

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

PANAMA: FIRES

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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

This Bulletin 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.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve 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

From 9.30 a.m until approximately 11.00 a.m on 12 June a fire took place in seven wooden buildings in the Barraza sector. Based on initial assessments it is estimated that the fire has affected at least 48 families (240 persons).

The Panama Fire Brigade (Cuerpo de Bomberos de Panamá) reported that 12 firemen have been injured by trying to control the fire. The firemen are hospitalized due to injuries and fractures caused by falling debris and the inhalation of smoke.

Some of the affected persons were transported to Parque de los Aburridos located 200 meters from the place of the emergency. Others were transported to the municipal gymnasium of the area and in the neighbouring offices of the Ministry of Housing (Ministerio de Vivienda).

This has been the fourth fire in the last three months that has occurred in the city of Panama. One day before this emergency, on Monday 11 June, a fire devoured an old wooden building in the Chinese area in the Santa Ana neighbourhood, affecting 50 people.

On Monday 21 May a fire occurred in the neighbourhood of Santa Cruz, located in the Curundú district of Panama City, Panama. Three wooden buildings – containing at least 106 rooms - completely burnt down, leaving some 85 families (approximately 380 persons) affected.

The fire that took place on 21 March 2007 had a devastating affect on 137 houses in the Curundú neighbourhood affecting some 725 people and killing three minors.

The security office of Panama Fire Brigade is currently investigating the cause of this new fire.

The director of the National System of Civil Defence (Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil- SINAPROC) indicated that he will recommend the government to demolish wooden houses in a bad state which are situated in the poor districts of the capital, in order to prevent more fires.

Red Cross action

During the emergency, the Red Cross Society of Panama (RCSP) immediately mobilized 30 Red Cross volunteers, as well as cars and one ambulance, to provide direct assistance to the affected beneficiaries. Three persons have been transported to the medical centres by the RCSP.

The RCSP supported activities such as first aid care, pre-hospitalization and evacuation with the Panama Fire Brigade and SINAPROC. Furthermore, the RCSP assisted the Ministry of Housing with the registration of the affected persons and the Office of the First Lady with distributing clothing and footwear to those who needed it the most.

The assessments identified the following immediate needs: shelter, food, clothing, educational materials, baby items, hygiene items for men and women, and general domestic items.

Beneficiaries

The operation seeks to assist 48 families (approximately 250 persons) that were affected by the fire as selected by the Local Committee of the RCSP and in line with the needs that were identified during the surveys. Beneficiary selection prioritized families with high vulnerability, with female head of household and with disabled persons, which are not already attended by other organizations. Based on these criteria, 48 families from these seven houses in the Barraza neighbourhood were selected for the distributions.



**The fire brigade trying to control the devastating fire.
Source: RCSP**



Volunteers of Red Cross Society of Panama providing assistance to the affected population. Source: RCSP

Objective 1: 48 families affected by the fire (approximately 250 beneficiaries) see their immediate needs met through the distribution of 48 kitchen kits, 48 hygiene kits and 48 clothing packages in different sizes, to help them recover from the effects of the fire.

Planned activities

- Survey, selection and registration of beneficiaries in coordination with the local authorities
- Distribution of non food items with the support of Red Cross volunteers and members of the community.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the distributions by personnel of the Headquarters with the support of the Federation.

Coordination

The Red Cross Society of Panama supports the activities carried out by the Panamanian government. There is close coordination with the Mayor's office, authorities of the Ministry of Housing, Office of the First Lady, SINAPROC's Emergency Operations Centre in the city's capital and with other involved non-governmental institutions.

From the onset of the disaster the National Society has been in close contact and coordination with Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and receives support in developing the activities mentioned above.

Monitoring and evaluation

The National Society provides staff for the implementation of the described activities. The RCSP, with support of the Federation, will monitor the situation in coordination with other involved organizations and will conclude the operation with an evaluation.

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