

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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

TIMOR-LESTE: STORMS AND FLOODS

14 March 2006

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 183 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. MD RTP001; Operations Update no. 01; Period covered: 23 February to 09 March 2006; Appeal coverage: 51.3% ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

Appeal history:

- Emergency Appeal launched on 23 February 2006 for CHF 569,685 (USD 431,253 or EUR 364,016) to assist some 8,400 beneficiaries for six months.
- CHF 200,000 has been allocated from the Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF)

Outstanding needs: CHF 277,337 (USD 209,945 or EUR 177,212)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: [Timor-Leste Appeal 2006-2007 MAATP001](#), [Southeast Asia Appeal 2006-2007 MAA51001](#)

Operational Summary: Support from international partners has enabled the Timor-Leste Red Cross (Cruz Vermelha De Timor-Leste or CVTL) to support many affected communities in the wake of a series of storms and floods. However, the appeal remains far from fully funded. Partners are urged to support CVTL's efforts to reach vulnerable communities across the country. This is the Federation's first international emergency appeal in support of CVTL, the youngest member of a global network of 183 national societies. The operation represents an excellent opportunity for the national society to prove itself and develop as an effective supporter of vulnerable people in times of disaster in one of Asia's poorest countries.

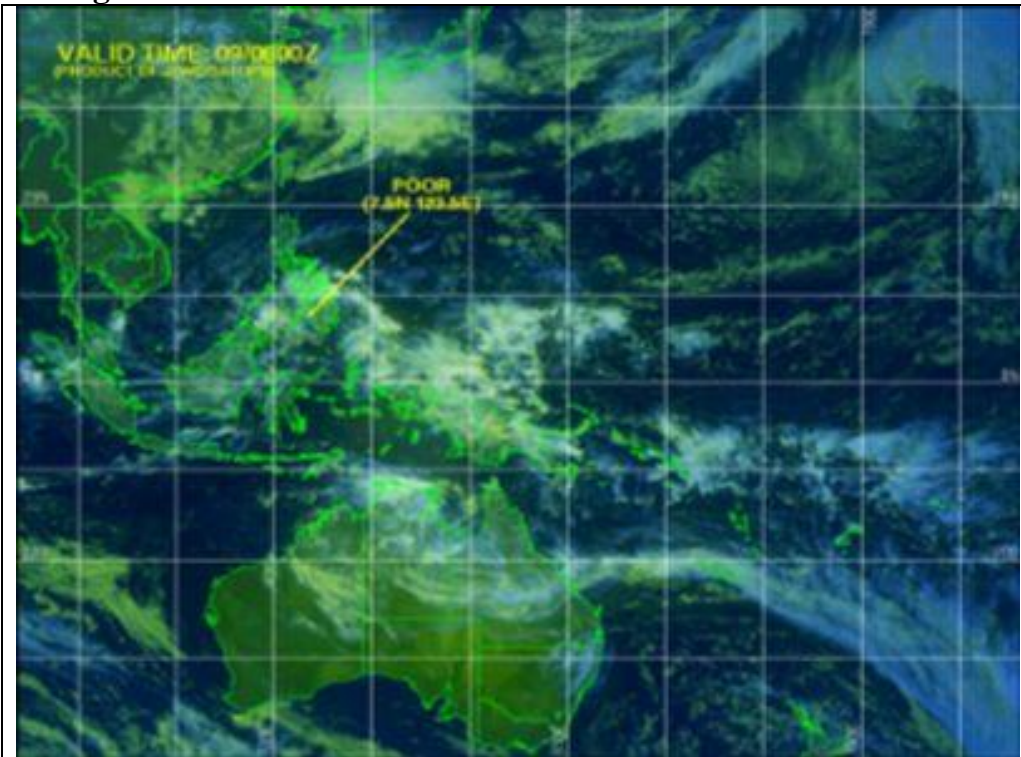
Several districts were affected by storms and flash floods in low-lying and coastal areas. CVTL has been at the forefront of efforts to assist some of the most vulnerable of those affected. The Federation delegation in Timor-Leste has provided technical assistance and information sharing/monitoring, and continues to support in this role.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background



Satellite imagery shows intense weather patterns forming over Timor-Leste. Source: SATOPS

Several districts in Timor-Leste have been hit by a series of storms since mid-January 2006, which have continued into March. The district of Oecusse was one of the hardest hit. More than 1,200 houses were damaged or destroyed and at least 100 wells contaminated. To date, 3,158 farmers have suffered extensive losses of crops such as corn and rice, and livestock. The number of affected families has increased because of the ongoing heavy rains across the region.

