

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

MADAGASCAR: CYCLONE 12 March 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. 02/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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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>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

The Situation

The situation regarding the impact of cyclone Gafilo still remains unclear. Estimates of the numbers affected vary between 50,000-100,000 people, with a reported 13 dead. According to the French Red Cross assessment and relief team deployed from Reunion, the cyclone was less destructive than anticipated due to its high speed as it passed over the northern part of Madagascar. By comparison, cyclone Manou, which struck the northeast of the island in May 2003, was almost stationary over Vatomandry for 10 hours and therefore caused much more destruction. The wind strength of Gafilo was still relatively severe, causing the destruction of dwellings around Antalaha but less damage to solid structures. Unfortunately, communities in rural areas are very vulnerable as most people live in mud and straw dwellings. There has also been a significant amount of rain that damaged roads and washed away many bridges. The Malagasy Red Cross (MRC) has expressed concern about the risk of communicable diseases.

Latest reports indicate that cyclone Gafilo returned from the Mozambique channel and passed over the southern part of Madagascar with the intensity of a tropical storm, bringing further heavy rain. The Malagasy government has convened meetings of its National Disaster Committee (Comité National de Secours) with the participation of the Malagasy and French Red Cross. The government is setting up a logistics base at Anthala, the area where the

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cyclone made landfall on Sunday. The French Government is sending two aircraft loaded with temporary shelter materials and supplies to this base.

Meanwhile, the cyclone season continues, and there is a new weather system developing to the east of Madagascar (named “Nicky”) that is intensifying and moving in a south westerly direction.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

From their base in Réunion, the French Red Cross Platform of Regional Intervention for the Indian Ocean (PIROI) has deployed a water treatment unit with the capacity to process treated water for 10,000 people per day. This unit, accompanied, by a consignment of temporary shelter material and other supplies, was loaded aboard a French navy frigate. The ship has already arrived at the port of Antalaha on the northeast coast. A French Red Cross water engineer is also on board, and will strengthen the team already in place and supervise the installation of water treatment and distribution. In addition, the MRCS mobilized thirty first-aid volunteers to support the operations with the disaster affected communities. The French Red Cross, with the Malagasy Red Cross, successfully implemented a similar operation for cyclone Manou in 2003, providing clean water to affected communities around Vatomaniry, cleaning wells, carrying out health education, and providing shelter materials.

The Malagasy Red Cross has just completed relief distributions for those affected by cyclone Elita (last month), and has identified the need to distribute blankets, soap, oil and sugar to those most affected. Their stocks, distributed after cyclone Elita a few weeks ago, have not been replenished. The Federation is considering how best to support them once a clearer picture of the situation is available.

On 11 March a senior representative of the International Federation’s Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) arrived in Antananarivo to support the Malagasy Red Cross to assess the situation and define their response. On 13 March an experienced member of the International Federation’s East Africa Regional Disaster Response Team from the Seychelles will arrive to assist and liaise with the French Red Cross.

The International Federation (via the Geneva and the Regional Delegation in Nairobi), continues to co-ordinate very closely with the French and the Malagasy Red Cross in all initiatives taken to support the affected population.

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