

# 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

## ***KENYA: BUILDING COLLAPSE***

24 January 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. 1/2006) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. 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 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**

A four storey building collapsed along Ronald Ngala Street (near River Road, opposite the Mobile petrol station) within the Central Business District of Kenya's capital, Nairobi. The building was under construction when it collapsed at 13:05hrs on Monday, 23 January 2006. The exact reason for the collapse is not yet known, but over 200 people are believed to have been constructing the building at the time of the disaster.

The injured are being rushed to Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) for immediate medical attention. According to the local press, at least 10 people have died while 77 others have been hospitalized or treated and discharged at KNH by today morning. Most of the injured have head and facial injuries as well as fractures in the hands, hips and legs. KNH has also indicated that it has sufficient blood if needed and that all its emergency equipment and doctors are on standby.

Out of the more than 200 construction workers, 60 were rescued immediately the disaster occurred. Several remain trapped in the massive debris and some were seen signalling with their hands for assistance from under the rubble. Some are audibly calling out for help. Some bystanders are said to have been injured by material that scattered as the building collapsed. The police had a difficult time in controlling crowds of curious onlookers as it was hampering the fast rescue operation. Police on horse-backs helped to push back the crowds thus giving room for emergency rescuers and ambulances to move easily.

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While the rescue operation is ongoing, the police have urged organizations and individuals with search and rescue skills as well as equipment to provide immediate assistance. A further request has been sent out for heavy earthmovers and cranes that are needed to move the rubble. The rescue operation has gone on throughout the night and may possibly continue throughout the week.

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

The Kenya Red Cross Society has been on the ground from the moment the collapse of the building was reported. 70 Red Cross Action Teams (RCAT) and first aiders are busy providing first aid services on the injured before they are rushed to the hospital. More volunteers from the Machakos branch of the national society are on standby for immediate deployment, if needed. The Kenya Red Cross Society has also commissioned its ambulance services and dispatched 30 flash lights, 100 body bags, two tents, two-inch flexible pipes, torches and hardware gloves.

The national society was involved in a similar rescue operation when the former Ukulima Sacco, building next to the former US Embassy, was brought down by a terrorist bomb blast that left over 200 people dead and over 2,000 people injured in August 1998.

The Kenya Red Cross Society is requesting for further assistance from the Kenyan public and its partners to see it through the rescue operation, possibly for one week. The assistance includes blankets, torches, flash/ flood lights, rescue equipment, trained search and rescue dogs, food and water.

The Secretary General of the Kenya Red Cross Society has been in touch with the RCAT volunteers and other rescuers since the operation began. Apart from the national society's ambulance service, other rescuers such as the KNH Ambulance Service, African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) and St. John's Ambulance- among others- are busy ferrying the injured to hospital. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has donated three land cruiser vehicles and two generators for the operation. Many more organizations are set to assist the operation that may possibly take one week.

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