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# Information Bulletin

## Brazil: Industrial Accident (dam collapse)

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>Information Bulletin N° 1</b>	<b>Date of issue:</b> 12 February 2019
<b>Date of the event:</b> 25 January 2019	<b>Host National Society:</b> Brazilian Red Cross
<b>Focal point:</b> Pabel Angeles, disaster management coordinator for South America, pabel.angeles@ifrc.org	

*This bulletin is issued for informative purposes only; it reflects the current situation and the available information at the moment. **The Brazilian Red Cross (BRC), with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that no external assistance is necessary in response to this accident. No funding or other assistance is being sought.***

### Situation

On 25 January 2019, at approximately 13:37, a dam at Córrego do Feijão mine (operated by the Vale mining corporation) collapsed, leading to a subsequent mudslide that devastated the nearby town of Brumadinho, in Minas Gerais. The collapse released a reservoir of 11.7 million cubic metres of mud-like waste material produced by the mine. After the failure, the mud deposits downstream were as thick as 5 metres in some locations.<sup>1</sup> As of 7 February 2019, 157 people have been reported dead and 182 remain missing.

The areas directly affected by this waste included Vale offices in the Feijão mine, the Vila Vertigo region, the Córrego do Feijão and the Parque das Cachoeiras region. The Minas Gerais Energy Company, CEMIG, warned that power in the region would be disconnected due to safety concerns. To date, no further information is available regarding the energy situation.

The Civil Police and the Institute for Legal Medicine had support teams on site to inform families of those affected by the accident. State authorities also are providing information in the mass media.

The Government of Minas Gerais provided 300 SIM cards to affected families to contact authorities and aid with the search for information and guidance. A station was set up to provide psychosocial support. However, due to the inaccessibility of pre-disaster routes, this station is located at 20 kilometres distance from where the accident occurred.

On the fourth day of the search for survivors, 136 members of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) arrived to reinforce rescue work. The troops, along with 270 Brazilians from various institutions in the region, carried equipment that detects signs of life beneath the surface of the accumulated waste. The Civil Defence office in Minas Gerais initially requested donations via its [website](#); donations are no longer requested.

### Actions of the Red Cross and Red Crescent



The BRC local branch receives support from staff mobilized from the national headquarters and the regional intervention team. Source: IFRC.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.vale.com/EN/aboutvale/news/Pages/Clarifications-regarding-Dam-I-of-the-Corrego-do-Feijao-Mine.aspx>

On 26 January, the central branch of the Brazilian Red Cross (BRC) sent a technical team to Minas Gerais to survey the impact of the event. The technical team was composed of a coordinator of humanitarian projects, a communication coordinator, an psychosocial support team composed of five people, a national coordinator of education and health and a restoring family links (RFL) coordinator. The team has participated and collaborated in inter-institutional meetings while contributing to the process of needs evaluation and strengthening local response capacities. To support the BRC, a general Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member from the Uruguayan Red Cross was deployed; the Canadian Red Cross funded this deployment. The RIT member is providing technical support to the BRC in its local actions in the disaster's aftermath.

The BRC's local branch in Minas Gerais has 50 volunteers with personal vehicles suitable for access to the area that are being used to support with search and rescue operations. Volunteers trained in first aid and communication were also activated. Rescue efforts are still ongoing and access to the areas is limited to avoid interference with operations. As a result, it will be difficult to accurately access and verify human losses until searches are complete.

The presidents of the BRC and the local branch also mobilized to Brumadinho to support the different actors involved. This allowed the BRC direct access to a command centre established in a local university, where all institutions are coordinating their actions. Thanks to efforts to generate institutional coordination, the BRC has been involved in a variety of emergency response efforts such as search and rescue, needs assessment and implementation of psychosocial support activities in different locations.

The BRC held two meetings with the general secretary of health of Brumadinho, one which dealt specifically with psychosocial support activities. The Secretariat confirmed the need for the development of new strategies to meet mental health needs due to the insufficient quantity of these services in the area. Authorities have also begun to identify cases of acute diarrheal diseases in the affected communities, which will require an increase in health actions in the surrounding areas.



Map of the affected areas. Source: NASA, Landsat 8

The Brazilian Red Cross is examining the possibility of providing psychosocial support in hospitals and at public events related to this disaster. As a result, the BRC arranged a team of 4 psychologists, which have reached 30 people. The BRC is conducting epidemiological surveillance and training actions for the personnel involved in this response. The municipal government is providing the space for these trainings.

This week, BRC health teams will accompany the municipal health team in home visits to ensure access to health services for those in need. The visits in turn will allow the staff of the BRC to carry out evaluations of the impact on health and the identification of vulnerable groups within the communities. The BRC will be using Open Data Kit (ODK) to collect and manage information about the accident, which should bring an added value to future data analysis.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has provided support to the BRC for Restoring Family Links. The BRC's national coordinator for RFL was deployed to the affected area for a week. After the assessment was concluded and the BRC's situation and capacities evaluated, it was decided not to implement RFL activities. The BRC's national coordinator for RFL identified the difficulties of coordination in the field, which blocked the deployment of RFL support to the families of the victims.

On 2 February, the BRC technical team held a recruitment and training event for volunteers. A total of 47 people attended, of which 43 were admitted as new BRC volunteers. The training included a basic course of institutional training, as well as training in first aid and psychosocial support.

BRC officials expect that this training will strengthen local capacities while also increasing the human resources available for the response to the incident in Minas Gerais.

Earlier this week, the BRC operational coordinator held a meeting with the head of operations of the State's Civil Defence Secretariat (SEDEC) to continue promoting inter-institutional coordination. A meeting was also held with

the National Civil Defence Coordinator where both parties agreed on specific psychosocial activities that the BRC will conduct. To implement these actions and provide continuity to the operation, the local branch will have 20 all-terrain vehicles at its disposal. The BRC's psychosocial support team, with Doctors Without Borders, will present the psychosocial approach in emergencies for the Municipality of Brumadinho's health officials.

The Brazilian Red Cross continues to publish information on its [response efforts in Brumadinho](#) on its public website.

## 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 (NGOs) 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

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