

# 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

## **MADAGASCAR: FLOODS**

28 January 2003

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*This Bulletin is being issued for information only, to communicate the situation described below. With another serious tropical depression approaching the island now the overall situation is expected to deteriorate further, and the Federation may consider issuing an Appeal to respond to the evolving needs.*

### ***The Situation***

Floods caused by almost a month of non-stop rainfall have killed 16 people in the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar. Flood waters have destroyed poorly constructed houses in slum areas resulting in the deaths, and the displacement of many hundreds of families. Over 2,215 people have been made homeless, while over 25,500 people overall have been directly affected by the floods. Madagascar, the fourth largest island in the world, is the poorest of the southern Indian Ocean states and is just emerging from a seven-month political crisis.

The Meteorological Department of Madagascar reports that rainfall amounts recorded since the beginning of the month have already reached the 550 mm mark, double the monthly average for January. The most affected are the low-lying areas of Antananarivo (the capital), Fianarantsoa and Antsiranana Provinces. The main road from Antananarivo to the main port city of Tamatave has been cut.

The floods have aggravated the spread of malaria, cholera, diarrhoea and respiratory infections - the first two are endemic in the island. Madagascar also frequently experiences epidemics like the severe flu that killed 600 people in the north and north east of the island in the last quarter of 2002.

Some of the immediate emergency needs identified so far include basic relief items such as food, tents, plastic sheeting, blankets, mosquito nets and medicines for malaria and diarrhoea treatment. The rice harvest season will begin in several weeks, and the flood situation is provoking fears of heavy losses unless immediate harvesting is done.

Another major tropical depression is now approaching Madagascar across the Indian Ocean today, and is likely to reach the island tonight (28 January), bringing additional heavy precipitation.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

Senior Malagasy Red Cross officials have been actively participating in the National Disaster Committee which is assessing the scale of the floods and planning measures in support of disaster prevention and relief management. Already, the National Society has plans for a medical intervention through a number of field clinics, and the distribution of essential medicines in designated reception camps and in centres where victims have taken refuge. The first distribution is targeting 2,000 people over seven days.

A medical doctor and four first aid volunteers will organise consultations in ten sites already identified in Antananarivo. The volunteers will concentrate on the main causes of morbidity - malaria, respiratory infections, diarrhoea and other waterborne infections.

The National Society has requested support from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and is exploring other possible fund-raising opportunities to cover the costs of drug purchases and volunteer mobilisation. The situation is being closely monitored and further bulletins and/or an international appeal will be launched if things deteriorate further.

The National Society is also in close contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation's Regional Delegation in Nairobi and the French Red Cross, who are their main partners in the country.

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

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