

SLOVAKIA/POLAND: FLOODS

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The Disaster

Following sudden storms which hit eastern parts of Slovakia on Monday 20 July, causing flash flooding in the districts of Sabinov and Presov, 34 persons have been reported killed and an estimated 60 are still missing. In the village of Jarovnice, in Sabinov district, the hardest hit by the flooding, 31 people died. Most of the victims were from the Romany population and children. Mud and flood waters from the Torysa, Hornad, Svinka and Zehrica rivers tore through the remote villages, washing away houses, bridges and roads and exacting a heavy toll in human lives. The water level in the rivers has now subsided to level three emergency, and machinery has been brought in by the civil defence and army to begin the clean up procedure. The search for missing persons continues, however according to local municipality officials, the chances of finding people alive under the silt are very slim.

Torrential storm rains in the south west of Poland have also caused major damage over the last five days. Three months' average rain fell in a period of just four hours at the end of last week, resulting in flooding in the valley region of Klodzko in Walbrzych, hitting four villages and four towns. Seven deaths were reported. Damage to homes and medical facilities, including the dialysis and nephrology wards in the Polanica health resort hospital, was extensive. Further storm rain has been forecast for eastern parts of the country later this week.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Slovakia w

Following the disaster alert raised in the early evening of Monday 20 July, the local crisis committee went into action. The committee is composed of representatives from the civil defence, the army, local municipality and the director of the regional Red Cross branches, and acts as a focus for co-operation between the various parties responding to the disaster.

The local Red Cross branches in Sabinov and Presov districts began immediate distribution of second-hand clothing to survivors of the floods and to those persons evacuated from their homes by the army and civil defence, and temporarily accommodated in schools, other municipal buildings and tents.

Local appeals were made for assistance by the Red Cross branches on 21 July and a national appeal for financial support was launched on Wednesday 22 July by the National Society headquarters. Although the cash response has so far been limited, offers of in-kind donations have been received for water, fruit juice, milk, baby food, vegetable oil and soap from local companies. A cash contribution has been offered by the German Red Cross and the Polish, Czech, Hungarian and British Red Cross have also offered assistance, which will be taken up.

The state is currently providing food and drinking water through tankers in the affected villages, however there is a need for water canisters to enable beneficiaries to take the water home. The local Red Cross

branches began distributing canisters to meet this need on Thursday 23 July, and have also begun the process of local procurement of hygiene items, clothing and food.

Poland w

Local Red Cross branches in the district of Walbrzych in Poland have been distributing emergency relief items, such as tinned food, hygiene items, clothes, shoes and rubber gloves from their warehouse stocks to victims of the flooding. Neighbouring district branches have also assisted in the relief effort, providing assistance from their stocks and a national appeal for support for the victims was launched by the National Society headquarters.

Needs

Slovakia w

The current need is for water canisters, clothing, hygiene materials, food, blankets, kitchen equipment and temporary shelter (large tents) for the survivors of the flooding. The outstanding longer term rehabilitation needs of the affected population will be assessed once the level of state assistance becomes clearer.

Poland w

National Society warehouse emergency stocks are currently sufficient to meet the immediate relief needs of the victims of the floods. The Polish Red Cross is co-ordinating its activities with the appropriate state and other emergency services at local and national levels. Long term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs will be assessed in due course.

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