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Information bulletin no 2

Fiji: Floods/Tropical depression

 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.

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Front of Colonial Plaza Nadi. Photo by Shiri Ram
(www.imaginesouthpacific.com)

The situation

Widespread flash floods which started in the early morning of 30 March particularly in the Western Division of Fiji caused damages to infrastructure, schools, homes, businesses and agriculture. On the afternoon of Monday, 2 April it was confirmed that a tropical depression had formed into a cyclone 600km South West of Fiji, 'Cyclone Daphne'. The cyclone did not make landfall in Fiji but brought extra rain and strong winds to the affected areas mainly in the West. It has been reported that there have been four fatalities as a direct result of the floods and there is still one child missing, who was swept away by strong currents.

At the peak of the floods there were 204 activated evacuation centres housing 14,984 people (source: NDMO, 5 April), across the main island of Viti Levu. The government has been working towards closing these centres which are utilizing school buildings, as the Ministry of Education has been focusing on restoring the schools and ensuring the schools resume as quickly as possible. As of Wednesday, 11 April, the government reported that there are 31 active evacuation centres housing 1,800 people in the Western Division and one active evacuation centre in the Central Division, housing 28 people.

As the weather continues to improve, and the flood water recedes in the affected areas, the cleaning up process is taking place. The government recently reported that electricity restoration is complete in the areas of Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki, however the areas of Sigatoka, Nadi and Lautoka are still experiencing partial disruptions. The Water Authority of Fiji (WAF) is currently working on restoring the reticulated system in the affected areas. Where there is no available water supply, they have been establishing water tanks and trucking in water along with distributions of bottled water.

There is currently a concern for communicable diseases such as typhoid, dengue and leptospirosis. The Ministry of Health has been implementing public health measures to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. These initiatives include food, water and vector surveillance, and health promotion.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

MANAGEMENT AND OVERALL COORDINATION

FRCS National Office has been working closely with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and their partners in coordination. The National Office teams are now in the field and have established an emergency operating centre (EOC) in Nadi. The teams are supporting the branches in the west with their assessments, relief distribution, information management and stock replenishment. The National Office deployment had additional support from an IFRC disaster management delegate for five days. FRCS has also been working closely with the regional partners.

The Australian and New Zealand Red Cross Societies have given in-kind support of relief supplies that are currently being distributed to the affected families. FRCS has been successful in securing warehouse space in the Nadi area as a relief stock distribution base.

FRCS also received financial support from partners. The current updated figures in CHF are as below:

Donors	Amount in CHF	To be used for
AUSAID (post in Suva)	253,562.00	Emergency items replenishment
NZAID (post in Suva)	231,446.00	Emergency items replenishment
US Government	44,747.00	Operation costs

If further needs arise, FRCS will open a discussion with national and regional partners on additional support for FRCS's response effort.

ASSESSMENTS AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFIs)

Based on the initial damage assessments, FRCS's initial plan is to assist 6,000 families to recover from the impact of the floods.

Branches in the Western Division had volunteers on the ground conducting assessments and undertaking distributions which started over the 7-8 April weekend. Sigatoka, Nadi, Ba, Tavua, Rakiriki Ba and Lautoka branches are now conducting distributions within the affected areas. So far, 2,538 families (8,596 people) have been assisted.

Relief distribution details are below.

Branches	No. of Villages	No. of Settlements	No. of Evacuation Centers	No. of Families Assessed	No. of Families Assisted	Total No. of People	Males (Adult)	Females (Adult)	Children (Male)	Children (Female)	Babies (Under 3)	Single Head Households
TAVUA	3	20	18	121	105	507	167	182	71	57	30	0
NADI	3	6	6	1665	617	5473	1860	2321	538	405	346	3
SIGTOKA	19	14	2	580	291	1839	766	740	257	44	32	0
RAKIRAKI	3	3	0	46	44	169	64	88	1	7	9	3
BA	1	8	0	126	75	608	253	271	74		10	0

