

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

In Brief

This document is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. In addition to the floods in the Dominican Republic, Tropical Storm Odette hit the south east region of the country on Saturday, 6 December. Given the generous response to the floods operation and the limited degree of damage incurred by the tropical storm, it is expected that major funding needs have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, 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 were all affected, potable water is in short supply. In total, the flooding 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.

On the evening of 6 December, tropical storm Odette hit the south of the country in the province of Barahona and the north west in San Juan de la Maguana, causing electric storms and flash flooding. A total of 4,759 people were evacuated and the gates of several dams were opened to reduce the potential impact of the heavy rains; approximately 10,000 people were affected to different degrees by flooding. Damage incurred is mostly to housing, particularly to roofs, and to agriculture, of which 20 per cent has been affected in the region. Assessments carried out on Monday, 8 December indicate that 80 families in Barahona and also 50 families in the area of the town of Guerra, near the capital, Santo Domingo, which was hit by a mini tornado, have been severely affected. Those families which were evacuated have now returned to their homes and the government is carrying out evaluations of the damage to agriculture. Electricity has been restored; however, the bridge connecting the town of Neiva with Baracoa has collapsed.

Given the imminent threat of Tropical Storm Odette in the border area, preparedness measures were taken by the Haitian National Red Cross Society, but fortunately, Haiti was not affected. The National Society is supported by the Federation's sub regional office in Santo Domingo, the Federation's organizational development delegate in

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Haiti and representatives of the French and Netherlands Red Cross Societies. A state of alert was in place until Sunday, 7 December. Furthermore, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) maintained two French-speaking delegates on stand-by, ready to travel to Port au Prince in the event of a disaster.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Dominican Red Cross is carrying out the floods relief operation in the provinces of Montecristi (the worst-hit by the floods in late November), Duarte, Santiago and Valverde. The National Society drew up a plan of action in order to assist a total of 3,000 families in flood-stricken communities with funding secured from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and from OFDA (see information bulletin no. 2 for details).

The distribution of 2,000 food kits per family per month is currently being finalized. Furthermore, 2,000 hygiene kits are also being distributed and, thanks to an agreement with the World Food Programme, an additional 1,666 food kits are being provided. On Thursday, 4 December, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit forwarded two containers for the operation including 1,500 kitchen kits and 10,000 mosquito nets. The Dominican Red Cross has mobilized some 130 volunteers from seven branches who are carrying out the distributions to the most vulnerable flood victims.

In response to Tropical Storm Odette, the Dominican Red Cross, together with the Civil Defence and the fire brigade, participated in rescue operations, assisting those whose houses were seriously affected in remote locations. All Red Cross branches were placed on alert in the south west and the north of the country. The headquarters activated emergency response systems in connection with the Civil Defence. Communication is ensured with ECHO, OXFAM and other agencies, and assessment teams were formed which are working in affected communities.

Support to the Dominican Red Cross is ensured by the Federation's regional delegation in Panama, the sub regional office in Santo Domingo and PADRU. A regional intervention team (RIT) member has been deployed to the Dominican Republic to work with the Dominican Red Cross in the coordination of the floods operation. Furthermore, a three-member American Red Cross Emergency Response Unit (ERU) specialized in relief, is on the ground in the Dominican Republic.

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

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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.