

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 لجمعية الصليب والهلال الأحمر

KENYA: BUILDING COLLAPSE

25 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. 2/2006) 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.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **In Kenya:** Abbas Gullet, Secretary General, Kenya Red Cross Society, Nairobi; Email: gullet.abbas@kenyaredcross.org; Phone + 254.20.60.35.93; Fax + 254.20.60.35.89
- **In Kenya:** Esther Okwanga, Federation Head of East Africa Sub-Regional Office, Nairobi; Email: esther.okwanga@ifrc.org; Phone + 254.20.283.52.53; Fax + 254.20.271.27.77
- **In Geneva:** Amna Al Ahmar, Federation Regional Officer for East Africa, Africa Dept.; Email: amna.alahmar@ifrc.org; Phone +41.22.730.44.27; Fax +41.22.733.03.95

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

Following the collapse of what has now been confirmed to have been a five storey building along Ronald Ngala Street (near River Road, opposite the Mobil petrol station) within the Central Business District of Kenya's capital, Nairobi on 23 January 2006, 20 people have now been confirmed dead after succumbing to injuries either in hospital or at site of the collapsed building. At the same time 92 people have been pulled out of the debris alive by rescue teams which worked throughout the nights. The rescue teams cheered as the survivors were put on stretchers and ferried to hospital. There is now more hope that more lives will be saved.

Over 100 people were still believed to be trapped under the massive debris as at the morning of 24 January 2006. Many are still signalling with their hands for assistance from under the debris. The voices of those trapped are getting faint, and this has been attributed to insufficient oxygen and exhaustion. It is not clear whether those still trapped are nursing serious wounds. About 35 injured people have been rushed to the Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), the Aga Khan and the Nairobi Hospital for immediate medical attention. Most of the injured have been treated and discharged and none is in the intensive care unit.

At the same time, a Kenya Red Cross Society volunteer and three other people were slung down and injured by a bus that rammed through the chaotic emergency scene on 24 January 2006. The lady national society's volunteer and the other 3 were later treated at a hospital and discharged. The bus reported a brake failure. However, there is now much better crowd control and emergency rescuers are having an easier time moving the injured to hospital and coordinating the rescue effort. Roads have also been closed to vehicles and human traffic. The roads that have been closed are the junction of Tom Mboya Street and Ronald Ngala Street, the junction of River Road and Ronald Ngala Street, the junction of Moi Avenue and Ronald Ngala Street as well as Uyoma Road. Barriers have also been erected to keep off curious onlookers who largely caused difficulty in the search and rescue operation.

Rescue personnel resorted to using bare hands and crude equipment to dig and rescue some of the trapped. Heavy earthmovers and cranes were removed from the emergency scene after it was decided that the heavy equipment may cause crumbling of the already weak structure. Though the rescue operation is slow, it is going on smoothly. The building was under construction when it collapsed at 13:05hrs (East Africa Time) on Monday, 23 January 2006. The injured and the trapped are mostly construction workers, though many more bystanders were injured during the collapse. The government has instituted an investigation to establish exactly what caused the building to collapse.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Kenya Red Cross Society's Secretary General spent the better part of the night of 24 January 2006 at the scene of the disaster, partly assisting in coordinating the operation. 80 Red Cross Action Teams (RCAT) and first aiders, working in shifts, are busy providing first aid services on the injured before they are rushed to the hospital. Volunteers on the ground have indicated that they rescued 18 people and collected five bodies. They have also established that there are more bodies trapped beneath the debris and that are yet to be reached. The Kenya Red Cross Society's ambulance has also ferried many injured people to hospital.

The national society, together with the government, has set up and is now manning an information centre at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC) where names of the injured, and where they have been hospitalized, are available. The names of those still trapped are also going to be issued to their relatives.

Hotels within the city centre and a number of organizations are donating food and water to the operation. The Kenya Red Cross Society has been coordinating the receiving of these donations and is channelling them to the rescue personnel. On 24 January 2006, the national society had dispatched 30 flash lights, 100 body bags, two tents, two-inch flexible pipes gauge, torches and hardware gloves. The national society is requesting for further assistance (blankets, torches, flash/flood lights, rescue equipment, trained search and rescue dogs, and food and water) for one week from the Kenyan public and its partners.

The Kenyan military and the US Marines are on the ground assisting with the operation. About 50 to 60 representatives from the Israeli government and the Israeli national society (Magen David Adom) arrived in the country at mid-morning of 24 January 2006 with a full compliment of search and rescue equipment, including specially trained search and rescue sniffer dogs. The Israeli team was immediately deployed and with the assistance of its sniffer dogs, two people were rescued within two hours of the team's deployment. The rescued were immediately transported to KNH. The British government has also committed its military personnel. Others who had responded as of yesterday, 24 January 2006, are the KNH Ambulance Service, African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) and St. John's Ambulance who are busy ferrying the injured to hospital. Many more organizations are set to assist the operation that may possibly go on for the following week.

[Click here to return to the title page or contact information.](#)