

DREF Bulletin Update



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

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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 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this update: 20 October to 14 November, 2006.

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 67,922 (USD 53,934 or EUR 42,769) allocated from the Federation DREF on 20 October 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation.
- This operation is expected to be implemented for 4 months, and will be completed by 20 February 2007; a DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available three months after the end of the operation by 20 May 2007. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.
- In response to recent additional flooding the operation has been expanded using funds from the DREF allocation for 2006 Hurricane Season Preparedness; CHF 3,957 (USD 3,168 or EUR 2,477) was allocated for this purpose.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet 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 \(NGOs\) 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>

Background and current situation

As of 12 October torrential rains have been reported in several areas in Panama. It is estimated that 1,900 people have been directly affected by flooding and emergency situations resulting from these rains in the regions of Panama East, Panama West (in the province of Panama) and the province of Chiriquí. Authorities have reported landslides and flooding mainly due to overflowing of the Chiriquí Viejo and Chico rivers.

The Red Cross Society of Panama (RCSP) provided initial response to the emergency by supporting activities such as rescue and evacuation, first aid care, needs assessments and the provision of first relief items in the form of clothing, dry food and hygiene kits. After assessing the situation, it was decided to prioritize provision of kitchen sets, hygiene kits, food, water and blankets. Relief goods were then distributed to the 380 families identified by the local Branches as the most vulnerable (see table below for affected areas).

A team of water and sanitation experts from the Federation participated in the distribution activities and took the opportunity to evaluate the environmental health situation within the communities with the aim of preparing the environmental health awareness-raising campaign.

As of 11 November, further heavy rains have caused additional flooding affecting some of the previously targeted areas. The Red Cross Society of Panama, assisted by the local Branches in the affected areas, has responded by providing support in rescue and evacuation, followed by needs assessments.

Rescue, evacuation and emergency assessments have been coordinated with other governmental institutions such as SINAPROC (Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil – National System of Civil Defence), the Panama Fire Brigade (Cuerpo de Bomberos de Panamá), Housing Ministry (Ministerio de Vivienda) and Social Development Ministry (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social) that were present at the affected areas. Local Branches identified 50 additional families in Panama East as having been the most affected by the recent floods.

Red Cross action

According to the Plan of Action the Red Cross Society of Panama with the assistance of the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) carried out the following actions;

Objective 1: 380 of the most affected families (approximately 1,900 persons) benefit from the distribution of food and non food items to assist them to recover from the effects of the floods.

Volunteers from the local Branches of the Red Cross Society of Panama have continued their work in identifying and registering the affected population in Panama East, Panama West and Chiriquí. During the second visit to the communities, surveys were carried out in order to obtain more precise beneficiary information, which was updated accordingly.

As shown in the table below, 234 families have been identified in the province of Chiriquí, 50 families in Pacora (Panama East) and 96 families in the districts of Chorrera and Arraiján, both in Panama West.

[Click here to go to a map of the affected areas](#)



Red Cross Volunteers from local Branches identifying and registering the affected population

<i>Province</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Affected Families</i>
<i>Chiriquí</i>	<i>Rural communities</i>	<i>Chiriquí Viejo</i>	88
		<i>Finca Santa Ana</i>	33
		<i>El Matadero</i>	16
		<i>Pedregalito</i>	48
		<i>Finca San Antonio</i>	4
		<i>Cruce de los Guabos</i>	5
		<i>Jacú</i>	31
		<i>Orilla del Río David</i>	9
<i>Subtotal</i>			234
<i>Panamá (East)</i>	<i>Pacora</i>	<i>Complejo las Garzas (sectores: Hugo Spadafora, El Tecal, La Mireya.)</i>	50
<i>Subtotal</i>			50
<i>Panamá (West)</i>	<i>Arraiján</i>	<i>Realengo</i>	76
	<i>Chorrera</i>	<i>Mastranto Final</i>	20
<i>Subtotal</i>			96
<i>TOTAL</i>			380

During the identification of the most affected families, suitable distribution points for relief items were selected. In Chiriquí and in Panama West relief goods were distributed in each community, while in the case of Panama East it was necessary to place the items in a strategic place (a community that was not affected by the floods) and have beneficiary families come to collect the assistance.

Provisions were transported by two RCSP trucks from PADRU's central warehouse and from RCSP's warehouse in the capital. The use of a secondary depot was only necessary in Chiriquí, due to the distance between this province and the capital city.

The following items were distributed to each of the 380 selected families to assist them in recovering from the effects of the floods.



Distribution of relief items by the Red Cross Society of Panama and PADRU

- *1 Hygiene Kit*

<i>Items</i>	<i>Units</i>
<i>Detergent</i>	3 kg
<i>Toilet Paper</i>	12 rolls
<i>Toilet Soap</i>	500 gr
<i>Tooth Paste</i>	145 gr
<i>Tooth Brush</i>	5 units
<i>Shampoo</i>	500 gr
<i>Razor</i>	5 units
<i>Sanitary Napkins</i>	80 units

- 1 Kitchen Set (Type A)

<i>Items</i>	<i>Units</i>
7 litre Pot with lid	1 unit
5 litre Pot with lid	1 unit
1 litre Bowls	5 units
Cups	5 units
Spoons	5 units
Forks	5 units
Table Knives	5 units
Kitchen Knife	1 unit
Stirring Spoon	1 unit

- 1 Family Food Parcel (Supplementary kit - 12 kg)

<i>Items</i>	<i>Units</i>
Rice	10 lbs
Pasta	2 packs
Beans	2 lbs
Lentils	2 lbs
Oil	1 small pack
Sardines	2 6-oz cans
Tuna	4 6-oz cans
Luncheon Meat	2 12-oz cans
Drinking Water	½ gallon

- 3 Blankets

There were no major constraints to mention during these initial distributions.

The Red Cross Society of Panama with the support of PADRU, in light of the most recent floods, has decided to provide humanitarian assistance to the additional 50 families that were affected. This assistance will consist of the same relief items provided for the first group of 380 beneficiary families. A DREF allocation granted to PADRU for 2006 Hurricane Season Preparedness has been used to extend the operation and help these additional families recover from the effects of the floods.

Distributions to the 50 families will take place on 16 November, as follows:

<i>Province</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Affected Families</i>
<i>Panamá (East)</i>	<i>Chepo</i>	<i>Olimpia</i>	38
		<i>Loma del Rio</i>	
		<i>Las Margaritas (sector 5)</i>	
		<i>Los Tecales</i>	
	<i>Pacora</i>	<i>Complejo Las Garzas (Sector la Mireya)</i>	12
TOTAL			50

It is important to note that although the affected zone is the same one in which the Red Cross Society of Panama was previously operating, these 50 families had not been affected or assisted previously.

Objective 2: Affected communities benefit from raised awareness in environmental health topics as a result of talks given by Red Cross volunteers during the operation.

The following actions have been carried out to date towards this objective:

During distributions to the affected communities, the Red Cross was able to more accurately identify the situation and needs of the population. A team made up of a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member and the water and sanitation officer in PADRU gathered data through interviews and meetings with the population and assessment visits to communities in order to determine the conditions of latrines and water systems. The situation is extremely vulnerable, especially in the affected zones of Chiriquí and Panama East, and an intervention in the form of awareness-raising talks within the population is required. The talks will involve correct handling of water and use of latrines in order to improve the health situation and prevent disease.

With this purpose, an initial training workshop will be carried out for a selected group of Red Cross volunteers who will disseminate this knowledge within the communities. The different RCSP departments involved in this activity (health, training, communication and relief) are working together in the design of the material for the environmental health workshop for volunteers of Red Cross branches in the affected zones. The workshop agenda will address different topics such as: emergency assessment, hygiene promotion at community level, vector control, SPHERE standards and basic concepts in water and sanitation.

The RCSP is in the process of selecting 20 volunteers from the local Branches who will participate in this workshop. Provisional dates for the workshop in environmental health are 17 - 19 November. The event will take place in the office of the National Society, in Panama City. Educational and information materials that will be used for awareness raising are being developed by RCSP and will be distributed amongst beneficiaries to support and enhance the planned talks.



