

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

COOK ISLANDS: TROPICAL CYCLONE PERCY

3 March 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This information bulletin (no. 01/2005) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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The Situation

Pukapuka (population 600) and Nassau (population 70), in the northern Cook Islands were battered by Tropical Cyclone Percy from 28 February to 2 March. No deaths or injuries have been reported, but the cyclone's present southward path puts Palmerston, a very small atoll with a population of about 50 people, at risk. Slow-moving Cyclone Percy is now rated at category four, with wind speeds of up to 240 kilometres per hour.

An aerial survey by the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) showed that about 80 percent of houses had been destroyed on Pukapuka and roads had been washed out. Media reports have warned that fresh water is also in short supply. The latest report from the Cook Islands Red Cross (CIRC) indicates that residents of Pukapuka have enough food and drinking water for about a week. The Cook Islands government declared a state of emergency in Pukapuka and Nassau on February 28.

The airstrip on Pukapuka has been damaged, so an RNZAF Hercules transport aircraft loaded with emergency supplies has been sent instead to the island of Penrhyn, northeast of Pukapuka, and its cargo will be transported by sea to Pukapuka and Nassau by this weekend. UN-OCHA will deploy a four-person United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team to the Cook Islands.

Percy is the fourth tropical cyclone to threaten the Cook Islands in less than a month. Although the islands' people have escaped unscathed, there has been extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure in each case as a result of high winds and/or heavy seas related to the cyclone activity.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Volunteers from the Cook Islands Red Cross (CIRC) prepared and loaded the relief supplies being transported by air and sea to Pukapuka. A Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT)-trained disaster management delegate from the New Zealand Red Cross and a disaster management officer from the CIRC are also travelling to Pukapuka, where they will conduct an initial needs assessment and oversee the distribution of relief items by local CIRC volunteers.

Emergency relief supplies have also been provided by the Samoa Red Cross Society, with coordination from the Federation's regional delegation in Suva. These items have been dispatched to Pago Pago, in American Samoa, and will be transported to Pukapuka by boat.

The CIRC has responded to four cyclones in the past three weeks and its relief stocks have consequently been depleted and need replenishment. The Federation may issue another information bulletin and seek support for further relief and rehabilitation if required once the needs assessment has been completed on Nassau and Pukapuka.

Table 1. Relief items sent to Pukapuka

Item	Quantity
Tarpaulins	150
Water containers	200
Ropes (200-metre rolls)	2 rolls
Bush knives	28
Blankets	200
Sheets (single)	50
Lanterns	50
Candles and matches	2 boxes
Cooking sets (one box for 12 families)	2 boxes
Large cooking pots for communal cooking	4
Buckets (various sizes)	44
Washing powder	2 buckets
Reef sandals	25 pairs
Gloves	44 pairs
Bath soap	1 box
Towels	32
Clothing (various)	-
Rice	50 bags
Tinned fish	50 cartons

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's [Annual Appeal](#).

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