

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: HEAVY RAINS 1 November 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 04/2004 is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 100,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The Federation plans to request international support through an Emergency Appeal.

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The Situation

After an entire month of heavy rains, sometimes accompanied by hail, over 70,000 persons from 63 municipalities in 20 departments of Colombia have been severely affected. Updated information from the Colombian Red Cross Society as of 27 October (CRCS) shows the following data regarding this disaster:

Persons dead	11
Persons missing	12
Persons injured	35
Persons affected	71,222
Families affected	15,065
Houses destroyed	96
Houses affected	3,586

The most affected departments are: Antioquia, Atlantico, Bolivar, Cordoba and Sucre. The Colombian government has declared a state of emergency in 15 municipalities in the department of Cordoba and in the municipality of San Pedro in the department of Sucre. An orange alert has been declared in the entire department of Quindio, and a

yellow alert has been declared in the surrounding area of the Tunjuelito river basin in Bogota and the Magdalena river basin.

The government's Institute of Water, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM) has advised of a significant increase in the level of the river Cauca that could cause more mudslides. At present, there are alerts of mudslides in the departments of Antioquia, Santander, Valle del Cauca, Cauca and Nariño. While it is forecast that the level of the rivers Magdalena and Cauca will continue to increase, the rivers San Jorge and Sinu registered the highest levels of the year in October. According to IDEAM the rains will continue with the same intensity throughout November.

Affected people country-wide as of 27 October, 2004:

Department	Municipality	Urban area	Rural area	Families affected	Persons affected	Houses affected	Houses destroyed	Remarks
Antioquia	Envigado	✓		20	80	20		
	La Estrella	✓		160	820	68	7	Three bridges destroyed; 5 injured.
	Copacabana		✓	11	55	10	1	
	Bello		✓	55	300		1	
	Medellin	✓		6	30	5	1	4 injured.
	Caldas		✓	4	31		4	1 dead, 1 injured.
Atlantico	Barranquilla	✓		150	750	50		
	Sabanagrande		✓	18	92	18		
Bolívar	Cartagena	✓		2,079	7,073	2,079		
	Clemencia	✓		76	380	70		
	San Fernando	✓		168	840			
	Simiti		✓	53	265	53		
Caldas	Riosucio		✓	21	130	21		8 deaths due to mudslides.
Cauca	Popayan	✓		5	25	5		
	Lopez de Micay		✓	37	183			
	Timbiqui	✓		50	150			
Cesar	Valledupar	✓		90	450			
Cordoba	Monteria	✓	✓	2,144	10,720	256		More than 1000 hectares of crops lost; hundreds of cattle dead.
	La Apartada		✓	30	212	4		
	Ayapel	✓		98	490	72		
	Ciénaga de Oro	✓	✓	500	2,500			
	Cerete	✓	✓	450	2,250			
	San Pelayo	✓	✓	1,425	7,125			
	Momil		✓	365	1,825			
	Planeta Rica		✓	250	1,250			
	Purisima	✓	✓	850	4,250			
	Moñitos	✓		781	3,905	30		
	Lorica	✓	✓	705	3,525			
	San A. de Sotavento	✓	✓	686	3,430			
	Tierralta		✓	370	1,850			
	Los Cordobas	✓	✓	300	1,500			
San Carlos		✓	255	1,275				
Montelibano	✓	✓	250	1,250	10			

	Puerto Libertador		✓	48	341	5		Outbreak of malaria.
	San Bernardo		✓	229	1,145			
Cundimarca	Capital city Bogota	✓		67	367	12		
	Yacopi	✓		2	17	4	2	1 dead, 3 injured; 5 missing
Guajira	Riohacha	✓	✓	492	1,949	491		2 injured.
Huila	Garzon		✓	1	3	1		Strong winds; 1 injured.
Magdalena	Zona Bananera		✓	239	1,195	80		1 dead.
Meta	Villavicencio	✓		5	25	4	1	
	El Calvario		✓	7	35			
Nariño	Samaniego	✓	✓	15	78			Mudslides.
	Pasto	✓		50	250			
	Barbacoas	✓		3	15	3		1 dead; 1 injured,
Norte de Santander	Ocaña	✓	✓	368	1,840			1 injured,
	Villa Caro	✓		20	100			
	Teorama		✓	150	750			
	Machique		✓	250	1,250			
Putumayo	Sibundoy		✓	100	500			
Quindio	Circasia	✓		8	50			
Risaralda	Pto. Caldas	✓		11	58			
	Pereira	✓		50	250			
Sucre	San Pedro	✓	✓	353	1,432	211	77	17 injured,
Tolima	Carmen de Apicala		✓	14	70			Floods - Melgara river.
	Armero Guayabal	✓		28	140			
	Purificacion		✓	44	148			One school damaged.
	Icononzo			15	81			
Valle	Bugalagrande		✓	34	122			
TOTAL				15,065	64,431	3,586	96	



