

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

JAMAICA: 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: 1 December 2006 to 29 January 2007.

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

- CHF 25,000 (USD 20,757 or EUR 15,723) CHF was allocated from the Federations DREF on 28 November 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation.
- This operation is expected to be implemented for 2 months, and will be completed by 28 January 2006; a DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 28 April 2007).

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.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Jamaica: Yvonne Clarke, Director General, Jamaica Red Cross, email: yvonneclarke@jamaicaredcross.org, phone: + (876) 984 7860-2, fax: + (876) 984 8272
- In Panama, Stephen McAndrew, Head, Pan American Disaster Response Unit, email: stephen.mcandrew@ifrc.org, phone: (507) 316-1001, fax: (507) 316-1082
- In Geneva: Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, email: luis.luna@ifrc.org; phone 41.22.730.4274; 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.

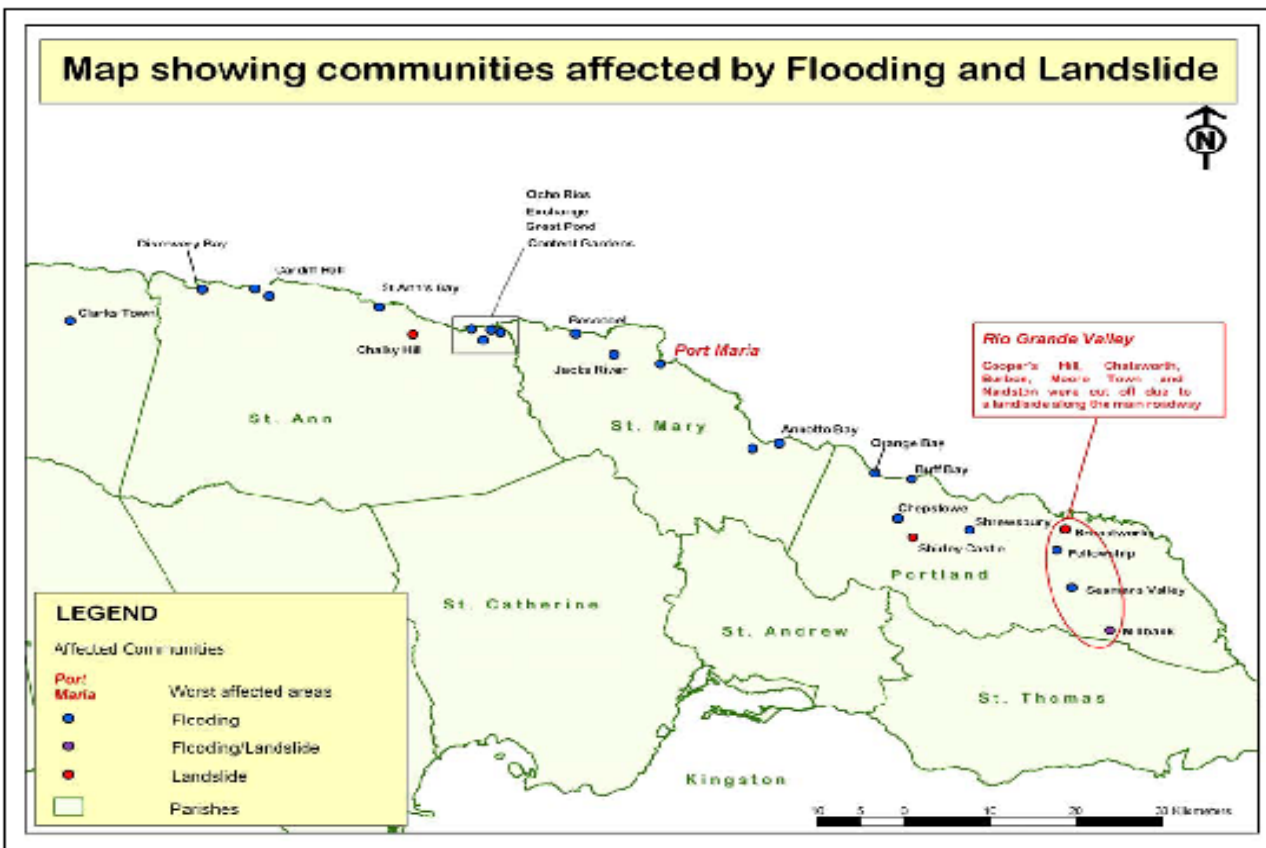
For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and current situation

For five days - between 22 and 26 November 2006 - large areas of Jamaica were subjected to excessive rainfall as a result of an upper level trough and cold front in the vicinity of the island. The north-eastern parishes of St Ann, St Mary, and Portland were mainly affected by this weather system. The entire town of Port Maria in St Mary - a town which is below sea level - was under water, leaving its citizens marooned in business places and homes, making it impossible for even essential services such as the police to respond to the needs of the population.

The death of one woman was reported in Portland when her home was destroyed by a landslide. Several main roads were blocked and sustained structural damage due to the unusually heavy levels of water flowing across and under them. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPEM) reported that over 1,000 families (approximately 5,000 persons) were housed in shelters on 24 November. In St Thomas, Portland, St Ann and St Mary three houses were completely destroyed, 42 houses sustained structural damage and 958 houses showed minor damage and loss of household effects. The Jamaica meteorological service lifted the flash flood warning for the areas affected on Sunday 26 November, after the waters had subsided.

