



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Support to humanitarian operations providing protection to victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone

Location of operation: Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone

Amount of Decision: EUR 3,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/THM/BUD/2006/06000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale :

During the last decade, the world has seen an increasing number of armed conflicts with devastating humanitarian consequences. The majority of these conflicts do not involve traditional warfare between internationally recognised states but are the result of internal conflicts between armed groups. These developments affect the civilian population. Nowadays, civilians are not only indirect victims of conflicts; they have often become targets themselves. Warring parties, often irregular armed groups, militias and foreign mercenaries have little knowledge or respect for a core principle of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) that is, the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. It is for this reason that since 1945 civilians have accounted for approximately 90% of war deaths worldwide.

Increasingly, conflict victims are in need of protection. Civilians are often caught up in the violence of armed conflicts and directly targeted. Forced displacement, massacres, hostage-taking, rape, forced recruitment of children into armed groups - the list of violations of the fundamental principles of IHL that are committed day after day, across continents, is long.

In addition, a growing number of countries have failed to meet their obligations towards the victims of armed conflict owing to the deterioration of government structures and, sometimes, a lack of political will.

Protection is the mainstay of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) activities: it is at the heart of the ICRC's mandate and International Humanitarian Law. As a neutral and independent organization, the ICRC seeks to ensure that all the parties to a conflict provide individuals and groups with the full protection that is due to them under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, as well as other applicable IHL. To this end, it assesses the needs of the general population and responds to them by taking action consistent with its mandate.

The current world climate poses new challenges for the ICRC and IHL. Humanitarian action continues to be regarded as politically motivated in some quarters, and basic legal provisions, such as the right to physical and psychological integrity, are being called into question. As a result, the ICRC's ability to protect war victims and promote respect for IHL is seriously hampered. Asserting the relevance of IHL to contemporary forms of armed conflict and ensuring respect for its provisions by parties to armed violence is more important than ever, yet it is also under threat.

The ICRC's protection programme has seen major expansion in recent years (from some EUR 70 million in 2002 to approximately EUR 113 million in 2006) in response to the growing worldwide needs for protection of both the civilian population and of people deprived of their freedom.

Consequently, the aim of the present decision is to enhance humanitarian action to protect the victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence through the allocation of funds to the ICRC, an experienced and performing partner with a unique mandate and a global outreach in this domain. In view of the deteriorating trends described above, a strengthening of ICRC's capacity to provide such protection is an indispensable prerequisite to reduce humanitarian suffering worldwide.

Through this funding decision, DG ECHO¹ aims to respond to the protection component of ICRC's 2006 Emergency Appeal in the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. These are countries where DG ECHO does not support ICRC with geographical funding because we have phased out activities. DG ECHO considers important to continue to support a partner like ICRC with a unique mandate for the protection of victims of armed conflict in these countries.

This is fully in line with DG ECHO's mandate, which includes support for civil operations to protect the victims of fighting in accordance with current international agreements among the principal objectives of EC humanitarian aid operations as defined in Article 1 and 2 (g) of Council Regulation 1257/96², of 20 June 1996, concerning humanitarian aid.

1.2. - Identified needs :

A. *Protection of civilians*

The protection of civilians who do not take part in hostilities is primarily the responsibility of the state. Civilians are entitled to respect for their lives, their physical and mental integrity, dignity, health and family life. However, increasingly, the protection provided by an individual's own state in situations of armed conflict is often insufficient, either because the individual is exposed to an adverse party or because his own state authorities are unable or

¹ Directorate-General for humanitarian aid – ECHO

² O.J. N° L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1
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unwilling to ensure it. When countries fail to meet their obligations, the tasks associated with protection are assumed by humanitarian organisations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Working closely with conflict victims is a vital component of the ICRC's protection work. This implies gaining access to those who require assistance; remaining present on the ground for the duration of the conflict and the aftermath; and collecting reliable and first-hand data. The ICRC also engages in direct and confidential dialogue with the authorities concerned and with anyone who can help put an end to observed abuses. ICRC's work is based on a great deal of preparatory work, which includes establishing a wide variety of contacts that help to create a climate of confidence and improve the organization's knowledge of the situation and the specific needs to which it gives rise.

