

# 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

## KENYA: FLOODS

7 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. 1/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Emergency Appeal. The [Kenya Red Cross Society](#) may also launch a separate Appeal within Kenya.

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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

At least 38 people have died, up to 10,000 people displaced and an additional 15,000 severely affected by heavy rains that have led to floods and land slides in Kenya since March 2004. According to the Kenya Red Cross, the situation has worsened in recent days.

The western parts of Kenya are the most severely hit by the rains; the capital of Nairobi also suffered a landslide that cut off one of the main roads going north from Nairobi towards Mount Kenya. Water levels in most rivers are currently rising and more areas getting flooded. The first week of May brought increased rainfall that resulted in more loss of life, livestock and destruction of homes and property.

In Western Kenya, approximately 6,000 people have been displaced so far and another 15,000 people affected by the aftermath of the heavy rains. An estimated 12,470 people have been affected in Nyando: 2,342 are displaced, and 1,242 of these are camping within the compounds of schools, churches and health institutions. Two people died after they were swept away by the floods and one person is hospitalised at Ahero Health Centre following injuries sustained after the collapse of her house. Five primary schools are submerged in floodwater. Water levels in Rivers Miriu, Nyando and Ombeyi are reported to be rising steadily during the past four days.

The immediate needs are shelter and food. The sanitation situation is poor as most latrines have collapsed and are filled up with water. In Central Kenya, 6 children aged between 3 and 15 were killed by landslides in the Othaya Division of Nyeri District. People living in landslide-prone areas have been warned to move to safer grounds.

Kenya has been experiencing massive floods during the annual rainy seasons since the 1997 El Niño rains. Districts around the shores of Lake Victoria, low land areas of Western Kenya, Tana River Basin and parts of Central Kenya have been the worst hit. This year the initial flood patterns indicate a scenario similar to that of 2003 when 60,000 people were affected. Based on last year's experience, national authorities, the Red Cross and other humanitarian partners contemplate several intervention scenarios. Meteorological forecast predict two more months of rain with possible catastrophic consequences.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

The Kenya Red Cross is a member of the Kenyan National Sudden Onset Disaster Committee. For the second consecutive year, national authorities have asked the Kenya Red Cross to remain as the lead agency for the distribution of aid (other than food) during the present flood disaster response.

Kenya Red Cross has built up its preparedness and response capacity from challenges and experiences of past flood operations. A 24-hour nationwide Red Cross surveillance system is monitoring every major flood development. About 30 volunteers from each of the seven flood-affected or flood-prone branches are either active or on alert ready to intervene. A network of HF and VHF radios recently installed in all flood-prone areas through funding from the Danish Red Cross; ICRC facilitates the transmission of information from branches to the Nairobi headquarters. The national society also co-chairs the National Coordination meetings where updates on decisions taken are made on a regular basis.

From the onset of the disaster the national society has distributed blankets, plastic sheeting and kitchen sets to more than 5,000 affected people in the west, Nairobi, and central parts of the country. tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito nets, jerry cans, kitchen sets as well chlorine tablets sets have also been distributed to assist up to 1,000 potential flood victims in each of the Kisumu and Busia areas of Western Kenya. National authorities have also pre-positioned in key areas relief food including maize, beans and vegetable oil for potential distribution to displaced families.

The Ministry of Health and Kenya Red Cross are working closely to prevent any possible malaria outbreak. More than 400 sachets of residual spray have already been distributed to the highland malaria-prone areas of Nandi, Nyamira, Kericho and Bureti. It will be recalled that more than 300 people died and 150,000 were treated during the last highland malaria outbreak in July 2002.

A team of trained Red Cross Action Team undertook an initial assessment to establish the extent of damage caused by the floods as well as the immediate needs to be met. Preliminary results of the assessment indicate that heavy rains continue in Busia, Tana River and Garissa which are likely to worsen the situation in the coming days. Kenya Red Cross is closely monitoring the situation.

The assistance provided to victims of the flood so far has been from the Disaster Preparedness stocks replenished by the Danish Red Cross after assistance to victims of a fire in 2003. However, these stocks are gradually being exhausted and should the present flooding continue, Kenya Red Cross may consider launching an appeal for more aid to replenish its contingency stocks. The magnitude of disaster will determine whether the national society will go for a national or an international appeal.

*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 for East Africa sub-regional programmes, no. 01.08/2004 \(a multi-country appeal that includes Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda\)](#).*

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