

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

MEXICO: FLOODS

6 April 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. 01/2003) is being issued for information only. 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>

The Situation

Heavy rains caused flooding in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila early on the morning of Monday 5 April, resulting in at least 25 deaths. Dozens of people are still reported missing and at least 3,500 have been forced out of their homes, prompting Mexican authorities to declare a state of emergency. Additional flooding occurred on the morning of Tuesday, 6 April, obliging an additional 200 people to evacuate the area.

The rains began on Sunday, 4 April, and continued until midday on Monday, causing the Escondido River, a tributary of the Río Grande, to rise eight metres. When the river finally broke its banks, nearby areas were flooded in just 15 minutes. Government sources indicate that some 2,500 houses were partially or totally destroyed. The flooding also affected drinking water, electricity and gas supplies. The damage was concentrated around the town of Piedras Negras, a city of 200,000 people located on the border with the United States. Flood waters in the Villa de Fuentes neighbourhood rose to 50 centimetres, according to Mexican officials. The communities of San Juan de Sabinas and Zaragoza were also affected by the floods.

Most flood waters had receded by noon on Monday, but search and rescue efforts were ongoing to locate missing persons, as were efforts to help flood victims recover their belongings. The Mexican President ordered Mexican troops to the area to assist in the search and rescue efforts and in the clean up. Municipal buildings have been turned into temporary shelters and local authorities distributed blankets, bottled water and food. Approximately 1,250 people are being hosted in five shelters in the area. The Mexican Civil Protection authorities have issued a request for 5,000 mattresses, 5,000 blankets, and 5,000 emergency food packages to assist 600 families.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Mexican Red Cross has deployed two damage and needs assessment teams from Monterrey and San Luis Potosí to the emergency area and has dispatched a trailer of relief supplies. The Mexican Red Cross National Emergency Director has also travelled to the area. Red Cross teams from Torreón and Saltillo are on the spot, together with an urban rescue team from Monclava. Assessments by the Mexican Red Cross indicate the affected population is in need of medicines, particularly in view of possible outbreaks of diarrhoea and skin diseases. Given the risks of dengue fever, fumigation is advised and there is a need for potable water and for cleaning of contaminated wells. In addition, since many people have lost their possessions in the flood waters, those affected require blankets, household items, kitchen sets, clothing and hygiene kits.

Further information will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

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.