

# 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

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: FLOODS

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 80,000

*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](http://www.ifrc.org)

### In Brief

**This document is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. The response to the disaster has been prompt and it is expected that major funding needs are fulfilled. However, unearmarked funds to repay the CHF 80,000 DREF allocation are required.**

### The Situation

As of 20 November, heavy rains and electric storms resulted in the bursting of the banks of the Yaque del Norte and Yuna rivers, as well as their tributaries, causing flooding in the region of El Cibao in the north of the Dominican Republic. The floods particularly affected housing, and some 47,270 people were evacuated. At the same time, damage was incurred to agriculture and fishing and, given that aqueducts in the area are all affected, potable water is in short supply. In total, the flooding has affected some 65,000 people. According to the national emergency commission, the most affected communities are in the provinces of Santiago, Montecristi, Valverde and Duarte, as follows: Ranchadero, Jobo Corcobado, Güayubín, Palo Verde, Castañuelas, Los Bateyes, La Cruz, Higüero, Isabel, El Puente, Villa Riva and the area referred to as "Lower Yuna". On 26 November, 13,000 people were estimated to be in difficulty, of whom 5,000 families (25,000 people) are considered to be critically affected. A red alert status has been maintained for the region between Santiago and Montecristi and there are fears that the two dams in the area: the Monción and Hatillo may burst. Outbreaks of illnesses are starting to occur, mostly diarrhoea, fever and skin rashes, and there are major concerns relating to health given that water supplies have been contaminated.



## **Red Cross action**

The national emergency commission, of which the Dominican Red Cross is a member, is ensuring the distribution of food rations, mattresses and mosquito nets in the most-affected areas.

The Dominican Red Cross, together with the Civil Defence and the fire brigade, participated in search and rescue operations, assisting those whose houses were seriously affected in remote locations. Teams of volunteers specialized in psychological first aid have been assisting disaster victims in the worst-hit locations. The National Society also took part in activities to help calm those hit by the flooding, through messages in newspapers and on the radio and television. Damage and needs assessment teams are working in the flood-affected communities in order to identify priority needs and a commission specialized in health issues has evaluated the situation in the shelters and other buildings which are being used by those whose houses are under water.



*Distribution of assistance provided by the French Embassy and Carrefour*

Support to the Dominican Red Cross is ensured by the Federation's regional delegation in Panama, the sub regional office in Santo Domingo and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU). A disaster management delegate and a regional intervention team (RIT) member have been deployed to the Dominican Republic and the American Red Cross (ARC) has also mobilized a member of its international disaster response unit (IDRU). Furthermore, following a decision of the disaster management working group, the ARC has taken the opportunity to deploy a new pilot relief emergency response unit (ERU). The final stage of the Unit's accreditation is field testing which will now take place in the Dominican Republic in support of the floods operation. The Unit will specialize in food and non-food relief, including quality control, and provision of training in documentation and procedures.

Members of the Dominican Red Cross and of the Federation are conducting visits to the affected areas, both aerial and over ground. Regular communication is also taking place with United Nations agencies, OXFAM, World Vision, OFDA, the Spanish International Cooperation Agency and PNS including the American Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross.

The Dominican Red Cross has drawn up a plan of action in order to assist a total of 3,000 families in the worst flood-stricken communities in the provinces of Montecristi, Santiago, Valverde and Duarte. Three operational phases are anticipated: the emergency phase which has just been concluded; the relief and rehabilitation phase which will take place between 20 November and 20 February 2004 and the recovery phase to be closed by 20 August 2004.

With funding secured from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and from OFDA, and through an agreement with the World Food Programme, food rations and complementary nutritive kits targeted at children and lactating women are planned to be distributed, together with hygiene kits, kitchen sets and family kits. Food rations will include rice, cooking oil, beans, sardines, spaghetti, chocolate, salt, sugar, matches and drinking water. 6,000 hygiene kits are to be distributed which are composed of toilet paper, bath towels, tooth brushes, tooth paste, soap, shampoo, sanitary towels, a razor and a waste disposal bag. It is planned to distribute 1,500 kitchen kits to

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those families who are most in need; 5,000 families will also receive kits which are made up of mosquito nets to protect flood victims from malaria and dengue fever. In addition, the Dominican Red Cross plans to support activities in the field of community health and water and sanitation carried out by the Dominican health authorities, the Pan American Health Organization and OXFAM. Volunteers from the Dominican Red Cross will focus on assistance with surveillance to identify outbreaks of disease; hygiene education in the community, providing information on prevention of illness; support to training of community groups in treatment and storage of drinking water and support to authorities regarding waste disposal; training in the use of latrines; provision of psychosocial support and assistance with the distribution of food in shelters.

Monitoring and evaluation of the various activities will be conducted by representatives of the Dominican Red Cross, the Federation and the PNS, together with members of partner international organizations.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

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