B. *Protection of people deprived of their liberty*

Many people are also deprived of their freedom during situations of armed conflicts. People deprived of their liberty are generally vulnerable in relation both to their captors and to the pressures of prison life. This vulnerability is heightened during armed conflicts and other situations of violence, in which the possibility of excessive and illicit force is likely.

Regular ICRC visits to detention centres, carried out in accordance with its standard procedures, continue in more than 80 countries around the world. In 2005, ICRC visited 528,611 individuals (25,831 new detainees) in 2,594 places of detention. Their physical and mental integrity is often at risk. They are in danger of disappearing, extra-judicial executions or being subjected to torture or ill-treatment. In those cases, a confidential dialogue with the detaining authorities is urgently needed. Also, the dilapidated state of prisons and facilities has an impact on several levels: the impossibility to ensure humane treatment that respects human dignity, families of detainees often having to take on tasks that should be performed by the authorities and affecting officials running the places of detention. Needs also still have to be met when hostilities stop, for many prisoners of war have to be repatriated and liberated detainees remain vulnerable and have to be followed up through home visits after their release.

Where possible, the ICRC pursues a dialogue with the detaining authorities in order to help them better meet their obligations towards the prison population.

C. *Restoring family links*

In order to perform its traditional task of restoring family links and to strengthen its operational capacity in this area, the ICRC relies heavily on the worldwide network of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In 2005, ICRC helped to reunite some 1,650 people, including 510 demobilized child soldiers, with their families. In addition, 959,475 Red Cross messages were exchanged.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

Funding under this decision will support ICRC's protection activities for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence. The ICRC distinguishes between three different types of victims:

- *Civilian*: All people who do not take an active part in hostilities but whose physical or mental integrity and dignity are either threatened or affected during a conflict or situation of violence;
- *People deprived of their freedom*: All individuals deprived of their freedom in connection with a conflict or situation of violence such as prisoners of war, civilian internees and security detainees;
- *Wounded and sick*: People injured or suffering from disease in a situation of armed conflict or violence.

More specifically, the beneficiaries of ICRC's protection programme are resident and displaced civilians, people deprived of their freedom (in particular prisoners of war, security detainees and internees) or separated from their relatives by conflict.

In keeping with DG ECHO's strategic objectives for 2006, within these target groups, particular attention will be devoted to women, children and the internally displaced who face specific problems which increase their vulnerability.

Children constitute an especially vulnerable type of victim. Three out of every five war victims assisted by ICRC are children. Many of them are killed, wounded or imprisoned, torn from their families and forcibly recruited into combat.

Funding under this decision will cover ICRC protection activities in the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

The ICRC has worked in the Republic of the Congo since 1994, first through the Kinshasa regional delegation and since 1998 as a separate delegation. It promotes respect for IHL and human rights law by the authorities in their treatment of civilians and detainees and encourages the inclusion of IHL in the instruction of the armed forces, police and gendarmerie. It also helps strengthen the operational capacity of the Congolese Red Cross. Civilians in Pool remain vulnerable to extortion, looting, theft and intimidation by arms carriers. The proliferation of small arms and the presence of arms carriers continue to create an insecure environment, ICRC focuses on remaining close to the population in sensitive areas to gain a better understanding of the security situation and living conditions. It maintains a dialogue with all parties at various levels and with arms carriers on their obligations to the civilian population, including civilians' right of access to basic services and humanitarian aid. The organization has developed and implemented assistance programmes in sensitive areas as a part of a protection-driven strategy.

The ICRC opened a delegation in Rwanda in 1990. Its current activities focus on visiting the tens of thousands of detainees held in central prisons. It also regularly visits people held in places of temporary detention such as police stations and military facilities. It helps to reunite children. The ICRC works with the authorities to incorporate IHL into domestic legislation and into school and university curricula. It also supports the development of the Rwandan Red Cross. In 2005, the prison population of ICRC concern and benefit numbered 92,965. A total of 244 visits were made to 103 different places of detention. The ICRC, in cooperation with the Rwandan Red Cross, offers the Red Cross Messages service to people separated from their families. It has also provided tracing and RCM services in Mutobo camp for

fighters demobilized and repatriated to Rwanda by the United Nations Mission in the DRC. In addition, the ICRC works with the National Society to reunite children with their relatives.

