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Information Bulletin

Solomon Islands: Dengue Fever Outbreak

 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 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Solomon Islands Red Cross Society will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

[<click here for detailed contact information>](#)

The Situation

Since January 2013, approximately 1,970 suspected and confirmed dengue cases have been reported, resulting in three deaths. More than 1,800 of the cases have been reported in Honiara, the capital of Solomon Islands, while the others are in the provinces of Guadalcanal and Gizo. There has been a steep increase in the hospitalization of dengue suspected cases in the aftermath of the earthquake and resulting tsunami that struck on 6 February. It is currently the rainy season in Solomon Islands, increasing the breeding sites of the Aedes mosquito which transmits the disease.

The trend in the bed-occupancy rate remains well over 95 per cent. Those with severe dengue requiring blood transfusion accounts for more than 20 per cent of the cases. The Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MoHMS) has been working hard to respond to the outbreak

since January. The MoHMS has enacted their emergency plans and requested the assistance of the national disaster management office (NDMO) to staff the hospital Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which is running 24/7.

Authorities in Solomon Islands say they have been unable to contain the spread of dengue fever with new cases reported throughout the country. There are serious concerns that a spread of the outbreak to the provinces will be very difficult to manage without further support. Following a request from the Solomon Islands Government, the governments of Australia and New Zealand have sent medical teams to the Solomon Islands to assist with the response.

Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr said the Australian Government has agreed to provide additional staff for the National Referral Hospital in Honiara and provincial hospitals. An initial assessment team was deployed to evaluate the situation, and an additional nine-person medical taskforce was subsequently deployed to work with local medical authorities and help control the outbreak. A senior AusAID response manager is leading the taskforce, which includes doctors, nurses and public health experts.



Voluntary blood donor recruitment and donation campaigns in communities are scaled up to ensure sufficient supply of blood during dengue outbreak. Photo cred: Solomon Island Red Cross

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (SIRCS) has been closely coordinating with MoHMS and other health partners to be updated of the evolving situation and the national response priorities and strategies, as well as to ensure its planned response fill critical gaps to the national response.

SIRCS' health promotion teams from Honiara and West Guadalcanal Red Cross branches have been deployed to Honiara and West Guadalcanal towns to disseminate dengue awareness and prevention messages. Western and Maliata Red Cross branches have briefed volunteers who will be involved in the dengue awareness and prevention campaigns in communities and schools.

The SIRC is also supporting government efforts in strengthening and scaling up voluntary blood donor recruitment and donation campaigns in communities to ensure sufficient supply of blood. It has deployed more volunteers to assist staff from the National Referral Hospital in managing designated blood donation venues, and have distributed blood donation-related communications materials in these areas. SIRCS' volunteers have also been assigned to support operations in the hospital EOC and MoHMS.

SIRCS has so far committed to support the national response for a month; a detailed plan of action with budget has been drafted. The Australian Red Cross (ARC), an established partner of SIRCS, will fund CHF 19,438 (AUD20,000) out of the total budget of approximately CHF 39,839 (AUD41,000).

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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.

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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.