

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

COSTA RICA AND PANAMA: EARTHQUAKE

29 December 2003

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 50,000

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 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 50,000 has been released. The Federation does not anticipate further needs. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the DREF update.

The Situation

Reports confirm that the earthquake which occurred on 25 December at 2.11 in the morning of a magnitude of 6.1 on the Richter Scale with its epicentre on the border between Costa Rica and Panama shook Puerto Muelles in Costa Rica and Puerto Armuelles in Panama. In Costa Rica, several dozens of homes were either partially or totally destroyed and two hospitals were severely damaged and immediately evacuated. Two people were confirmed dead and 75 were injured. In Panama, some 200 homes and a health care facility were severely damaged in Puerto Armuelles, one person died and 45 were injured. On 27 December, an aftershock of a similar magnitude took place. Details as to any further damage incurred are awaited.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In Costa Rica, a full team was immediately put in place in the capital, San José, and emergency response experts and ambulances were deployed to Puerto Muelles. The conclusion of the ensuing damage and needs assessment was that damage to housing and infrastructure was less than anticipated; however, an aqueduct has been destroyed, giving rise to concerns regarding potable water. A team from the Red Cross Society of Panama was deployed to the affected area on 26 December, including national intervention team (NIT) and regional intervention team (RIT) trained personnel. The nearest Red Cross branch is in the city of David, one hour from the affected area. A water truck, vehicles and tents have been made available by PADRU and 200 units of plastic sheeting and a water testing kit were also provided. Major needs in both Costa Rica and Panama, according to reports to date, are for shelter and communications equipment.

The Panama Regional Delegation is in constant communication with the Costa Rican Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of Panama, and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) was alerted in order to provide support for the coordination of response activities.

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Both the Costa Rican Red Cross and the Red Cross Society of Panama, with the support of PADRU, are to compile plans of action outlining assistance to be provided to those affected by the earthquake on the border area. As soon as this information is available, together with further details regarding the conclusions of damage and needs assessments taking place, an information bulletin will be issued.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.