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Information bulletin

Western Europe: Plane crash

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Spanish Red Cross (SRC), French Red Cross (FRC) and German Red Cross (GRC) have determined that external assistance is not required, and are therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this point in time.

Summary:

On 24 March 2015 a Germanwings aeroplane crashed on its way from Barcelona to Dusseldorf in the French Alps area of Digne-les-Bains, in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence in southern France. It is believed that none of the approximately 150 passengers survived.

An emergency operative was established, in which more than 50 French Red Cross volunteers participate alongside local and national emergency public teams.

At the same time, Spanish Red Cross Teams for Immediate Response to Emergencies (ERIEs) were activated at Barcelona Airport to provide psychosocial support (PSS) to the families of those passengers who were involved in the crash.



More than 30 volunteers from the Catalonia branch of the Spanish RC were deployed at the El Prat airport in Barcelona to provide psychosocial support to those who lost their loved ones in the plane crash. /@CRC

German Red Cross activated their PSS team and also its Restoring Family Links (tracing) Service, working closely with the German authorities.

Following the request of the French Red Cross on 25 March, the German RC and the Spanish RC have deployed two teams of German and Spanish speaking Red Cross staff, respectively, to provide psychosocial support activities in the crash area.

The situation

On 24 March 2015, a Germanwings Airbus A320 aircraft, carrying 144 passengers and 6 crew members, crashed in the Digne-les-Bains area of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence in southern France. The aircraft which was flying from Barcelona to Dusseldorf disappeared from the radar screen at around 11:00 hours (France time).

French police at the crash site said no one survived and it would take days to recover the bodies due to difficult terrain, snow and incoming storms.

The aircraft came down in an alpine region known for skiing, hiking and rafting, but which is hard for rescue services to reach. Snow is expected above 1,800 meters and relatively low clouds, which inhibits helicopter operations.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The French Red Cross teams have been activated and are providing support to the local authorities as well as those affected, who are present at the site. An operations centre in Paris and another one on site in Dignes-les-Bains have been established and are functioning.

The French Red Cross has engaged 50 volunteers since 24 March to provide logistical support for the response activities as well as hospitality and accommodations for relatives. Psychosocial support in collaboration with the German Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross is also available at the location.

At the train stations and the airport in Marseille, the French RC has six (6) local volunteers in place to assist those arriving from or en route to Dignes-les-Bains. Transportation support is also in place to aid those who require transport to and from the place of their temporary accommodations.

Currently there are two temporary housing units established, with an 800 bed capacity to meet the accommodation needs of those on-site in Dignes-les-Bains.

The Spanish Red Cross Teams for Immediate Response to Emergencies (ERIEs) joined public authorities in Barcelona Airport to provide psychosocial support.

The Catalonia branch of the Spanish RC deployed one psychosocial support team consisting of six PSS experts, one communications specialist and two drivers, in Digne-les-Bains to support the French RC's psychosocial activities provided to the affected Spanish-speaking relatives.

The German Red Cross activated their tracing service and deployed one psychosocial support team with three PSS experts, one liaison officer and two drivers in Digne-les-Bains to support the French RC's psychosocial activities in regard to the affected German-speaking families.

The psychosocial activities carried out by the German RC, Spanish RC and French RC teams include:

- Emotional support to affected relatives;
- Technical advice to emergency health staff and police on how to manage the psychosocial variables of the situation;
- Early detection of cases needing specific psychological support;
- Support to people while information about their relatives is confirmed.

A non-denominational funeral service is planned on site for Saturday, 28 March, for the victims and all those who have lost their relatives or friends in the plane crash.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC 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 the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.



The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.