

## Information bulletin Maldives: Fire Incident

Information bulletin n° 1	Date of issue: 30 January 2016
Date of disaster: 26 January 2016	Operation start date: 27 January 2016
Host National Society(ies): Maldivian Red Crescent	
Number of people affected: 12,000	Number of people to be assisted: 375 (75 families)

This bulletin is being issued for information and it reflects the current situation based on information currently available. The Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC), with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has delivered the most essential assistance to the affected populations. The MRC is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

[<click here for detailed contact information>](#)

### The situation

On 26 January 2016 early morning, a fire broke out in Gaafu Dhaal atoll of Thinadhoo island's powerhouse at 02:30 Maldives time and has destroyed all three of its generators. This incident resulted in complete electricity supply cut in the whole island. Although the fire and rescue team was alerted and responded to the fire immediately, they only managed to put out the fire and any further damage by 4:00 a.m.

According to a representative of Thinadhoo island council, the fire started in a nearby storehouse, and spread to the powerhouse in a short span of time.

The government corporation informed that three powerhouse generators of 1000kv, 720kv and 600kv, producing total 2.3 megawatts of power, have been damaged. It will take some time to be operational again. To make matters worse, the fire had also destroyed the powerhouse's electricity panels and half of the 172 solar panels atop the powerhouse's roof. According to the corporation, restoring the electricity temporarily will be possible in the next two days; however it would take at least two months to restore the supply permanently.

The vast damages impacted on the lives of 12,000 residents living on Gaafu Dhaal - atoll's largest island. The loss of electricity also affected the water supply and the functioning of other basic infrastructure. Majority of the residents uses electric water pumps to collect water from the wells. The regional hospital is currently operating on one generator. All patients were moved to one ward in order to save electricity.



*The fire at the power house of Gdh. Thinadhoo on 26 January at 2:30. The power house was destroyed beyond use during the fire. Photo: SunMV*

### Red Cross and Red Crescent action

**First Meeting:** Following the incident on 26 January 2016, National Emergency Committee (NEC) of Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) called for an emergency meeting to assess the situation. Based on the information, the NEC categorized this incident as a national level emergency which demands for a comprehensive response plan. Gdh. Thinadhoo is one of the densely populated islands in the country, whereby MRC has a unit office on

the island. It is imperative that MRC, as part of auxiliary to the government, responds to the needs of the affected people. MRC immediately deployed two National Emergency Response Team (NERT) members to the affected areas and released its Emergency Response Fund for operational and administration support to activate the functions of logistics, finance, resource mobilization and communications.

**Second Meeting:** The second meeting was held on 27 January to discuss the response activities of NERT members in Gdh. Thinadhoo. As the preliminary assessment indicated that jerry cans as a priority relief item, MRC immediately dispatch the items from its prepositioned stocks after further consultation with the IFRC Country Cluster Support Office in Delhi. MRC will also support the affected people with other humanitarian aids as and when they are identified using its own resources. MRC, with the support of IFRC, will continue to monitor the evolving situation.

The following are the highlights of MRC response to date:

- Activation of emergency response mechanism;
- Organized National Emergency Committee meetings;
- Deployment of two NERT members for rapid assessment;
- NERT members completed rapid assessment;
- NERT members facilitated and supported stakeholder meetings, discussions and decision making process;
- Identified the most affected population through a consultative process;
- 5% of the total house (75 out of 1500) holds were selected for rapid assessment;
- NERT members supported localized conflict resolution;
- Identified relief distribution centers;
- Mobilized volunteers for relief and response support;
- Provided psychosocial support (PSS) services via trained volunteers.



*Crisis Management Committee meeting Gdh. Thinadhoo Photo: Ibrahim Faisal, NERT member*



*Relief distribution, Gdh. Thinadhoo Photo: MRC volunteer*



*Packing of relief items donated to MRC ready for dispatching, MRC HQ*



*Meeting of NERT member with the students of Maldivian National University campus, Gdh. Thinadhoo*

MRC is in regular contact with the National Disaster Management Centre at national and local level in the affected community. Immediately after the incident, existing partners, government stakeholders and individuals have approached MRC extending their support to the affected community. However, due to the challenge of transporting the goods to the community, only goods that have an immediate need have been collected as donations.

As transportation is the biggest challenge, MRC negotiated with the main air freight company in the country, Maldivian Airline to transport the relief items. As such the company agreed to transport MRC's relief items by their cargo flights free of charge. However, they did bring to the attention of MRC that they already had a back log of 10 tonnes of relief items and hence it will take time to dispatch the items. As an alternative strategy, MRC also looked into the possibility of sending the items by sea boat which will take at least three days. However the poor weather condition and high sea tides in the southern atolls present huge risk for sending the items via sea transport. NEC reverted back to the initial approach to have the items send by air freight.

The Rotary Club and Male' branch of MRC donated items to MRC HQ to be transported to Gdh.Thinadhoo which was transported with the last shipment of jerry cans on 28 January 2016 at 17:00 hrs. Below is a summary of the items dispatched by MRC.

Items	Quantity	Date dispatched	Other remarks
Jerry cans	1500	30 January, 2016	Jerry cans dispatched and distributions are in progress.
Mosquito Repellent	730	28 Jan 2016	Rotary Club
	154	28 Jan 2016	Damas – donated to MRC Male' Branch
Mosquito repellent wipes	342	28 Jan 2016	Damas – donated to MRC Male' Branch
Rechargeable lights	65	28 Jan 2016	Individual donors
Batteries (AA)	240	28 Jan 2016	Rotary Club
LED Flashlight	120	28 Jan 2016	Rotary Club

*\*prepositioned through the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund in 2014 during the water crisis*

All the above listed items have been dispatched to Gdh. Thinadhoo via air freight. All the jerry cans have been received and the distributions are in progress. The rest of the items are en-route and expected to be delivered by 30 January.

## Contact information

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. 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**.

