

Bolivia: Floods

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The Disaster

Thousands of subsistence farmers in Bolivia's extreme south are facing serious food shortages after weeks of heavy rains caused floods and landslides that left them homeless and swept away their crops and farm animals. Before the rains, the area suffered a period of severe drought that reduced crops and livestock. The flooding occurred along the Bermejo and Grande rivers in the province of Tarija, in the areas of Bermejo, Aviles, Acre and Gran Chace. The Government has declared the province a national disaster area.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Bolivian Red Cross provided first aid to families in temporary shelters and took part in the evaluation of needs. The Civil Defence has now requested it to help by distributing relief supplies, particularly food, to the most vulnerable families. A Federation relief delegate has been recruited regionally to help the Society with the operation. Caritas and other local voluntary agencies are also participating in the relief efforts. Co-ordination at a national level is ensured through meetings and contacts with the Bolivian Government. At the local level, the co-ordinating body is the Departmental Operative Emergency Committee.

Needs

The immediate needs are for food, tools and kitchen sets. The Federation has released CHF 80,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which is being used for the local purchase of family food parcels, tools and kitchen sets for 294 families, to be distributed by the local Red Cross branch volunteers. The operation, which is scheduled to last for six weeks, is thus covering both immediate relief needs and helping with rehabilitation. It could be extended to more families if further cash support were to be made available.

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