

MINOR EMERGENCY



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

ZIMBABWE: INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

05ME034
8 July 2005

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 over 181 countries.

In Brief

CHF 100,000 WAS ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) ON 8 JUNE 2005 (SEE INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 1) TO RESPOND TO THIS OPERATION. BASED ON THE EVOLVING SITUATION AND DISCUSSIONS UNDERWAY, AN EMERGENCY APPEAL IS UNDER CONSIDERATION.

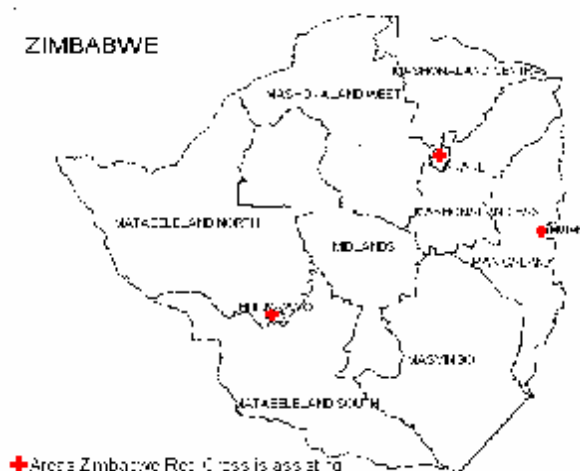
For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Zimbabwe: Emma Kundishora, Secretary General Email zrcs@ecoweb.co.zw; Phone 263 4 775 416, Fax 263 4 751 739
- In Zimbabwe: Françoise Le Goff, Head of Southern Africa Regional Delegation, Harare; Email ifrczw02@ifrc.org and Davide Zappa, Regional Disaster Management Coordinator; Email ifrczw70@ifrc.org Phone 263.4.70.61.55, 263.4.70.61.56; Fax 263.4.70.87.84
- In Geneva: Terry Carney, Federation Regional officer, Email terry.carney@ifrc.org; Phone 41.22.730.42.98, Fax 41. 22.733.03.97

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The Situation

The 'clean-up' / 'restore order' operation started by the government of Zimbabwe on 18 May 2005 has extended to 50 locations scattered throughout the 10 administrative provinces of the country. More than 75,000 households are currently estimated to have been affected. The Government has stated that the campaign objectives are to formalize all business and residential structures, but the result has been a particularly disproportionate impact on



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the most vulnerable households. Illegal residential and commercial structures have been demolished without a court order and the provision of alternative shelter in the midst of the winter season. Livelihoods of the individuals have been severely disrupted, and the very poor, the chronically sick, and the child-headed households are bearing the brunt of the impact. In urban and peri-urban areas, up to 45% of the 18,000 home-based care (HBC) clients and registered orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS (OVC) assisted under the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS) programme are no longer contactable at their register residential addresses, posing a threat on the sustainability of the programme. In some cases, individuals are alleged to have been injured, and a few reportedly perished during the demolition of properties.

Various organizations are trying to evaluate the situation and the needs of the most vulnerable people. The ZRCS is also involved in these activities. The UN secretary general has mandated the executive director of UN-Habitat to be his special envoy to discuss with the government the human settlement issues in Zimbabwe. The terms of reference include the assessment of the scope and extent of the mass evictions, the humanitarian needs, and the impact on the affected population. It also includes the assessment of adequacy of the government's arrangements for the displaced, and its capacities to address the basic needs of the affected population. Lastly, it includes the assessment of the humanitarian community to respond and the preparations of a report to the UN secretary general. The Federation's head of regional delegation was invited to meetings with the UN secretary general's Special Envoy, Mrs Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, alongside with Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) members. In the course of these meetings, the Special Envoy clarified the UN position being against forced displacements especially when the population is not given immediate relocation sites. The President of Zimbabwe has welcomed the offer of assistance and has put in place a committee to deal with the situation, making available USD 300 million for the reconstruction.