Since the end of the war in 2002, the ICRC has adapted its operations in Sierra Leone. Its protection priorities remain ensuring the welfare of Sierra Leonean and Liberian children separated from their families and monitoring the conditions of detention of internees/detainees. The ICRC provides the authorities with substantial technical support in promoting respect for IHL and its integration into national legislation. The organization has maintained a continuous presence in Sierra Leone since 1991.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

The widespread disregard in today's armed conflicts of core principles of IHL such as the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, the denial of access to the protected population as well as the increasing attacks against humanitarian personnel feature amongst the main constraints of the protection activities that this decision intends to finance.

At times, the ICRC may want to carry out protection work in any one given context of armed conflict, but is prevented from doing so by one or more of the warring factions. In this case, negotiations will continue at various levels. At other times, it may be difficult to clearly identify the belligerent parties to whom ICRC could make representations. However, the mere presence of ICRC delegates on the ground may have a deterrent effect on belligerents during armed conflict.

Often, there is a genuine political will to let ICRC do its protection work, but security conditions are such that this is impossible. At other times, ICRC may start implementing protection activities, but has to suspend them for security reasons. Occasionally, the ICRC may have successfully negotiated at the highest state level to commence protection activities, but is prevented from doing so because officials lower down the hierarchy may not agree or have not been informed properly.

The modalities that are a prerequisite for visits by ICRC to detainees in every detention place visited world-wide are as follows:

- access to all detainees and premises;
- initial and final talks with the authorities;
- registration of detainees;
- interviews in private with detainees;
- repetitions of visits.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed: ³

³ Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Article 110 ECHO/THM/BUD/2006/06000

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective:

The principal objective of this decision is that victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence are protected in accordance with International Humanitarian Law norms and humanitarian principles through ICRC in the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

Specific objective:

The specific objective of this decision is to support ICRC's protection programme for resident and displaced civilians, people deprived of their freedom and people separated from their relatives in the countries covered by this decision.

2.2. - Components:

Funding under this decision will cover the following components:

A. *Protection of civilians*

Protection activities for the civilian population are intended to ensure that individuals and groups, who are not or no longer taking an active part in the hostilities, are fully respected and protected in accordance with IHL norms and principles. In particular this involves:

- Deploying ICRC delegates in the field, negotiation with the authorities to obtain access to individuals or groups needing protection and/or assistance;
- Assessment of the living conditions of the civilian population and its means of subsistence, analysis of cases of abuse and violations of IHL and identification of any shortcomings or needs;
- Monitoring individuals who are particularly vulnerable;
- Establishment and maintenance of a dialogue — preventive and corrective — with the civil and military authorities at all levels regarding humanitarian issues linked to the respect of civilians, by reminding them of the applicable norms and principles of IHL.

B. *Protection of people deprived of their liberty*

thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16 September 2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002).

Rate of financing: In accordance with Article 169 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action.

Humanitarian aid operations funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) (in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). The standards and criteria established in DG ECHO's standard Framework Partnership Agreement to which NGO's and International organisations have to adhere and the procedures and criteria needed to become a partner may be found at http://europa.eu/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm
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The objective of ICRC's activities for detainees is purely humanitarian. In working with detainees, the ICRC strives to prevent or put an end to cases of disappearance, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, and to debilitating detention conditions. It also endeavours to ensure that detainees can maintain contact with their families and benefit from the legal guarantees to which they are entitled under IHL and international customary law. At the same time, the organization refrains from forming any opinion on the motives for incarceration.

