

# 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

## COLOMBIA: FLOODS

5 May 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 based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 50,000 has been requested 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

Since the beginning of the rainy season, the government's Institute of Water, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) has been providing early alerts in areas that are at risk for floods and mudslides, activating the National Disasters Preparedness and Response System (SNPAD). SNPAD authorized the release of some preliminary funds from the National Disaster Fund to be managed by local committees.

At the end of April, heavy rains in Colombia intensified, causing mudslides and flooding of several rivers. The heavy rains have also destroyed roads, houses and crops, affecting 17 of the 32 departments in the country, in particular those in the Andean region. According to a preliminary report from the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRC) issued on 29 April, approximately 8,769 families have been affected (43,586 persons), including 5 deaths and 6 injuries. However, according to the latest media reports, based on data from SNPAD, more than 100,000 persons have been affected, including 10 deaths and 13 injuries.

Disasters such as this dramatically hamper local response capacities in a country already severely affected by a long internal conflict.

Affected families per department, updated 29 April, 2004:

Department	Families affected
Antioquia	41
Boyaca	164
Bolivar	200
Cauca	1,387
Cordoba	634
Choco	1,100
Cundimarca	185
Guajira	30
Norte de Santander	4,343
Tolima	220
Valle	465
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,769</b>

*source: Colombian Red Cross needs assessment*

The hardest hit department is Norte de Santander where the flooding of the Tachira, Cucutilla-Zulia, Sardinata and Pamplonita rivers has affected 11 municipalities. The latest available information also indicates that over the weekend there was an increase in the number of affected persons in the departments of Caldas and Nariño, in addition to the number of affected families listed in the chart.

There is the possibility that river level downstream will continue to rise due to the quantity of rains upstream.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Colombian Red Cross Society immediately activated its contingency plans at both the national and local (branch) level. As part of the national system (SNPAD), the CRC has been coordinating with, and taking active part in, the response of SNPAD since the beginning of flooding, through its branches in the most vulnerable departments.

### CRC action:

- Verification of security conditions in emergency areas, prior to conducting operations in conflict areas.
- Delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid to families of Norte de Santander: 300 blankets, 250 bed sheets, 250 mats and 350 kitchen kits.
- First aid to victims.
- Evacuation of families from high risk areas.
- Search and rescue for missing persons.
- Damage assessments in affected areas.
- Logistic support for delivery and distribution of the government's humanitarian aid.
- Monitoring of illnesses related to winter in order to keep the government's health sector informed.

### CRC's planned operation:

- In the identified affected communities, continue with damage assessments and surveys; continue delivering humanitarian aid and basic health care; continue searching for missing persons and supporting evacuation and implementation of temporary shelters in coordination with the institutions included in the SNPAD at the local and national levels.
- Continue supporting health structures in the affected areas including ambulance services, primary health care, and search and rescue.
- Strengthen the response capacity of CRC branches, providing them with the necessary equipment.

- After the initial response, the CRC will develop a community based needs assessment, on the basis of which a series of rehabilitation activities in the affected communities will be identified, with the active participation of the communities themselves.

The following food and non food items will be distributed to affected families:

FOOD AND NON FOOD ITEMS		
ITEM	QUANTITY	
Food packages	Lentils	2lbs
	Wheat flour	1 packet 500 g
	Rice	3 packets 1000 g
	Sugar	2 packets 500 g
	Beans	2 packets 500 g
	Salt	2 packets 500 g
	Oil	2 bottles 500 ml
	Brown sugar	4 cubes 500 g each
	Chocolate	1 packet 500 g
	Powdered milk	1 bag 400 g
	Coffee	1 packet 500 g
Tuna	1 can 170 g	
Mats		
Sheets		
Blankets		
Hammocks		
Mosquito nets		
Hygiene kits	Soap	
	Toothpaste	
	Toothbrush	
	Comb	
	Razor blade	
	Hygienic towelette	
	Disposable diapers	
	Shampoo	
	Cotton towel	
Deodorant		
Kitchen kits	Pot	
	Frying pan	
	Bowl	
	Coffee grinder	
	Kitchen spoon	
Basic crockery sets	Bowl	
	Plate	
	Spoon	
	Mug	
Construction items	Plastic sheeting	
	Binding tape	

The planned budget for this operation is COP 1,050,200,000, which is equivalent to approximately CHF 525,000. This includes: humanitarian aid, recovery support, and operative and administrative expenditure. Initial information indicates that the government, under the existing agreement with the Colombian Red Cross Society, has made emergency items available, which were pre-positioned in CRC warehouses and have an approximated value of COP 500,000,000.

The CRC has informed all relevant agencies (UN system, ICRC and others) of its actions. Upon request, the Regional Delegation is keeping the ECHO representative in Colombia informed of the developments. Initial contacts with Partner National Societies with a direct presence in Colombia indicate an interest in supporting CRC activities.

Heavy rains have more and more often resulted in floods, affecting vulnerable communities in Latin America. This type of recurrent emergencies was clearly identified as an issue to be addressed within the Plan of Action of the XVII Inter-American Conference, and is included in the Inter-American Strategy on Disaster Management (Reducing Risks and Improving Coordination). Recent Andean sub regional initiatives to promote strategic alliances between the National Societies of South America and regional disaster management entities (the Andean Commission for Disaster Prevention, CAPRADE; the Hipolito Unanue agreement with the Pan American Health Organization and the Ministries of Health, among others) show a common interest in strengthening inter-institutional cooperation in this area.

The Federation, through its Federation representative in Colombia, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Delegation in Lima, in close coordination with the Colombian Red Cross Society, will continue monitoring the emergency situation for further action.

A second Information Bulletin will be issued shortly with updated information on the ongoing operation and further needs.

*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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