Streets of Monteria are flooded by the heavy rains
(Picture courtesy of the government of Cordoba)

Map showing regions with IDEAM mudslides alerts:



The private sector and the population have mobilized humanitarian aid through local systems and the national government. An important initiative from Colombian society referred to in the second information bulletin is that undertaken by local authorities, civil organizations and the Catholic Church, which organized a local television campaign through which 50 tonnes of humanitarian aid items were collected and COP 100,000,000 (CHF 46,491 or USD 38,729) were raised.

The Colombian government has allocated COP 2,500,000,000 (CHF 1,166,521 or USD 975,077) for the rehabilitation phase of the emergency. These funds are being used to dredge the River Sinu, provide logistical support for emergency prevention and care committees, and provide humanitarian aid.

The departmental government of Cordoba accessed an amount of COP 270,000,000 (CHF 125,526 or USD 104,570) to respond to the emergency and is prioritizing health issues. Local government in coordination with the Ministry of Social Protection, the Public Force and Médecins Sans Frontières have already carried out health campaigns in the municipalities of Monteria, Cerete, Planeta Rica and Lorica, and six more campaigns are planned for Purisima, Moñitos, San Andres de Sotavento, Momil, Cienaga de Oro and San Carlos. The government of Cordoba's evacuated 303 families to three temporary shelters, two of which are being managed by the CRCS and the National Civil Defence.

The issue of sanitation is being addressed by the Environment Corporation of the valleys of Sinu and San Jorge, which is cleaning the water channels. In addition, the municipality is draining stagnant water from streets and the departmental secretary of health is fumigating some areas particularly affected by stagnant water.

Red Cross action

Colombian Red Cross Society activities in response to the heavy rains began as of 11 October. The National Society has been mobilizing and distributing humanitarian aid to the most affected communities, particularly the municipality of Monteria, located in the department of Cordoba.

On 27 October, more non-food relief items were dispatched to Monteria; this humanitarian aid load was a donation from the Colombian company Kimberly Colpapel, valued at COP 6,000,000 (CHF 2,789 or USD 2,324). On 27 October, the CRCS also mobilized 120 mattresses, 130 bed sheets and 40 food packages to the affected people from the mudslide which occurred on Tuesday 26 October in the municipality of Riosucio in the department of Caldas, a disaster in which eight people died, including five children. This latter mobilization of humanitarian aid was carried out with funds from the local government.

The CRCS is also initiating the purchase of non-food relief items for 180 families from the municipalities of Cienaga de Oro, Cerete and San Pelayo, in the department of Cordoba, with funding from Microsoft Colombia that donated COP 52,000,000 (CHF 24,175 or USD 20,139) for assistance.

Including these latest activities, the aid mobilized by the CRCS to date is equivalent to COP 195,000,000 (CHF 90,658 or USD 75,523). The majority of this funding has come from the CRCS's own resources and from donations made by the private sector and civil society.

As the situation continues worsening and has overwhelmed local capacities, the National Society and the National Disaster Preparedness and Response System have asked for the support of international donors for funding of response operations. For this reason, the Federation has allocated CHF 100,000 from its disaster relief emergency fund (DREF), to support a specific one month operation of the CRCS. This operation will benefit 500 affected families from Cordoba and Sucre with non-food relief aid, as many other humanitarian organizations are already distributing food aid to these communities.

Distribution of non-food relief items to be purchased with DREF:

Department	Municipality	Beneficiary families	Non-food relief items
Cordoba	Monteria	400	400 kitchen kits, 1,600 tableware kits, 1,600 hygiene kits, 1,200 mattresses, 1,200 tents, 1,200 bed sheets y 1,200 blankets
Sucre	San Pedro	100	100 kitchen kits, 400 tableware kits, 400 hygiene kits, 300 mattresses, 300 tents, 300 bed sheets y 300 blankets
TOTAL		500	500 kitchen kits, 2,000 tableware kits, 2,000 hygiene kits, 1,500 mattresses, 1,500 tents, 1,500 bed sheets y 1,500 blankets

At a later stage of the operation, the CRCS intends to introduce components of community disaster preparedness, strengthening of early warning systems in high-risk communities, health activities, water and sanitation and strengthening of local capacities.

Due to proven further needs in the country, the Federation will launch an international appeal to obtain funds for a more comprehensive national operation that will not only include immediate response activities, but longer term development activities which will strength capacities of local communities.

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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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