Regular visits to detention centres, carried out in accordance with defined procedures, are a principal means used by the ICRC to achieve its aims. During the visits, delegates hold private meetings with detainees, record detainee identity and check on conditions of detention and treatment. This enables the ICRC to monitor the situation of detainees in its caseload until the detainees' release. The information gathered during the visits becomes a basis for dialogue with the authorities concerning practical problems and provides an opportunity for the ICRC to make recommendations. In particular this involves:

- Deployment of ICRC delegates in the field; negotiation with the authorities to obtain access to places of detention in accordance with procedures that guarantee the effectiveness and consistency of the ICRC's action — visit detainees, assess their conditions of detention and identify any shortcomings and needs for humanitarian assistance;
- Maintenance of a confidential dialogue with the authorities at all levels regarding any problems of a humanitarian nature that may arise;
- Monitoring individual detainees (for specific protection, medical or other purposes);
- Providing training and expertise on protection issues with prison or judicial authorities.

C. *Restoring family links*

These activities aim to restore or maintain contact between members of families, including detainees. In particular this involves:

- Deployment of ICRC delegates in the field forwarding family news (through various means, such as Red Cross messages, radio broadcasts, the telephone and the Internet) via the worldwide Red Cross and Red Crescent network;
- Organization of repatriations and family reunifications, including reuniting unaccompanied children with their families;
- Maintenance of family links for people deprived of their freedom (facilitate family visits forwarding Red Cross messages, etc.);
- Issuing of detention certificates and other documents related to persons deprived of freedom;
- Maintenance of family links across front lines;
- Issuing of ICRC travel documents for persons who, owing to a conflict, do not or no longer have identity papers, and are about to be repatriated or resettled in a third country;
- Provision of support and training to National Societies' tracing services, both at headquarters and in the field;
- Holding of workshops on protection, including on the subject of unaccompanied children, with NGOs and ensuring practical follow-up.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this decision will be 15 months starting on 1 August 2006. Humanitarian operations funded by this decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 August 2006.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis

The European Commission has traditionally supported the work of ICRC in the field of protection and assistance as part of geographical operations. In 2005, through DG ECHO, the Commission has provided EUR 39,072,444 to ICRC, making the Commission the organisation's fourth largest donor.

In addition to the country-oriented financial support provided to ICRC, in 2003 DG ECHO provided programmatic funding to ICRC to support its mandate to protect victims of armed conflict in various countries affected by armed conflict (EUR 10,000,000). The adoption of this first funding decision (ECHO/THM/210/2003/1000) represented the European Commission commitment to support ICRC's activities in the implementation of their unique protection mandate. This decision was followed by a second phase last May 2006 (ECHO/THM/BUD/2005/03000). This funding decision represents the 3rd phase.

DG ECHO funding to ICRC 2005

Region (Country)	Contract title	Amount contract sum
GLOBAL	Support to ICRC Emergency Appeal in Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Azerbaijan, Philippines and Pakistan. Protection programme.	4,000,000
KENYA	Economic Security/Water and Habitat Programme	500,000
NEPAL	ICRC protection activities, Nepal	1,500,000
GUINEA	ICRC Protection activities in Guinea	400,000
RUSSIA	ICRC assistance programmes in the Northern Caucasus	4,000,000
RUSSIA	ICRC protection activities in the northern Caucasus	300,000
BURUNDI	Protection activities for Burundi 2005	300,000
ERITREA	ICRC Protection and Assistance activities, Eritrea	2,000,000
GEORGIA	ICRC economic assistance in Georgia	700,000
LIBERIA	Protection and Health Activities	2,500,000
LIBERIA	ICRC economic security assistance	520,000
MYANMAR	Activities for protection of detainees	1,000,000
SOMALIA	Assistance in economic-security (livelihood-support) and health	4,000,000
COLOMBIA	Protection and assistance activities – Colombia	3,702,444

ETHIOPIA	Protection, medical and economic security activities	2,500,000
PAKISTAN	ICRC Emergency relief assistance for South Asia earthquake (Pakistan - administered Kashmir)	4,000,000
SRI LANKA	ICRC water and habitat activities	400,000
AFGHANISTAN	Livelihood security in Afghanistan	1,000,000
AFGHANISTAN	ICRC protection and related IHL activities	2,500,000
CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF	Health support	750,000
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY	Assistance	1,000,000
OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY	Protection	1,500,000
		39,072,444

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms.

