

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

SRI LANKA: FLOODING & LANDSLIDES

19 May 2003

Information Bulletin N° 1

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 Bulletin is being issued based on the information available at this time. A DREF allocation of CHF 50,000 has been released. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Appeal.

The Situation

Floods from the recent monsoon rains have created havoc in Sri Lanka, and landslides have added to the situation in certain parts of the country. The number of casualties cannot be accurately confirmed at this time but between 50 and 100 persons are believed dead, and more than 100,000 families displaced and marooned on roof tops in Ratnapura and Galle (central Sri Lanka). Some areas have received 3 meters or more of water, and many areas of the district remain inaccessible. The Government has called upon the Navy to assist and facilitate rescue operations. Power supplies have also been disrupted, creating further chaos. Several highways including the Colombo- Badulla main road are impassable. Heavy rains and cyclone-type winds and floods have also affected southern Sri Lanka, leaving a massive trail of destruction and displacement. In Hambantota, an area already heavily affected by a drought, the floods have exacerbated the situation, and there is little relief in sight. The Indian Government has provided naval support and dinghies.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS): The SLRCS has appealed for urgent help and has already sent two relief teams to Ratnapura and Galle to assess the situation in the area while also mobilizing the trained volunteers of the branches and coordinating with government District Secretary offices. There have been two Regional Disaster Response Team training courses in the region (the most recent in Sri Lanka) and trained personnel are available to support the national society as needed. The Red Cross is appealing for urgent help from donors both in Sri Lanka and outside. The SLRCS has indicated an urgent need for food items, clothes and cash support to assist those affected. In the meantime the society will distribute 10,000 food parcels from its emergency stocks.

The Federation: The Head of Regional Delegation is in close contact with the Federation Representative in Colombo who is close to the disaster-affected area. The Representative is in close contact with the Minister of Social Welfare who confirmed (18 May) at least 50 plus dead and 100,000 families affected. By this morning the figures had been adjusted to 200 plus dead, 200 missing, and 500,000 affected. The Regional Disaster Management delegate and Regional DP delegate are en route to join the Representative who is attending a workshop along with the regional information manager, regional reporting delegate and regional finance delegate

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in Sri Lanka. The Norwegian Red Cross has indicated their own and the Norwegian government's interest to support any appeal. RDRT and Field Assessment and Coordination Teams (FACT) are on standby if required.

Immediate needs:

The most important need is for start-up funding to ensure a rapid mobilization of the emergency needs such as food, shelter, water, and health essentials.

Coordination

The SLRCS will lead the relief effort, supported by the Federation's Disaster Management and Coordination (DMC) division, the Asia/Pacific Department, the Regional Delegation, and the team in Sri Lanka. Information has been disseminated to PNS through updates on the DMIS to ensure close coordination of any national society assistance. The Federation's Sri Lanka Representative will be facilitate assistance and support to the SLRCS.

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

For further information 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.

