Ingushetia and one in Dagestan. Medical donations to the Republican Blood Bank in Grozny covered its needs in HIV/Hepatitis tests, reagents and medical consumables. ICRC also financed a month-long (2-29 September) professional training of one laboratory specialist from Shali district of Chechnya in the town of Ufa in September.

WHO provided the Ministry of Health of Ingushetia with 16 tables, 35 chairs and 6 bookshelves for their information centre. The facility will be used for training courses and meetings. In addition, the centre received medical literature and information materials for MoH staff and humanitarian organisations.

IMC supplied the dentist service at the Republican dentist complex in Staropromyslovski district of Grozny with equipment. Ten TACs will be served by this dental centre.

Within the framework of its Young People’s Health and Development programme UNICEF carried out a three-day seminar in Nalchik for 25 participants from Ministries of Health, government institutions and NGOs from Ingushetia and Chechnya. The seminar introduced the general concept for the creation of social and medical services with a "youth friendly approach", the constituent parts of which are establishing youth friendly clinics and launching the programme on prevention of major health problems, such as HIV/STI and drug abuse in adolescents and youth in Ingushetia and Chechnya.

WHO delivered HIV test systems to the Ministry of Health of Chechnya, July 2004

Within the framework of the HIV prevention programme, WHO delivered to the Ministry of Health of Chechnya over 10,000 HIV test systems for pregnant and delivering women. The tests were distributed to maternity homes and hospitals’ maternity departments, the Republican AIDS centre and the dermato-venerological dispensary – in total 27 medical facilities - of the Chechen republic. WHO also donated Syphilis test systems, condoms, disposable syringes, express pregnancy tests and other medical consumables.

On September 23-24 World Vision conducted a training course on HIV infection and drug abuse for all WV staff and selected NGO staff in Nazran. The invited facilitators were the experts of the Republican Narcological Dispensary and AIDS centre of Chechnya.

WHO donated to AIDS center in Grozny condoms and HIV/AIDS awareness materials
Mother and child health

WHO continues implementation of its IMCI programme in Chechnya. In July, IMCI monitoring and follow-up after training were carried out in 32 medical facilities in Grozny and Kurchaloi districts of Chechnya.

In cooperation with WHO, UNICEF completed on 21-31 July and 6-17 August two IMCI training workshops for primary health care staff in Achkhoi-Martan district of Chechnya. About forty paediatricians, nurses and primary health care workers upgraded their professional knowledge in management of childhood illnesses, receiving from the organizers a full set of IMCI training modules as supplementary material.

On 11 August WHO carried out a co-ordination meeting on mother and child health care for Chechnya and Ingushetia in Nazran. Thirty representatives from the Ministries of Health of both republics and organisations implementing and/or planning to introduce mother- and childcare projects were briefed on the status of maternal and child health in both republics, on the progress of IMCI implementation in Ingushetia and Chechnya, on the various MCH projects in NC and the importance of inter-organizational co-ordination. They also discussed the issues of linking maternal and child health strategies to prevention of HIV in infants and young children; community interventions to improve maternal and child health; child protection initiatives, including early child development, improvement the quality of hospital paediatric care and overall perspectives of implementation of MCH strategies in the North Caucasus.

Starting from 28 June World Vision carried out a 10-day training course on IMCI for paediatricians of its mobile teams in Chechnya. The course was facilitated by a WHO trainer and MoH of Chechnya expert Dr Malika Ismailova.

UNICEF continues to promote its Mother Empowerment Programme (MEP), targeting pregnant and lactating women, mothers, parents and primary health care providers for children under five in Chechnya and Ingushetia. Throughout July-September over 1000 women, living in TACs in Chechnya and over 700 from spontaneous settlements in Ingushetia attended MEP sessions, receiving basic knowledge on immunization, breastfeeding practices, childhood illnesses and hygiene. IDPs living with host families and residents in Ingushetia are also among the beneficiaries of the programme. Each mother, attending a training session, receives from UNICEF a small kit with hygienic and medical consumables. The programme is implemented in cooperation with Hammer Forum and the Ingush Republican Centre for Disease Prevention.

75 health workers from Achkhoi-Martan district of Chechnya attended MEP training workshops in September. Two IMCI (Integrated Management of Childhood Illness) trainers facilitated in the same district the workshop on MEP/IMCI concept and its realisation at the primary and secondary health care level. 20,000 copies of MEP leaflets were distributed to local communities and families through the district health department.

Water and sanitation

Within the framework of water provision programme in Grozny, carried out by UNICEF in cooperation with PHO, one more water truck was hired in addition to the already operating 15, so as to serve 180 water distribution points in 26 health care facilities, 56 educational facilities and 98 other distribution points, including TACs and residential areas in Grozny.

Average water distribution capacity stood in September at 583 cubic meters per day.

100 water bladders were procured and distributed to supplement the already existing capacity. UNICEF has also supplied over 5000 water containers to ensure safe storage of potable water in Grozny schools and installed 500 hand-washing stands in 49 schools in Grozny.

In order to contribute to maintaining appropriate sanitary and epidemiological conditions, UNICEF has distributed in August 6,900 kg of chloramide powder, 130 litres of disinfectant and 90,000 bars of soap to various health care facilities, schools, and kindergartens both in Ingushetia and in Chechnya.

Within the framework of its hygiene education programme for children in Chechnya and In-
gushetia UNICEF initiated, in cooperation with the SES of Chechnya, a survey to assess family practices and behavioural changes of targeted beneficiaries in personal and environmental hygiene and water consumption.

In July-August, the **Polish Humanitarian Organization (PHO)** continued realisation of its project on improvement of environmental sanitation conditions in Grozny and other parts of Chechnya. Three medical waste incinerators were constructed in Achkhoy Martan, Shali and Starye Atagi districts of Chechnya; an additional garbage truck and 80 garbage containers were procured; 400 cleaning kits and 560 dustbins were distributed to educational and medical institutions in Grozny.

PHO is currently running three garbage trucks, servicing 172 garbage containers. The PHO-run sewage disposal system is capable of disposing daily some 10,6 cubic meters of sewage from various locations, including schools and hospitals.

In July-August PHO has also installed 11 hand operated water pumps in ten medical and educational institutions in Grozny and proceeded with the construction of latrines - 15 latrines were completed.

At the same time, as reported by the local SES, despite UNICEF and PHO efforts, the sanitation situation, particularly in the TACs in Grozny, still remains unsatisfactory - garbage is often piled up around the TACs, the number of trash containers remains insufficient and the latrines are not duly emptied everywhere.

**Assistance to the disabled**

According to **UNICEF**-supported Information Management System for Mine Action (IMMSA), gathering information on mine/UXO incidents in Chechnya since 1995, as of end-September, 717 children under 18 have been killed or injured by mines/UXO in Chechnya.

In mid July four specialists from the Grozny Prosthetic/Orthopaedic workshop started training on advanced techniques for orthopaedic footwear in Vladikavkaz.

Over the reported period, Vladikavkaz prosthetic/orthopaedic workshop produced prosthesis, orthopaedic devices and shoes for disabled children from Chechnya. In September, however, this work has been temporarily suspended following the events in Beslan. Meanwhile, Grozny’s Republican Clinical hospital continued physical rehabilitation of mine/UXO affected children and children with other disabilities through special massage and physiotherapies.

In September, UNICEF distributed through its implementing partners **LSG, VoM** and **Minga**, wheelchairs and crutches to children in Shalazhi and Grozny and assistive devices in Grozny, Nozhay-Jurtovski, Shalinsky and Urus-Martanovsky districts of Chechnya.

UNICEF continues to support training on prosthetic-orthopaedic assistance for doctors from Grozny prosthetic workshop at the St.Petersberg’s Scientific Centre. In mid-September the second specialist from the Grozny centre started the 2,5 months lasting training.

UNICEF also trains two nurses from Chechnya at the Armenian Center of “Universally Christian Solidarity” (Stepanakert) in physical rehabilitation support to mine survivors and disabled children.

**Handicap International** continues its regular monitoring program in Ingushetia and distribution of items for handicapped people in Chechnya, including wheelchairs, hygienic kits, etc. The distribution takes place directly or through the co-operation with the regional state society for handicapped people.

**Other news**

**WHO: Missions to Grozny**

In August (2.08), WHO conducted one mission to Grozny. Apart from the MoH, four city policlincs, the republican perinatal centre, the republican cold chain centre and school No 37 were visited.

WHO participated in the joint UN/donor mission on 22 September. UN agencies and representatives of the Swedish Embassy and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) had a
meeting with the members of the Chechen government, visited areas of UN operation activities, including school N39, hospital N4 and families in box tents.

On 23 September WHO undertook a special mission to Grozny with the representatives of the Swiss Humanitarian Agency (SHA). The mission visited the Republican AIDS centre, school N26, the Republican TB dispensary, boarding school N1, city policlinic N1, city children policlinic N1, Grozny-Selsky district hospital, Ministry of Health and hospital N4.

**MSF-Holland** published its latest quantitative assessment of living conditions, psychosocial and general health status among war-displaced people in Chechnya and Ingushetia, “The Trauma of ongoing War in Chechnya”. The electronic English version of the report is available at www.msf.org.

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**List of abbreviations:**

DRC: Danish Refugee Council  
EPI: Expanded Programme on Immunization  
FAP: Feldsher/obstetric post  
GP: General practitioner  
ECHO: European Community Humanitarian Office  
HI: Handicap International  
ICRC: International Committee of the Red Cross  
IDPs: Internally displaced persons  
IMC: International Medical Corps  
IMMSA: International Management System for Mine Action  
IR: Islamic Relief  
IRC: International Rescue Committee  
MDM: Médecins du Monde  
MoH I: Ministry of Health of the Republic of Ingushetia  
MoH RF: Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation  
MoH Ch: Ministry of Health of Chechnya  
MSF-B: Médecins sans Frontières-Belgium  
MSF-F: Médecins sans Frontières-France  
MSF-H: Médecins sans Frontières-Holland  
PHO: Polish Humanitarian Organization  
OCHA: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
SARC: Saudi Red Crescent Society  
SES: Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance  
TAC: Temporary accommodation centre  
UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund  
UXO: Unexploded ordnance  
VOM: Voice of the Mountains  
WHO: World Health Organization  

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Correspondence should be addressed to:  
Russia Office of the WHO Special Representative of the Director General in the Russian Federation  
28, Ostozhenka,  
119034 Moscow  
The Russian Federation  
Attn: Irina Tarakanova [i.tarakanova@who.org.ru]  
Tel.: (+7) 095 787 21 52/12  
Fax: (+7) 095 787 21 19

**Editors:** Dr Corinna Reinicke  
[i.reinicke@who.org.ru], Irina Tarakanova  
[i.tarakanova@who.org.ru]

For more information about WHO Disaster Preparedness and Response programmes, please contact:  
Dr Gerald Rockenschaub [gro@euro.who.int]

The “Health Action in the North Caucasus” newsletter of the Disaster Preparedness and Response programme (DPR) can be found at http://www.euro.who.int/emergencies.