Like the European Commission, various EU Member States, as well as the US, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, Australia and Japan have provided continued strong support to ICRC operations. DG ECHO contributes to ICRC's programmes all over the world. ICRC ensures that there is no overlap in funding of activities by different donors and notably between DG ECHO funding at country and thematic level.

The ICRC implements a performance management system endorsed by its Donor Support Group. This is the tool the ICRC uses to plan and monitor operations both in the field and at headquarters. The internal planning exercise "Planning for Results" is a needs-based bottom-up process guided by the Directorate's institutional priorities and validated by Governance. This is the basis for the annual Emergency Appeals document that details the ICRC operational plans for the coming year.

ICRC delegates conduct ongoing monitoring. Tools include regular internal reports (weekly operational reports, regular institutional reports, internal visit reports) or additional ad-hoc reports (mission reports, minutes, etc.).

DG ECHO will ensure the monitoring of the programme in the selected countries via its network of field experts. At **headquarters level**, meetings with ICRC will take place to review the programme.

6 - Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 3,000,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>Victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence are protected in accordance with International Humanitarian Law norms and humanitarian principles through ICRC in the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.</i>				
Specific objective	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners⁴
To support ICRC's protection programme for resident and displaced civilians, people deprived of their freedom and people separated from their relatives in the countries covered by this decision.	3,000,000	Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone	<p><u>Protection of civilians:</u> Deploying ICRC delegates in the field; negotiation with the authorities to obtain access; Assessment of living conditions, analysis of cases of abuse and violations of IHL; Monitoring individuals; Establishment and maintenance of a confidential dialogue with the authorities.</p> <p><u>Protection of people deprived of their liberty:</u> Maintenance of family links for people deprived of their freedom (facilitate family visits forwarding Red Cross messages, etc.); Issuing of detention certificates; Monitoring individual detainees; Providing training and expertise on protection issues with prison or judicial authorities.</p> <p><u>Restoring family links:</u> Maintenance of family links across front lines; Organisation of repatriations and family reunifications; Issuing of detention certificates; Issuing of ICRC travel documents; Deployment of ICRC delegates in the field; Provision of support and training to National Societies' tracing services; Holding of workshops on protection.</p>	CROIX-ROUGE CICR- ICRC - CH
TOTAL:	3,000,000			

⁴ COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE (CICR)

7 - Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

http://europa.eu/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

8 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01

	CE (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2006	470,429,000
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers	-
Total Available Credits	470,429,000
Total executed to date (21/06/2006)	372,767,000
Available remaining	97,662,000
Total amount of the Decision	3,000,000

COMMISSION DECISION

on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union to support operations providing protection to victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid⁵, and in particular Article 15(2) thereof:

Whereas:

- (1) During the last decade there has been an increased number of armed conflicts;
- (2) Most of these conflicts do not involve traditional warfare between internationally recognised States. They are instead the result of internal conflicts between armed groups which disregard International Humanitarian Law, and in particular the principle of distinction between combatants and non combatants. Civilians are not only indirect victims of conflicts; they are often directly targeted themselves;
- (3) As a result, civilians, in particular residents and displaced civilians, people deprived of their freedom and people separated from their families are increasingly in need of protection;
- (4) The current world climate poses new challenges for the International Committee of the Red Cross and International Humanitarian Law. Asserting the relevance of IHL to contemporary forms of armed conflict and ensuring respect for its provisions by parties to armed conflict is more important than ever;
- (5) Consequently, the funding measures under this decision are envisaged to enhance the protection of victims of armed conflicts;
- (6) The International Committee of the Red Cross is charged under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols with the protection of civilians;
- (7) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 15 months;
- (8) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 3,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to support humanitarian operations providing protection to victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors ;

⁵ OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6
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- (9) In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 21 September 2006.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 3,000,000 for humanitarian aid operations to support operations providing protection to victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone by using line 23 02 01 of the 2006 general budget of the European Union.

2. In accordance with Article 2 (g) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:

To support ICRC's protection programme for resident and displaced civilians, people deprived of their freedom and people separated from their relatives in the countries covered by this decision.

The total amount of this decision is allocated to this objective.

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 15 months, starting on 1 August 2006.

2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 August 2006.

3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision.

Article 3

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission