

# 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

## PANAMA: FLOODS

25 October 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. 01/2004) 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

Several days of heavy rains caused rivers to overflow, flooding several neighbourhoods in Panama City, Panama on 23 October. The Pacora, Tocumen and Cabra rivers burst their banks on Saturday, affecting 3,400 people and damaging more than 650 houses in the eastern part of the capital city. According to the National Civil Protection (SINAPROC), the majority of those affected were women and children. One of the affected neighbourhoods, Prados del Este, was the same neighbourhood that was hit by floods on 17 September, which killed 16 people and caused millions of dollars worth of damage.

As the flood levels rose in Panama City, national security and rescue authorities tried to evacuate residents, but many refused to leave because of fears of looting. A collection centre has been set up in the National Air Service headquarters, from where relief goods will be distributed to the affected population. A support centre will also be set up in the police station in Tocumen. The Ministry of Public Works has announced that the river banks in the area will be reinforced in order to reduce the risk of further flooding, while the Ministry of Housing has announced that residents will be relocated to safer areas as soon as possible.

Strong rains and flooding also occurred in other parts of the country, particularly in the provinces of Los Santos, Veraguas and Chiriqui. In Los Santos, around 100 people were evacuated as a result of flooding, and there were several mudslides reported in Chiriqui, which is located on the Caribbean coast, near the border with Costa Rica. In Veraguas, several communities were cut off by the floods as 400 people were affected and 90 houses were submerged in water. Many of the affected people in Panama City and in other parts of the country have lost all of their possessions.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Red Cross Society of Panama responded quickly to the floods in the eastern part of Panama City. Approximately 70 volunteers were mobilized to the affected area, as were 5 ambulances and 2 other vehicles. Red Cross volunteers worked in search and rescue, damage and needs assessments and distributions of relief items. The Federation's Regional Delegation and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), both located in Panama, also responded immediately to the disaster, providing support to the Red Cross Society of Panama. A response vehicle has been provided by the Regional Delegation, and PADRU sent blankets, hygiene kits and jerry cans to be distributed amongst the affected population.

The Red Cross Society of Panama also responded to flooding in the same area of the city one month ago and developed a plan of action to assist 550 of the most vulnerable families (2,500 people). The Red Cross Society of Panama provided hygiene kits, kitchen sets and jerry cans for 400 families. In total, the Red Cross Society of Panama distributed and/or contributed 511 hygiene kits, 510 kitchen sets, 1,197 jerry cans, 2,260 sheets, 1,184 boxes of clothing and 1,155 blankets to assist those affected by the floods in September.

*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.*

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