

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

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: FLOODS

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The mission of the International Federation is to improve on the living conditions of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. The International Federation is the world's largest humanitarian organisation, and its millions of volunteers are permanently in action in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (No. 2/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 20,000 has been allocated from the Federation Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (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

From 18 to 21 October 2004, and from 1 to 5 November 2004, a torrential rain fell in most sub divisions of Bangui (the capital of the country), and in other parts of the country like Mobaye and Bema, located respectively 609 and 870 km from Bangui. Floods ensued and caused serious material and human damages.

The current situation has changed drastically due to the rains of 1-5 November 2004 that caused new damage in Bangui and in other parts of the country like Mobaye and Bema. Water sources and wells are polluted, thereby exposing the population to the risk of being contaminated by water-borne diseases.

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Table 1: Affected Population

Number of families	Number of Women	Number of Children	Number of Men	Total Affected Population
2,004	3,863	7,931	904	12,698

Possible Evolution

According to the Metereological Office, the affected localities are in the middle of the rainy season that is likely to run until mid December, thereby exposing other neighbourhoods of Bangui to the same disaster. Houses in the affected areas are generally constructed without solid foundation, proper sanitation and draining systems. If nothing is done, the next rains are likely to cause greater damage.



Impact of flooding: a destroyed house in Bangui district.



Near a completely-destroyed house, the owner is registered by a Red Cross volunteer.

Red Cross Red Crescent Action

Immediately after the announcement of the disaster, 150 volunteers of Central African Red Cross Society¹ went to the field to assist the affected population in transporting their remaining property.

In its capacity as member of the Crisis Committee that was set up by government, the national society carried out the identification and registration of victims. With support from the ICRC Bangui Delegation, the national society has provided the following non-food items to those first registered as victims (up to 21 October 2004):

- 180 tarpaulins
- 404 blankets
- 180 containers (buckets)

The Federation Central Africa sub-regional office (BRAC/Yaoundé) deployed the disaster management assistant, a member of ERDAC², to Bangui (8-13 November 2004), to assist the national society in the emergency assistance phase. A joint Federation-national society team went to the affected areas and re-assessed the situation. The resulting data is summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2: Human and Material Damages

Human Casualties		Material Damages			
Deaths	Wounded	Houses completely destroyed	Houses Partially Destroyed	Classrooms	Farms / Gardens
03	04	200	998	75	98

¹ Central African Red Cross Society – refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=44>

² ERDAC - Equipe de Réponse aux Désastres en Afrique Centrale (Central Africa Regional Disaster Response Team).

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Wells were chlorinated to avoid the risk of epidemics. Distribution of food items to the affected families is currently on-going. Once this is completed, the national society volunteers will carry out sanitation activities in the affected localities and sensitize the populations to improved hygiene practices they need to adopt to avoid water-borne diseases, malaria, etc.



Distribution of plastic sheeting and blankets (provided by ICRC).



Registration of an elderly victim who lost her house.

Coordination

The Government established the Crisis Committee; the national society is an active member. The Government, through local councils, also conducted the registration of affected people. The wife of the Head of State paid a visit to a family that lost two children as a result of the 1 November floods.

A second evaluation was conducted in collaboration with UNDP. The OCHA³ office in Bangui conducted a rapid evaluation in some neighbourhoods, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the national society.

The Central African Red Cross is currently the only organization in the field to help count the affected families or to at least assist them in one way or the other.

Needs

After the emergency assistance and the sanitation phases, the rehabilitation phase is now in force. The following activities need to be carried out:

- Distribution of seeds to the populations to help them start their agricultural activities again and avoid the situation of food insecurity.
- Help Central African Red Cross with customs clearance of clothing, and distribute them to children from the most affected families.
- Support Central African Red Cross in the process of setting up a National Disaster Response Team. This will be achieved by deploying two ERDAC members who will be selected at the appropriate time.
- Support Central African Red Cross in the process of permanent retraining of local committees' members and volunteers on the management of emergencies and on IEC methods to sensitize the populations to the risks of disasters.

³ OCHA – (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Action Plan

Goal: The vulnerability of the populations affected by floods is reduced.

Objectives:

- The affected families are capable of ensuring their food autonomy and are able to face the risks of contamination by water-borne diseases.
- Members of the Central African Red Cross now have good mastery of disaster preparedness and response measures

Expected Results:

- The dependence of the affected populations is reduced;
- The populations have access to potable water to cover all their needs.
- The populations have good mastery of risks, and they are exposed to the approached of the early alert system.

Activities:

- Distribution of seeds to the most vulnerable 100 families.
- Federation ERDAC trains and puts in place an ERDAC for the Central African Red Cross.
- The Central African Red Cross will encourage and support government authorities in the process to develop a national disaster management plan, with particular emphasis on floods.
- A follow-up evaluation will be conducted in late December 2004.

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 Appeals for Central African Republic:

- 2004 Annual Appeal no. 01.41/2004 http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/014104.pdf
- 2005 Annual Appeal no. 05AA034 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA034.pdf

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