

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

DJIBOUTI: FLOODS

16 April 2004

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 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 30,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider international support through an Emergency Appeal.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

News was received yesterday 15 April from [Red Crescent Society of Djibouti](#) that torrential rains and high winds hit Djibouti town and the surrounding areas between Sunday 11 to Tuesday 13 April. There has been an almost complete communication blackout as the storm brought down telephone poles. The rains caused flash flooding in Djibouti town. As flood waters surged along the dry river bed between Djibouti town and Balbala suburb many homes were washed away. Electricity supply had been cut off to many parts of the city but partly restored by Tuesday 13 April. Government ministers reported on 15 April that 48 people had been killed and 1,500 people were evacuated by the Djibouti military, with the assistance of US and French military helicopters, to two schools (also reported in an IRIN¹ report). A representative from ECHO had reported yesterday afternoon that 50 bodies had been found, the government was expecting another 100 or so and that 5,000 people were affected but who were able to return to their homes. The Red Crescent of Djibouti reported last night that the Government had revised the death toll to 156 people and that around 10,000 people had lost shelter and property. Red Crescent of Djibouti has also expressed fears that up to 100,000 people may be affected. This may be half the population of Djibouti (300,000-400,000) that live in basic housing very vulnerable to the torrential rains and high winds.

¹ IRIN – UN Integrated Regional Information Network

According to the UNDP Resident Representative there has been no UNDAC² deployment, they confirm official Ministry of Interior figures of 100,000 affected, but their visit of yesterday to the affected area confirms approximately 1,500 only affected. Power and water supply has been re-established to around 50% of population.

ECHO have expressed concerns that only 40% of the urban water supply is presently functioning (although the water supply is normally inadequate for the needs of the population, especially in the poorer suburbs). This is of concern as Djibouti is prone to cholera and malaria especially as the temperature is getting hotter.

The evacuation phase appears complete and the search for bodies continues. The Government Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs will hold a meeting early today 16th where the outcome of the evaluation of the damage will be reported and roles assigned to various organizations. It is expected that the government will launch a flash appeal for \$20 million for relief and rehabilitation measures. As it is nearing election time it is likely that the government will make efforts to ensure a good response to the crisis.

According to ECHO there are a few International NGOs and UN agencies operating in Djibouti but mainly with development-oriented programmes that may be unable to scale up quickly. The French army is assisting with water trucking

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Red Crescent of Djibouti has a small presence in Djibouti town but have good relationships with the Government. They have previously assisted with non food item distributions for displaced people and fire victims, with the assistance of the local ICRC office in Djibouti town. They have recently recruited a disaster management officer and information officer.

Red Crescent of Djibouti have mobilized 40 volunteers to their dispensary in Balbala and have been coordinating with the Government and attending meetings to see the role that could be assigned to them. They have expressed willingness to assist in the distribution of non food items such as tarpaulins, kitchen sets, jerry cans and possibly blankets.

The Federation's Regional Disaster Management department will continue to liaise with Red Crescent of Djibouti and ICRC, has requested an allocation of CHF 30,000 from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), plans to send an assessment officer/team as soon as possible and is preparing for the possibility of purchase and airlift of non-food items possibly with ICRC assistance.

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's [Annual Appeal for Djibouti no. 01.02/2004](#).

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² UNDAC – UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination