

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

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: FLOODS IN KINSHASA

18 April 2006

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 (no. 01/2006) is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time concerning the floods that occurred in Kinshasa. The Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹ has sent a team to the field to assess the situation. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. However, when further information indicates a need, the Federation will do so as the case may be.

Activities undertaken are aligned with the International Federation's 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 (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>

¹ Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of Congo - refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=187>

The Situation

From 8 to 10 April 2006, torrential rains fell in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and its surroundings. This has caused numerous and serious material damages as well as human casualties. The rains of the recent days were particularly violent and at times caused landslides.

Early reports indicate that seven councils have been seriously affected. According to a local radio that quoted government sources, including the Governor of Kinshasa and officials of the affected councils, the situation is as follows:

- In the Kisenso council, two neighbourhoods have been flooded, affecting 700 families. Members of these families have been accommodated in two sites- “Ecole Technique Kitomesa” and “No 15 de l’Avenue Ndaya”. Seven people have been reported dead and three wounded, one of whom suffered from a fracture and is currently admitted at the Saint Joseph de Limete Hospital. Four houses have been destroyed.
- In Limete Council, the Kingabwa-Pêcheur neighbourhood has been flooded, causing the death of one person, the destruction of 12 houses and the burning down of three others. The exact number of people affected in this locality is not yet known. Since the neighbourhood is often flooded, the populations evacuated well in advance thus avoiding major damages.
- In Matete Council, no human casualty was recorded. However, the Maziba and Malemba neighbourhoods have been seriously affected and are still flooded. The victims, approximately 400 families (3,945 people) have been accommodated in three sites. Apart from the loss of basic property like cooking utensils and clothes, no serious material damage has been recorded.
- In Masina Council, 13 neighbourhoods have been affected, 8 of which are still flooded. The Malemba River overflowed at the level of the Kalumba and Sango bridges in the Mapela neighbourhood. Other neighbourhoods of the same council, such as Mapela, Boba, Mandiangu and Abatoire, have also been flooded. The main damages registered include the collapse of walls; the complete of latrines, thereby causing the ebbing of excreta; the flooding of about 2,000 fragments of land and the loss of some materials. No human casualty has been registered.
- In Kimbanseke Council, two neighbourhoods— Mikondo and Moule— have been affected. Apart from the collapse of four houses, no serious damages were recorded.

Information from other councils is yet to be received. Nevertheless, it has been declared that four people died: one in Kalamu Council, one in Kitambo Council and two in Ngaliema Council. No case has been reported in Mont Ngafula Council.

In the final analysis, there are extensive material damages that need to be thoroughly assessed. Houses have collapsed, crops have been destroyed and roads have been washed away. According to the teams in the field, the situation is alarming, especially in the Kisenso Council which is the most affected.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action taken so far

In each of the affected councils, Red Cross of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (RCDRC) volunteers have been mobilized and divided into operational teams to provide assistance to the affected populations. The national headquarters of the RCDRC provided technical support to volunteers in the field, while the Federation’s delegation for the Congos, in Kinshasa, provided logistical support.

Teams from the RCDRC provincial committee and the national headquarters have been busy in the field since 11 April 2006 trying to assess the needs of the affected populations and to identify the extent of the damages that occurred. Immediate needs will be identified as soon as the outcome of the ongoing evaluation is known.

Actions of other partners

No other partner is currently present in the field. The Kinshasa Local Council authorities went into the field immediately after the rain to acknowledge the situation. The various stakeholders are presumably preparing themselves while waiting for a Coordination or Crisis Committee to be set up.

Coordination

The authorities of the local councils concerned are still holding talks with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in view of setting up a Coordination Committee.

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