

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

ECUADOR: VOLCANO ERUPTION

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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 183 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- **Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.**
- **Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.**
- **Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.**
- **Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.**

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

At 17:00h on Friday 14 July 2006, Ecuador's Tungurahua volcano began spewing ash, gas and molten rock – with ash rising 15 kms, and molten rock being thrown 500m above the crater. The Ecuadorian Geophysics Institute reported that the 5023 meters high volcano had changed its behavior drastically by expelling at least four lava flows - the first since activity resumed in May. Volcanic activity continued for a second day on 15 July, although explosions had lessened in frequency to every half an hour, from every five minutes on Friday, according to the Institute.



The Director of the Institute said the wind was carrying ash from the explosions up to 130 km west of the volcano, affecting provinces to the north-west of the country - in particular Tungurahua, Los Ríos and Chimborazo. The community of Bilbao has declared a state of emergency due to the quantity of ash raining down on it.

Civil defense authorities said that more than 3,700 people have been evacuated from the highest risk areas near the volcano, from some seven villages in close proximity. No injuries have been reported to date.

The Mayor of the county of Penipe has said that although there have been no victims, all the vegetation has died and cattle have been lost. This county includes two villages where 300 families have been forced to evacuate. Lava flow along the brook of Juive Grande, located on the north-western side of the volcano, has knocked down a bridge along the Baños-Penipe highway, while the Baños-Ambato road has also been affected.

The volcano, located 180 kms south of the capital of Quito, had begun emitting loud and frequent explosions in May of this year, showing increased activity since re-awakening nearly seven years ago, after having been inactive for eight decades – prompting a limited state of emergency at the time.

Authorities have declared a red alert in zones near to the volcano and experts have indicated that the current activity may only be a precursor to greater volcanic activity over the coming period. In other more distant cities, an orange alert has been declared.

Red Cross Actions

The Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) activated its emergency plan of action within an hour of the eruption of Volcano Tungurahua – which has been one of the most active volcanoes in the country. More than 200 volunteers were immediately mobilized to the area, to provide medical assistance and assist with search and rescue operations. The Provincial Branches of Pastaza, Tungurahua, Chimborazo, Bolivar, as well as ERC National Headquarters in Quito, have supplied technical teams and volunteers to support in the assessment of damage and needs, and are collaborating with authorities in the evacuation of families living in the high risk zones. A Disaster Management Delegate from the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) is in-country, in support of the National Society.



To date, the ERC has distributed 14,000 masks, 600 protective glasses, 500 bottles of serum, and first aid material to the most affected.

The day after the eruption, a psychological support team and a telecommunications team were deployed to the area. Preliminary assessments indicate that the most affected communities are: Cusúa, Juive, Bilbao, Cotaló and Penipe. Some 120 families with 70 children are currently staying in a shelter in Guadalupe, in the Pingüe sector.

The Table below summarizes the resources mobilized by the ERC to date:

ERC Resources mobilized for TUNGURAHUA response 16-07-2006		
PROVINCE	Staff and volunteers mobilized	Vehicles
TUNGURAHUA	165	3 AMBULANCES / 2 PICK UPS
CHIMBORAZO	17	1 AMBULANCE / 1 VAN / 2 MOTORCYCLES / 2 FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLES
BOLIVAR	35	2 AMBULANCES / 1 PICK UP
SEDE CENTRAL	30	1 TRUCK / 1 PICK UP / 1 VAN
TOTAL	247	6 AMBULANCES / 5 PICK UPS / 1 TRUCK / 2 MOTOS / 2 FOUR WHEEL DRIVE VEHICLES
<p>A relief team of 10 people has been mobilized, as well as a psycho-social team of six, one person in charge of information, one coordinator, 15 NITs members, two IT/Telecom experts. Each vehicle is accompanied by a driver and each ambulance has two technicians in medical emergencies.</p>		

The National Society intends to pursue its response activities over the next hours, while it awaits additional information from the authorities regarding the volcano's anticipated activity.

Coordination

The ERC is closely coordinating its relief activities with Civil Defense, government authorities and other organizations active in the affected area, including The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), OXFAM and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The results from a comprehensive needs assessment by the authorities are expected shortly – although the ERC has clearly noted needs for non-perishable foodstuffs, water and masks for people now in shelters.

The Federation and ERC are in contact with various National Societies and funding agencies – including Spanish Red Cross, the European Commission's ECHO and USAID for possible funding of on-going operations. ERC is currently preparing a detailed plan of action, which will be finalized once the results from the needs assessments have been confirmed.



It is expected that DREF funding will be sought by the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

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