The UN Special Envoy is promoting the development of a reconstruction plan with the government to provide priority assistance to those affected by the operation, and will make efforts to halt the demolitions. It is clear that if people are given a plot, construction materials and clear official authorisations, it will be easier for them to resume their lives. It will also be possible for humanitarian actors to assist the immediate needs (shelter, food, water, health) and facilitate the provision of further services.

This trauma of demolition is affecting the normal coping mechanisms of the poor, already weakened by five years of economic decline and the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The priority now is to know where people are, collect substantive data and statistics, share information among the stakeholders, ensure good coordination, gain access to affected persons, distribute relief items, and advocate for stopping the demolition. The UN Special Envoy has requested the government to provide figures of the affected population and the first estimates given are between 17,000 to 20,000 families. The situation of some vulnerable groups such as street children and orphans has been addressed and will require special action to ensure their protection and their basic needs (food, education, health), since they have nowhere to return.

The campaign is currently on-going and the Government has provided no timeframe. The government has established 'transit' centres/camps to temporarily house the displaced people before they relocate to their rural homes. These camps are managed through social services specifically created sub-committees. Camps currently exist and/or are being set up in greater Harare (Caledonia Farm) – 4,822 individuals (at 5 July 2005) in Bulawayo (Helensvale) and Mutare (Sports Oval and Sakubva).

In addition to individuals currently living in 'transit' centres, large numbers of people remain camped where their houses were destroyed or in public areas of cities and towns, while others found alternative accommodation (at family and friends and/or new rentals). Other people are also reported to have moved to rural areas. The overall situation is very fluid and is constantly being monitored.



Secretary General of Zimbabwe Red Cross Society distributing clothing to beneficiaries

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Federation made available CHF 100,000 from its DREF to the ZRCS on 10 June 2005 to meet immediate and short-term humanitarian needs for 500 affected families. Items have been pre-positioned in ZRCS provincial offices and are currently being distributed to affected families and HBC clients. Zimbabwe Red Cross provincial offices are engaged in on-going assessments of the situation. Relief items being distributed include blankets, soap, rigid jerry cans, water makers (chlorine sachets) and kitchen sets. The ZRCS also distributed 25 tents in Mutare, clothes and set up temporary latrines out of its own stock in 'transit' camps in greater Harare and Mutare.

The ZRCS has agreed to take the lead humanitarian agency role in 'transit' camps in Bulawayo and Mutare, after meetings with stakeholders. The national society will be supporting the management of the camps with reporting lines to the social services subcommittees set up by the government. With the technical support of the Federation's regional delegation, training on camp management will be organized the first week of July for national society staff and volunteers (DFID funded).

The ZRCS role has been acknowledged through a statement by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works on 27 June 2005, and by local media. Zimbabwe Red Cross Society is the Movement leading agency in the response and is supported by a Task Force comprising both Federation and ICRC.



Temporary latrines at Caledonia Farm cam

Coordination

The Zimbabwe Red Cross Society has been consulting and coordinating with the government at the provincial and district levels. The national society and Federation are represented at key meetings with UN, NGOs and other key stakeholders in Zimbabwe. The ZRCS and Federation are actively participating in the humanitarian coordination fora and are members of UN sectoral working groups.

The Federation regional Delegation held an information and planning telephone conference on 7 July with all partner national societies to inform them about the situation in Zimbabwe, sharing future Red Cross actions, and discussing needs for support.

The Head of Regional Delegation has also requested to meet with the ZRCS's national board on 8 July to further discuss the Movement position and the advocacy plan.

The Regional Delegation has also initiated a position paper for the Federation and the national society, which will be useful to advocating at national and international fora.

Further Needs

As the situation is currently unfolding, needs are monitored on a daily basis. If further needs in terms of Movement response arise, they will be detailed in further updates to be issued shortly, and in the upcoming Emergency Appeal.

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