The Timor-Leste enclave on the coast of the Indonesian part of Timor was ravaged by floods. Heavy rains caused the Tono river to swell, destroying sections of the river bank that protect the adjacent villages. Over 500 families were directly affected through damage to housing and crops. Strong currents in the Tono river killed livestock, including horses, cows, pigs, buffalos and chickens. At least 100 wells were contaminated, limiting potable water supply to affected communities.

Oecusse is a highly vulnerable district, accessible only by ferry (a 15-hour trip) or UN helicopter from the capital Dili which flies twice weekly. Local transport is difficult, given the scattered nature of communities and lack of roads. Communication with the district is challenging because of poor telephone coverage, while electricity and fuel supplies are often disrupted. Such a scenario exacerbates health risks, such as malaria, dengue and tuberculosis.

Poor weather conditions have continued to affect Timor-Leste. On 2 March, the national disaster management office (NDMO) issued an alert, warning residents near coastal areas to beware of possible flash floods and storm surges because of strong winds.

An estimated 3,500 people in the coastal areas of Vemasse sub-district, Suco Campong Lor hamlet, Baucau district, were evacuated as a protective measure. Many of the evacuees were children and the elderly. They moved to safer and higher grounds because of the risk of coastal flooding from the one-metre high tides. The local fire and police departments, coordinated by the CVTL district branch staff, assisted in the evacuation.

The floodwaters have since subsided without any reports of casualties, but there are still 20 families living in a makeshift higher-ground sanctuary, hesitating to return home because of fears of more flooding. Water sources

(deep wells) remain vulnerable. On 2 March, a CVTL/Federation team assessed the situation and the needs of the affected population. Nine sheets of plastic tarpaulins were given to affected families to provide temporary basic shelter.

Floods have also been reported in Suai district. Several households evacuated to higher areas before returning home. No casualties or damage have been reported.

Some areas in Atauro sub-district were flooded after heavy rains on 7 March. Nine houses were washed out and 30 damaged in Arlo sub-district. Approximately 100 households were affected and their rice fields damaged but there were no casualties reported. Most affected households lost basic items such as kitchen utensils. The island is 28 km off the shore and is reachable only by small craft; the journey can take two hours through rough seas. CVTL branch members are assessing affected sub-districts.

In Liquica district, some 25 km west of Dili, six houses were destroyed by strong winds and heavy rains which started on 7 March. Two people were injured. Assessments are underway to determine possible CVTL assistance to the affected population.

The districts of Ainaro, Viqueque, Maliana, Bobonaro and Baucau were exposed to storms that destroyed or damaged houses, particularly roofs, and destroyed crops. The districts of Dili, Ainaro, Bobonaro, Liquica, Oecusse, Aileu, Ermera, Covalima and Manufahi (mostly in the west and southwest of Timor-Leste) are still experiencing strong winds and spells of rain.

The CVTL disaster management unit, supported by the Federation country delegation, will deploy one team to each district of Atauro and Liquica to assist branch assessments.

Operational developments

A six-month plan of action has been developed to ensure effective and timely execution of the programme.

Oecusse

CVTL cleaned 72 deep wells to ensure safe water for the affected population. It also distributed 500 mosquito nets to affected communities to prevent dengue and malaria. Ongoing assessment in three more villages is expected to identify more contaminated wells.

Ainaro, Viqueque, Bobonaro, Baucau and Hato Bullico



Strong winds stripped many houses of their roofs, exposing the poor structure of most houses in the affected areas.

Five model houses have been completed in five villages in Ainaro. Their primary purpose is to demonstrate how effective roof construction is more likely to withstand strong winds. A civil engineer was hired as a consultant to help in the roof construction and demonstration of proper techniques.

The same activity will be undertaken in the districts of Bobonaro, Viqueque, Baucau, and Hato Bullico sub-district. Several villagers in Ainaro and volunteers from other affected districts have been trained on construction techniques, with a view to implement in their own districts.

The Federation country delegation has provided technical support in the procurement of mosquito nets, jerry cans, and basic shelter materials (including a portable generator and electrical drill to be used in the demonstration). The delegation will continue to provide such support as necessary. CVTL has also coordinated with the local branches and district government in the target areas. Ten volunteers from the society's national headquarters have been trained on assessment and relief management. Specific plans and schedules for assessment, distribution and demonstration of proper roof housing construction have been prepared.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Provision of immediate relief assistance (non-food items)

Objective 1: 500 families in Oecusse are protected from immediate health threats in terms of unsafe water and mosquitoes.

Progress/Achievements

Procurement has been arranged according to Federation standards, for 2,000 mosquito nets and 1,000 jerry cans. Delivery will begin this week and distribution will take place from the last week of March until the first week of April.



CVTL volunteers in Oecusse register beneficiaries during the relief operation.

To date, 500 mosquito nets were distributed to affected households in Banoco, Noapai and Um Noah, all in Oecusse district.

