

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: FLASH FLOODS

13 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. 1/2006) 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.

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>

The Situation

Following torrential rainfalls in Isiolo District, Kenya, over the last several days, a number of population centres in Garbatulla, Sericho and Merti divisions are reported to have been severely flooded. These areas lie in the Uaso Nyiro flood plains. Roads have also been rendered impassable, requiring an aerial assessment as well as relief supplies by air. Some 3,000 people have been displaced as a result of the floods.

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Forecasts by the Kenya Meteorological Department indicate that more flooding can be expected during the just-started long rains season (March-May), particularly in the central provinces of the country; while normal rains are forecast for other areas.

It is hoped that the heavy rains that began last week can reverse the dry spell that had engulfed the north-eastern part of the country. During the first days of the month, rains in Marsabit and Moyale—the areas which have been hardest hit during the prolonged drought—were well above average.

The rains introduce a new hardship to the rural and pastoral populations of Kenya. With the land barren as a result of the droughts, the sudden rains have caused flash floods as the wasted land is unable to catch the downpour. Most parts of Kenya are still experiencing the severest drought the country has seen for over two decades, following several consecutive seasonal rainfall deficits that have led to severe food insecurity conditions as well as a lack of pasture and water for livestock. The most affected areas include the north-eastern districts (Mandera, Wajir and Garissa), south-eastern lowlands (Machakos, Kitui, Makueni and Kajiado) and parts of the Coast (Kwale and Kilifi). The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), with Federation support, is currently implementing an emergency drought response operation- [Click here to go directly to the Emergency Appeal](#) and [here for Operations update no. 1](#).

Rainfall during the October-December 2005 short rains was insufficient over most parts of Kenya. Stations such as Lodwar and Mandera recorded less than 10mm of rainfall during the period. There was therefore an understandable sigh of relief when heavy rains pounded the central and western Kenya as well as parts of south-eastern districts towards the end of February 2006. The rainfall was especially heavy in Nairobi where Moi Air Base, Eastleigh, recorded 65.5mm on 28 February 2006.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

On Saturday 8 April 2006, the Kenya Red Cross Society used helicopters to ferry 57 tonnes of food and non-food items to affected people living along the banks of the Uaso Nyiro River in the central parts of the country. KRCS has been responding to flash floods and torrential downpours in various areas since late March, when the long rains season began in earnest. KRCS staff and volunteers have distributed food and various other relief goods such as tarpaulins, mosquito nets, blankets and water purification tablets.

In Kisumu District, close to Lake Victoria, up to 200 homes were partially or totally destroyed during storms at the end of March. Two schools also collapsed as their roofs were ripped off by fierce gusts of wind.



Photo above: One of the buildings totally destroyed during the storms.

In Isiolo, the KRCS branch remains on standby following the recent floods. Around 3,200 people have been displaced, though no human death has been reported. However, an unknown number of sheep and goats have been swept away by the raging floods. Immediate requirements include food items such as cereals, cooking oil, beans, Unimix and milk powder.

Coordination

The KRCS branches in the flood-prone areas are on high alert and are continually working with local administrations on mobilization, logistics and relief assistance. The [Kenya Red Cross Society](#)¹ headquarters in Nairobi is also working closely with the Ministry of Transport's Meteorological Department and other stakeholders in monitoring the weather conditions in the country. The national society is also prepositioning relief supplies in Isiolo District, to be airlifted or trucked to outlying areas as and when the need arises.

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¹ Kenya Red Cross Society- refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=93>