

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

EAST TIMOR: FLOODS

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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 for information only. While an Emergency Appeal was considered unnecessary, an estimated CHF 50,000 (USD 40,668 or EUR 31,901) was required to assist the national society in responding to the needs. Based on the support received so far, an additional CHF 10,000 is still required to complete the planned assistance activities.

The Situation

Torrential rains towards the end of December 2003 caused severe flooding in the villages of Meligo and Atudara, situated in Cailaco, located 30 minutes (by car) east of Maliana in the southeast of the country. Houses were destroyed and damaged, and up to 400 people were seriously affected and are in need of assistance. A few cases of diarrhoea and malaria were diagnosed, but people are receiving adequate health care from the local clinic in Maliana.

Already extremely impoverished, villagers have been left with very little as flood waters carried away belongings, livestock and destroyed crops of rice, corn and vegetables.

In late December the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) had provided support to 26 families, distributing family kits, 50 kg rice, and five litres of cooking oil to each family. However there are still significant unmet needs among those worst affected by the floods.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Federation issued Information Bulletin no. 1 on 13 January 2004, reporting that staff and volunteers from the East Timor Red Cross - Cruz Vermelha Timor Leste (CVTL) - conducted an early assessment, and on 14 January 40 family kits (including kitchen utensils, cutlery, plates, washing materials and hygiene items) were delivered and distributed in the affected area to around 250 needy people not covered by government assistance. Present at the CVTL distribution was the Cailaco sub district administrator who commended the society for its timely and professional follow-up.

Prior to the distribution of family kits (which was featured on national television), the CVTL delivered 30 sacks of used clothes (donated by the Singapore Red Cross) to nuns at the Convent of Santa Cruz in Maliana who are sorting and repacking these items ahead of distribution by Maliana Red Cross branch volunteers to the villagers. In addition, a CVTL water-sanitation team carried out an inspection of the local water supply suspected of being the possible source of a diarrhoea outbreak. They were able to confirm this was not the source.

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During the distribution of family kits, CVTL staff learned of more families in the area affected by the flood. An assessment carried out the following day concluded that an additional 14 families were in need of family kits and food support. CVTL was also alerted to reports of possible new flooding in the village of Aidabaslete, situated one hour by car from Adutaro. An assessment mission concluded that there was no imminent threat of flooding in this area.

Having covered most of the needs for family kits and clothes, CVTL is now focusing on the provision of food, seeds and if possible construction materials for those affected. CVTL officials are currently in discussion with the government to ensure that humanitarian action is complementary and avoids duplication. Support for the further CVTL intervention - through the disaster management component of the 2004 East Timor Annual Appeal (no. 01.64/2004) - has been pledged by the Hong Kong Red Cross, with firm indications of support by the Australian and Norwegian Red Cross Societies. Procurement and distribution will begin shortly. The initial needs of this operation were estimated at CHF 50,000 (USD 40,668 or EUR 31,901), and based on the support received so far, an additional CHF 10,000 is still required to complete the planned assistance activities.

Meanwhile, the first phase of the operation has boosted the confidence of CVTL staff and volunteers and demonstrated that despite limited training and even fewer material resources, the society is capable of a timely and adequate response, at least in case of small-scale disasters.

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.