Impact

The families receiving mosquito nets are now better protected against mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria.

Shelter (4 Districts)



Increasing community knowledge: a demonstration of better construction techniques in Ainaro district.

Objective 1: Target communities are more aware of improved construction techniques.

Progress/Achievements

Five model houses were constructed with improved roofs and demonstrations of better construction techniques were held in different areas of Ainaro district. A schedule for demonstration/awareness workshops in construction has been prepared for other districts and will be held through to the third week of April.

The demonstrations and training sessions have given 257 families knowledge of improved construction techniques.

Impact

With awareness of improved construction techniques, more vulnerable families will be able to build structurally stronger homes, greatly reducing their risk to disaster.

Constraints

Strong winds were still experienced in many areas, delaying the schedule for demonstrations.

Objective 2: 200 families have used improved construction techniques so that their homes are more storm resistant.

Progress/Achievements

Procurement, following Federation standards, of various basic shelter materials, such as corrugated iron sheets, timber, nails, wooden screws with washers and spanners, has been arranged and delivery will start this week.

Water and sanitation

Objective: Communities in Oecusse have secured sources of potable water.

Progress/Achievements

To date, 72 deep wells in three areas in two villages (Lalisuk and Cunha) have been treated, in coordination with Oxfam and the district government in Oecusse.

Impact

A total of 400 households comprising 3,000 people have benefited from this operation. The CVTL water sanitation team composed of headquarters personnel and district volunteers are continuing water treatment in deep wells in affected areas.

Constraints

The ongoing rain and poor weather may delay the treatment of contaminated water. There is a risk of the cleaned wells being flooded/ contaminated again.

National Society Capacity Building

Objective: The national society’s disaster management capacity is strengthened.



Treated deep wells restore clean and safe water to affected communities.

Progress/Achievements



Training sessions, such as the relief management course in Oecusse, work to improve the capacity of CVTL volunteers.

A standard emergency assessment checklist was formulated to be used by the national society for monitoring and assessment. Ten volunteers from the CVTL national headquarters were trained on standard operating procedures in assessment and relief management, utilizing appropriate forms such as the emergency assessment checklist, award distribution sheet, family record form and relief operation report. Seven volunteers from CVTL’s Oecusse branch were trained on standard operating procedures in relief management utilizing appropriate forms.

A temporary CVTL disaster management operation centre was established at the disaster management unit for monitoring and operation updates.

Impact

The capacity of CVTL’s disaster management unit has increased as a result of its active role in the implementation of planned activities.

Constraints

The CVTL disaster management unit faced difficulties in providing service delivery because of limited human resource and expertise in the department.

Communication and publicity

Media coverage has featured the humanitarian assistance provided by CVTL to affected people, particularly those families whose roofs were destroyed. The national society’s work was featured in the *Timor Sun*, a weekly newspaper. CVTL and the Federation acted swiftly to profile the national society’s early response to Timor-Leste’s floods and storms through the publication of an information bulletin on 10 February on the Federation’s website.

Federation coordination

The Federation's country Delegation will ensure that programme plans are carried out on time and according to standards. Technical support and the increase of expertise to the national society are being achieved through activities and involvement in implementation. Regular meetings, coordinated by the head of delegation, to monitor operational progress and ensure coordination are held with CVTL counterparts.

Capacity of the national society

The national society has mobilized its volunteers at headquarters and in branches (those in affected and non-affected areas) to assist, particularly in: the treatment of water in the deep wells in Oecusse district; construction of new roofs in Ainaro; and assessment/distribution of relief items to affected people. CVTL's disaster management unit and logistics department identified qualified bidders to deliver required quantities of needed items at reasonable prices.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

Timor Leste - storms and floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. MD RTP001

PLEDGES RECEIVED

14/03/2006

CASH

| REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF -----> | | | | 569,685 | | TOTAL COVERAGE 51.3% |
|--------------------------------|---------|-----|---------|----------|-----|-------------------------|
| FINNISH - RC | 50,000 | EUR | 77,723 | 24.02.06 | | |
| NEW ZEALAND - GOVT | 150,000 | NZD | 130,500 | 01.03.06 | | |
| SWEDISH - GOVT | 500,000 | SEK | 84,125 | 27.02.06 | | |
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH | | | | 292,348 | CHF | 51.3% |

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

| DONOR | CATEGORY | QUANTITY | UNIT | VALUE CHF | DATE | COMMENT |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|------|-----------|------|---------|
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES | | | | | | |
| | | | | 0 | CHF | 0.0% |

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

| DONOR | CATEGORY | QUANTITY | UNIT | VALUE CHF | DATE | COMMENT |
|--------------------|----------|----------|------|-----------|------|---------|
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED | | | | | | |
| | | | | 0 | CHF | |