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Information bulletin Fiji:Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Fiji Red Cross will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The situation

Heavy rains over the western and northern parts of Fiji on 24 January caused widespread flooding resulting in eight deaths and localized landslides. A State of National Disaster was declared over some parts of the Western Division of Viti Levu for 15 days with effect from 26 January 2012 although the scale and extent of the damage varied considerably from area to area. The water level decreased but flooding continued over the following days. Fine weather has been experienced over the last 12 hours, however according to Fiji Meteorology Service, reports indicate that the weather may worsen over the next 12 hours.

Deaths reported has increased to eight (8). The Fiji Government reported that during the peak of the flood there were a total of 64 evacuation centres open with a total of 4,561 evacuees. As of 3 February, 21 evacuation centres remain open and one of these is in a school in Ba. Ba is the only district where its school continues to be closed due to the flooding. The Fiji Meteorological Service predicted that the worsening weather conditions are likely to increase the chances of flooding in low-lying areas again and there is now a cyclone threat predicted to happen on Tuesday, 7 February.

Cleanup operations are underway in the economic centres where shopkeepers are in the process of sweeping the mud and debris from their shops. Flood levels had risen to up to one metre. Trucks are being organized to carry away the debris that have been swept onto the sidewalk and street. There have been substantial damages to villages and the collapse of the Moto Bridge has disrupted the water supply and access to markets for a large rural population.

The Fiji Government is reporting that Fiji Electricity Authority has restored power in the districts of Sigatoka, Nadi, Rakiraki, Tavua/Vatukoula/Nadarivatu and the majority of Lautoka and Ba. Fiji Electricity Authority is targeting to restore all the remaining areas by tonight. The teams will work round the clock to ensure power supply is fully restored to the remaining areas. The Water Authority of Fiji is also reported to be working around the clock on the rehabilitation work on the affected areas to restore the disrupted areas. Ba district is still without any reticulated water, including their hospital facilities. Access to affected



Fiji Red Cross distributing relief items from the back of the Fiji Red Cross truck to flood affected areas in Balenakula Settlement.
Photo cred: FJRC

areas remains a challenge as a number of roads and bridges are not passable in Nadi, Ba and other affected areas.

It is now reported by the government that evacuation centres are reopening in Sigatoka, Latoka, Nadi and Rakiraki in anticipation for the predicted rain. If the worsening weather creates increased flooding events it will greatly hinder relief distribution and rehabilitation of critical infrastructure.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

MANAGEMENT AND OVERALL COORDINATION

Fiji Red Cross has now centralized operational coordination at the Fiji Red Cross Nadi branch and field operations deploying from branches in Nadi, Sigatoka, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki. Fiji Red Cross team is closely coordinating on the field with the District Offices to assess the needs and give updates on distributions and situation.

Fiji Red Cross team is working on a consolidated plan to clearly allocate the funds against the needs and to detail proposed activities in the various locations. This tool will support the overall management of the operation and reporting system.

Fiji Red Cross is an active member of the response coordination meeting held by NDMO, where all the responding agencies and donors are coordinating the response efforts.

Fiji Red Cross, with the support of IFRC regional office, is coordinating with the cluster members (WASH, Health) to have a common approach to the response in the different areas and identify opportunities and gaps.

Fiji Red Cross is coordinating closely with IFRC regional office and their Pacific Red Cross partners to support their efforts in the response.

ASSESSMENTS AND DISTRIBUTION OF NON-FOOD ITEMS

Assessments and distribution of non-food items (NFI) are ongoing in Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki. Assessments have been conducted in 47 communities covering 600 households. Distribution of relief supplies is ongoing and has thus far assisted a total of 538 households. However, all assessment teams are currently on standby due to the worsening weather conditions.

Fiji Red Cross has deployed an Emergency Response Team from the National Office to Nadi to assist with assessments, distribution and coordination. The team is equipped with radios, additional relief items and two vehicles (1 x 4WD and 1 x 3 ton truck).

Fiji Red Cross has distributed relief supplies (black packs, cooking sets, water containers, blankets, tarpaulins, dignity packs, soap, mosquito coils, candles) in the following areas:

Location	Black Pack	Cooking Set	Tarpaulin	Water Container	Dignity Kit	Blankets
Nadi	118	58	7	13	6	218
Sigatoka	14	5			1	37
Lautoka	264		11			38
Ba	10	1	9	5		21
Tavua	357	5	3			38
Rakiraki	22	3	4			
Nalawa	<i>No Distribution due no immediate needs identified from assessments</i>					
Totals	785	72	34	18	7	352

WATER SUPPLY

The district of Ba has had the worst impact on the water supply during this event. The Ba Divisional Operation Centre in partnership with the District Officers has been assisting Fiji Red Cross team on the ground in coordinating this activity. Due to lack of clarity on the water situation, the Fiji Red Cross team with the support of Australian Red Cross water and sanitation delegate will carry out a quick assessment of the water situation in Ba town, with assessments results to be published when available.

Fiji Red Cross Society's National Office staff and volunteers are currently working around the clock in distributing water to schools in Lautoka. Fiji Red Cross distributed a total of 1,674 cases of bottled Fiji Water into Ba division alone.

Further to the provision of water, Fiji Red Cross in partnership with UNICEF has a distribution plan for 500 local WASH kits in and around the area of Ba. Fiji Red Cross is repositioning stocks of Puritabs in the event that water quality issues arise following prolonged wet weather.

The NOMAD Water Purification Unit has been deployed in Ba, with the support of two Australian Red Cross water and sanitation technicians. However it is used as a transfer pump at the moment, because of the water turbidity, due to ongoing rains.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE PROMOTION

Fiji Red Cross has a Health in Emergencies (HIE) team, which has conducted assessments in the field and is now planning to target the distribution of hygiene packs, first aid kits and health education in the most affected areas. The health related issues are of increasing concern to the different stakeholders involved in the floods. The water supply situation on the ground at the moment is tenuous and due to weather conditions there is uncertainty around how long it will take for normal water supplies to be rehabilitated. The health team has already visited affected villages, towns, settlements and evacuation centres to conduct assessments on the short and long term health needs. This is particularly important as the Ministry of Health figures indicated a notable increase in the reported cases of waterborne diseases such as diarrhoea and dengue fever. Based on these assessments the HIE team has developed a distribution plan for hygiene, comprising of bathing soap, washing soap, sanitary pads, colgate, toothbrush, fabuloso detergent, candle, matches, mosquito coil, hand sanitizer, educational leaflets on sexually transmitted infections (STI), male condom and hand washing steps leaflet in Fijian, Hindi and English. The team will begin implementing this plan tomorrow.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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 2. **[Return](#) to the title page**
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The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