Branches	Black Pack	Cooking Set	Water Container	Baby Pack	Blankets	Tarpaulin	Hygiene Pack	Dignity Pack	Wash Kit	First Aid Kit	Diapers	Gas Stove
TAVUA	53	36	0	0	26	16	46		46			
NADI	371	49	84		425	1	417		308		2	
SIGTOKA	230	4	2	1	13	23	57	3	55	4		15
RAKIRAKI	44						44		44			
BA	65	9	10		60		47		26			

FRCS is continuing the response on the ground with additional assessments and distribution of relief items. For the next couple of weeks, the FRCS National Office will continue to work on the replenishment of relief supplies at the headquarters and branches.

Thus far, FRCS has accepted the following in-kind supplies:

Items	Quantity
Australian Red Cross	
Hygiene Kit (baby)	98
Hygiene Kit (adult)	259
Jerry Can (10 L)	3000
Kitchen Set	216
Filter Carbon	4 boxes
Filter Sediment	10 boxes
New Zealand Red Cross	
Kitchen set	1000

Based on the needs on the ground, FRCS has also supplied the Western Division branches with wheelbarrows and brooms to assist with the clean-up effort in the most affected communities. Through this action, FRCS is supporting a quicker rehabilitation process and ensuring people are moving back into clean premises.

WATER SUPPLY

As with the last floods, UNICEF has supported FRCS by giving in-kind 3,000 WASH kits for FRCS branches to distribute in the affected areas. To date, FRCS has distributed 479 WASH kits.

The contents of the WASH kits were validated by the WASH cluster. Each pack contains:

- 2 X 10lt collapsible containers
- 100 X 33mg purification tables (to cover the needs of a family of five for 25 days)
- flyer on how to use the water purification tablets (Fijian/English)
- 2 bars of soap.

FRCS is also working with the WAF to monitor the water situation carefully for changes. If required by WAF or the WASH Cluster, FRCS is ready to deploy the NOMAD water purification unit.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE PROMOTION

The FRCS National Headquarters is working with health volunteers in the western branches in supporting the Ministry of Health to identify high-risk areas within affected populations. The teams are also working closely with Ministry of Health to distribute relief items, provide community education and assist with the cleaning up of affected communities. FRCS health teams also visited evacuation centres while they were open, to conduct community education sessions on the importance of health and hygiene. As the evacuation centres have been closing, these education sessions are being conducted in villages and settlements within the affected areas.

FRCS is currently working with the health cluster to develop a longer-term response plan working collaboratively with all the health partners. FRCS is collaborating with the health cluster on inclusion of simple psychosocial support messages in their dignity (safety and sanitation) kits.

FRCS is continuing its partnership with UNFPA to distribute UNFPA-funded dignity packs as a supplement for existing hygiene kits and targeting women and girls in flood-affected households. The packs have a strengthened safety and sanitation component and include a wind-up radio, torch and batteries, a packet of sanitary pads, a t-shirt, flip flops, underwear and stay safe condoms. Fiji Women's Crisis Centre has provided material covering "8 steps to Child Safety" and contacts for information and support. A brochure is currently being developed by FRCS in conjunction with the protection and health clusters and UN Women will provide simple protection and psychosocial messages. One thousand packs will be distributed the week beginning 16 April. FRCS is also collaborating with the Fiji Disabled Persons Federation and Pacific Women's Rural Network to enable distribution of these kits to remote locations.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **National Society:** Acting Director General, Christopher Ho; office phone +679 331 4133; mobile phone +679 999 2505; email: operations@redcross.com.fj.
- **IFRC regional office:** Regional Disaster Management Coordinator, Ysabeau Rycx; office phone: +679 331 1855; email: ysabeau.rycx@ifrc.org.
- **IFRC Zone:** Operations Coordinator, Christine Strater; office phone : +60 3 9207 5727; mobile phone: +6012 2130 149; email: christine.strater@ifrc.org.



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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.