Relief items ready to be distributed in one of the affected communities

Coordination and Communications

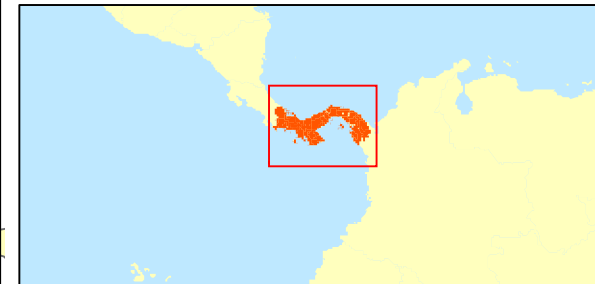
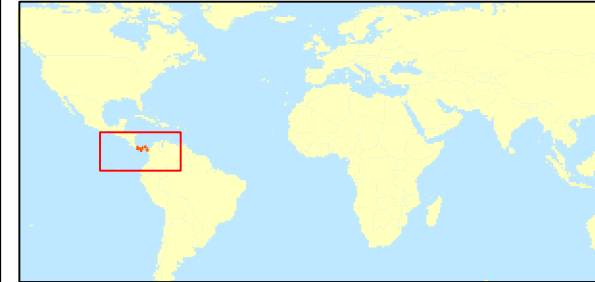
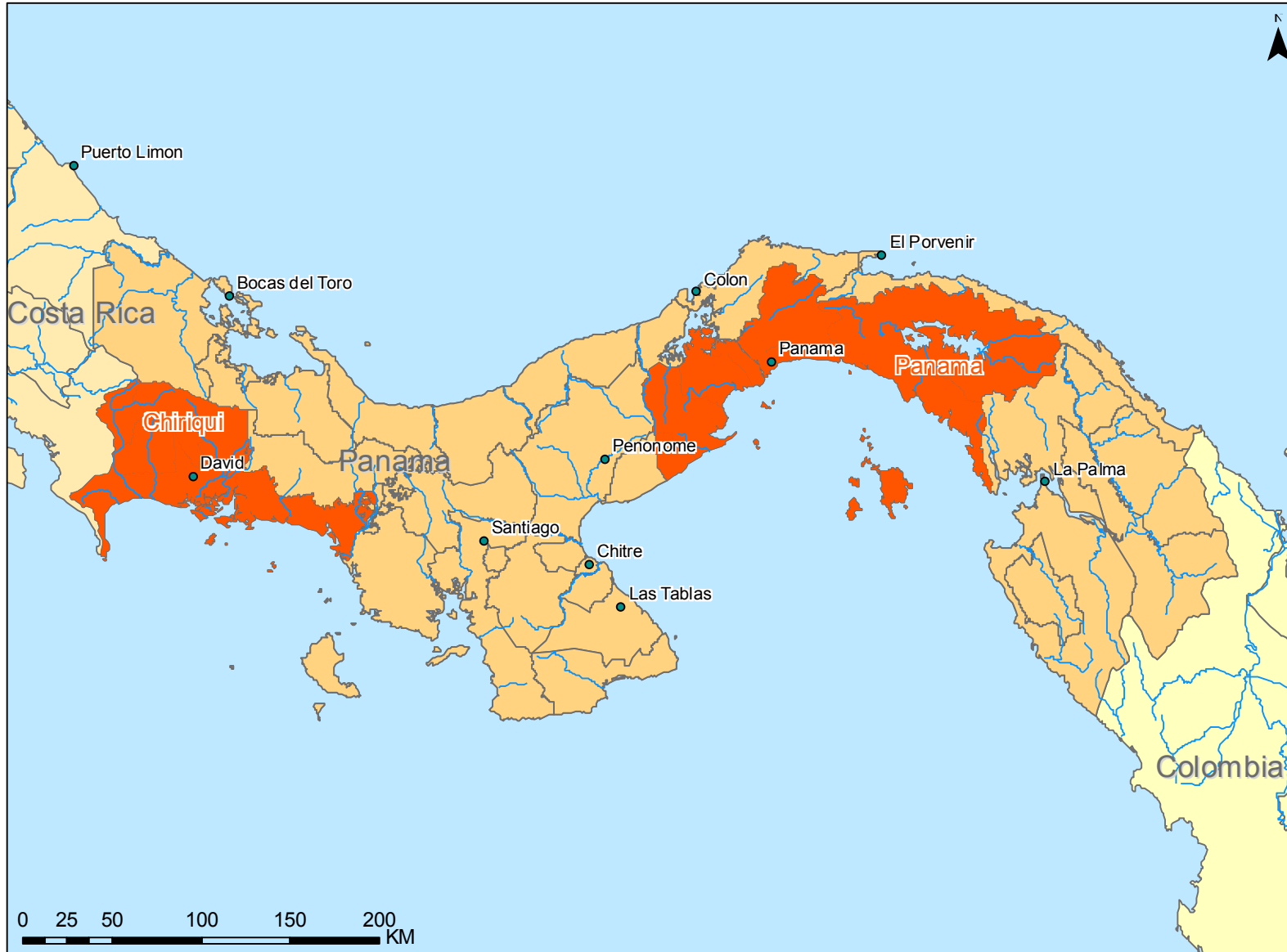
As mentioned above, search, rescue and evacuation activities were coordinated with SINAPROC and the Panama Fire Brigade. Institutions such as the Housing Ministry and the Social Development Ministry, as well as other local authorities were present in the affected areas conducting needs assessments and relocating families to safer areas. A report was issued through the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) on the global Federation website.

A communications plan was designed to support the operation. It has five main target audiences: media, Red Cross Movement, beneficiaries, local authorities and donors. The different channels of communication include national media and RCSP, the Federation regional and global websites. Special sections were created on the Federation regional website – www.cruzroja.org – as well as on the RCSP website. Two press releases were issued and distributed to national and local media, and published on the various Red Cross websites. At least one article was published in a national newspaper and three television interviews were given, two in Chiriquí, and one in Pacora.


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Panama: Floods



Torrential rains have been reported in several areas in Panama since 12 October. It is estimated that 1,900 people have been directly affected in the regions of Panama East, Panama West and Chiriqui.

 Most affected areas

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

Map data sources: ESRI, SALB, Unysis, Federation