

# ***TOGO: FLOODS***

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## ***Information Bulletin N° 2 (final)***

### ***The Disaster***

Torrential rains which fell in Togo in October 1998 caused the Mono river in the south and the Oti river in the north of Togo to overflow their banks, resulting in significant damage and loss of life. Whole communities in the Lakes Prefecture in the south and in the Prefectures of Oti and Kpendjal in the north were made homeless, with many losing their entire food stocks. Furthermore, crops which were almost ready for harvesting were seriously damaged.. As soon as the situation allowed, the Togolese Red Cross sent a team to the affected areas to assess the situation and to determine priority needs.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The assessment team identified 15,785 needy persons from 18 communities who had the greatest need of assistance in the Lakes Prefecture, 6,530 needy persons from 7 communities in the Prefecture of Oti, and 8,090 needy persons from 27 communities in the Kpendjal Prefecture.

On 24 November 1998, the Federation launched an Information Bulletin requesting support for an operation which aimed to provide supplementary food assistance for the most vulnerable, blankets and second-hand clothing, together with mosquito nets and medicines to avoid the spread of diseases such as cholera and malaria.

The total needs for procurement of relief items for a 3-month period amounted to CHF 170,000. The Federation released CHF 25,000 from the DREF fund to initiate the assistance. However, no further contributions were received, and since it would have proven difficult to scale down the number of potential beneficiaries, and as a result of efforts to ensure the impartial distribution of assistance, the Togolese Red Cross decided to retain the 30,405 beneficiaries initially selected. However, given the low donor response and the resulting limited availability of resources, the distribution of food (2.15 kgs of maize per person) was the only assistance actually carried out.

The distribution operation took place in the Lakes Prefecture between 17 and 21 February, and in Oti and Kpendjal between 21 February and 4 March 1999. First aiders trained by the local branches carried out distributions to the flood victims under the supervision of a team leader and with the assistance of volunteers from amongst the affected communities. Rations were strictly monitored and daily distribution reports drawn up. Major difficulties were encountered as a result of the distance of the affected communities from Lomé - approximately 200 kms in the case of the Lakes Prefecture, 575 km. in the case of the Oti Prefecture, with a further 240 kms between Mango (Oti Prefecture) and Mandouri (Kpendjal Prefecture). Road conditions are poor and vehicle movements slow as deep mud hampers progress in certain areas. In addition, flood waters had washed away bridges and certain stretches of roads, making isolated communities even more difficult to access.

### ***Needs***

The affected communities are still suffering from the effects of the floods, particularly as a result of the loss of crops. Nevertheless, the most difficult period has now passed and the assistance provided by the Togolese Red Cross helped the flood victims to remain in their communities.

## *Conclusion*

The flood operation in three Prefectures in Togo was carried out successfully. Since the government had not been in a position to come to their aid, flood victims appreciated the assistance of the Red Cross, and the food assistance arrived at a time when the price of food stuffs had increased considerably in the Prefectures concerned. The operation has also helped to boost the image of the Togolese Red Cross and has reinforced links with the authorities.

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