Addressing the post-Cabinet press briefing on 11 December at Jamaica House, the Minister of Information and Development, explained that Cabinet has taken a decision to offer assistance to the victims of the flooding in St Thomas, St Mary, Portland and St Ann. The level of assistance to be offered will be 30,000 Jamaican dollars (some CHF 555) for those who have had their houses totally destroyed; 20,000 Jamaican dollars (some CHF 370) for those who have had the structure of their houses damaged, but not destroyed, and 10,000 Jamaican dollars (some CHF 185) for those with minor house damage and loss of household effects. The total amount approved by the Cabinet is 10.5 million Jamaican dollars (some CHF 194,000) to be distributed amongst 1,003 families in the affected parishes.



In the beginning of December water levels had considerably receded, which has allowed villagers to gradually return to their normal lives and seasonal activities.

Red Cross action

The Jamaican Red Cross (JRC) mobilized volunteers from local branches in St Mary and Portland, ensuring direct response to the emergency situations by supporting activities such as rescue and evacuation, first aid care and needs assessments. The finalization of the assessments revealed that over 400 families (approximately 2,000 persons) have been displaced after sustaining loss of homes, livestock and household effects due to water damage. The primary needs were therefore determined to be mattresses, blankets, water, food, clothing and tarpaulins.

The Jamaica Red Cross provided initial response by dispatching 30 mattresses, 100 blankets and ten tarpaulins to displaced persons in Port Maria, St Mary. This response was however insufficient to meet the emergency needs. Therefore the JRC started local procurement procedures of food and water from its virtual warehouse for the preparation of food packages to be distributed to the affected communities.

The National Society, with the assistance of the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) achieved the following objective:

Objective 1: 200 of the most affected families (approximately 1,000 persons) benefit from the distribution of food, water and non-food items, as well as provision of psychosocial support to assist them to recover from the effects of the floods.

All International Federation procurement procedures were followed in the establishment of a virtual warehouse which Jamaican Red Cross (JRC) maintains. Supplies were requested and dispatched for preparation of food packages. Blankets and water were distributed from existing stock and Jamaican Red Cross is currently in the process of replacing these. The items for distribution were dispatched to St Mary which is two hours from National Headquarters in a delivery truck hired for this purpose.

Distribution of relief items

The National Society, assisted by the local branches, started - on 26 November 2006 - distributions of non-food items such as mattresses, hygiene kits, blankets, bottles of water and tarpaulins. The food packages were procured some time after and were distributed from the Red Cross headquarters to the affected St Mary parish on 2 December, as well as after the Psychosocial Support activity on 28 December, 2006.

The following items were distributed to 200 of the most affected families (approximately 1,000 persons) according to their specific needs to assist them to recover from the effects of the floods:

Date	Distributed at:	Items distributed
Period between 26 November – 14 December 2006	Jacks River	6 food packages, 6 dbl mattresses 6 hygiene kits, 6 blankets 24 bottles of water
	Warner Lane	45 food packages, 30 dbl mattresses 36 hygiene kits, 36 blankets 60 bottles of water, 12 tarpaulins
	Warner Street	114 food packages, 80 dbl mattresses 100 hygiene kits, 100 blankets 150 bottles of water
	Main Street	20 food packages, 12 dbl mattresses 15 hygiene kits, 14 blankets 21 bottles of water
	Clemetson Avenue	15 food packages, 7 dbl mattresses 10 hygiene kits, 8 blankets 5 tarpaulins, 20 bottles of water

28 December 2006	Psychosocial support/ Christmas activity	100 food packages
TOTAL		300 food packages 135 mattresses 167 hygiene kits 164 blankets 275 bottles of water 17 tarpaulins

Psychosocial Support

As requested by the affected population during the needs assessments, the psychosocial team of the National Society provided psychosocial support in the form of a Christmas activity. Approximately 200 families who lost all their material belongings participated in a Christmas activity that was carried out on 28 December 2006. The activity aimed to dispel some of the anguish the families were experiencing at that time.

During the Christmas activity a general Psychosocial Support intervention was carried out by the Jamaica Red Cross Psychosocial Support Team with the help of a Power Point presentation with an aim to provide the affected families with coping skills to deal with their recent loss in the floods. Afterwards, three members of team conducted individual sessions with those who expressed the desire to do so. The 200 families were then treated to refreshments, de-stressing techniques and one-on-one counselling as necessary. After the session they were treated to blood pressure checks, cooked meals, ice cream, drinks and pastries. The remaining 100 food packages were also distributed to some of these families.

Coordination

The Jamaican Red Cross closely coordinated its activities with the governmental institutions such as ODPEM and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security in order to increase efficiency and to prevent duplication of efforts.

From the onset of the emergency, constant support and guidance was provided by the International Federation through its Sub-Regional office in Trinidad and Tobago as well as PADRU, which resulted in the activation of the Disaster and Relief Emergency Funds (DREF).



Psychosocial support by the JRC during the Christmas activity

Communications and Public Advocacy

An initial bulletin alerting of this situation was posted on the Federation's Disaster Monitoring and Information System (DMIS) on 26 November 2006, followed by further updates. Two press releases were issued and distributed to national and local media. Furthermore, two radio interviews with national media took place in order to increase awareness and better understanding of the mission of the Jamaican Red Cross and the activities undertaken by the Red Cross in general.

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