

# 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

## NAMIBIA: FLOODS

28 March 2004

Information Bulletin N° 01/2004

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 94,500

*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 180 countries.*

*For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

### In Brief

This document is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. A DREF allocation of CHF 94,500 has been released to provide immediate support and assistance to the operation. Based on further updates and details from the Regional Disaster and Response Team (RDRT) deployed on Saturday, 27 March, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Appeal.

*For further details please contact (field to provide/complete relevant contact details):*

- *Razia Essack-Kauaria, Secretary General, email [secgen@redcross.org.na](mailto:secgen@redcross.org.na); Phone 264 61 235 216; Fax 264 61 228 949*
- *Alasan Senghore, Head of Southern Africa Regional Delegation, Harare; email [ifrczw02@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrczw02@ifrc.org); Phone 263 4 70 61 55/6; Fax 263 4 70 87 84*
- *Terry Carney, Federation Regional Officer, email [terry.carney@ifrc.org](mailto:terry.carney@ifrc.org); Phone 41 22 730 4298, Fax 41 22 733 0397*

*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.*

### The Situation

The International Federation's Regional Delegation in Harare remains on red alert as the level of the Zambezi River continues to rise, following heavy rains during the month of March. The Zambezi originates in the highlands of Angola and Zambia, from where it flows into Namibia's Caprivi Strip, through the borders between Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, before reaching Mozambique where it finally empties into the Indian Ocean.

Localized floods have already been reported in Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, but the greatest current concern is in the Caprivi Strip in north-eastern Namibia where authorities claim it is the worst floods in the area since 1958. The water level in the river has risen to 6.71 metres and continues to rise some 10-15 cm per day, according to Namibian hydrology authorities. The current level is more than 2 metres higher than at the same time last year, when the Zambezi burst its banks, causing serious flooding.

The most affected areas in the Caprivi Strip are the Kabbe and Katima constituency located in the low-lying areas along the Zambezi. The water level has been rising within the last couple of weeks due to the heavy rainfalls received in the area and these villages are already submerged. In May 2003 the river burst its banks and displaced some 12,000 people. This year's floods have already affected more people than last's year.

As of Friday morning (26 March 2004) the town of Katima Mulilo (the largest town in the Caprivi district) has been experiencing power failures and there has been a breakdown in communication due to landlines having been affected by the rain. According to Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS) sources, the water continues to rise even in areas that don't normally experience flooding. Children are using canoes to go to school. During last's year's flood, the NRC had donated 60 tents for the Nankutwa combined school.

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the area is 43%. There is fear that contamination of water sources will provoke an outbreak of water borne diseases and malaria, deepening the vulnerability of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) in the area. It is imperative that the affected people maintain access to clean water, blankets and protection from mosquito's. Most of the population of the area rely on subsistence farming and chronic food insecurity prevails in the region. The flooding threatens this year's harvest.

Wildlife also poses a real threat. Large numbers of elephants in a state of panic are on the loose and destroying crops. Hippos, crocodiles and snakes are also a threat to the population.

People affected have gone to the NRCS's Katima Mulilo branch and requested water purification tablets. Thousands of people will have to be relocated to higher grounds.

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

The NRCS arranged with the National Emergency Management Unit to transport some items to Katima Mulilo yesterday afternoon (Saturday, 27 March). The relief items include 128 tents, 50 jerry cans, and 52 mosquito nets from the national society warehouse in Windhoek. The items will be transported by a government truck destined for Katima Mulilo which should reach the area on Saturday afternoon.

The NRCS will be conducting an initial assessment with the assistance of the Federation. A Regional Disaster Response team (RDRT) consisting of two members from the Namibia Red Cross and one from the Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross, has been deployed to Caprivi. The regional delegation has also deployed the regional disaster response officer and information delegate to support the team. Caprivi is a very remote region (1,600 kilometers from Windhoek) and the team will be in place to start the assessment and the support to the affected population on Sunday 28 March. An update on the situation on the ground will be provided shortly.

The Namibia Red Cross regional manager is also chairing the National Land and Shelter committee. Shelter has been identified as a serious problem and the rapid spread of the flood water also poses a safety threat: Evacuation of the resident population is needed.

The Harare Regional delegation is currently purchasing water purification tablets, jerry cans, and mosquito nets to support an initial 1,000 families. Meanwhile, more in-depth information is awaited from the assessment team.

The Government assessment team is also schedule to leave Windhoek on Sunday and start the assessment Monday.

### **Coordination**

It is expected that Namibia Red Cross and the Federation, will be working in collaboration with the national and the regional emergency management unit and UNICEF to ensure that shelter, food and safe drinking water will be accessible to the floods victims.

The CHF 94,500 released from the Federation's DREF will be used to provide immediate assistance to those affected by the floods (see details below).

### **Summary of Caprivi Floods Needs**

<b>Details</b>	<b>Total Cost Chf</b>
RDRT deployment	9,500
Local transport	3,000

**Namibia: Floods; Information Bulletin no. 01/2004**

Volunteer costs	2,000
Replenishment of relief Items sent to area	18,000
Collapsible 25Lt water jerry cans 1000 @ Chf 3.55	3,500
Water purification tablets & detergent	6,500
Mosquito nets 2000 @ Chf 10	20,000
Blankets 2000 @ Chf 16	32,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,500</b>

[\*Click here to return to the title page or contact information.\*](#)