

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

## **ECUADOR: VOLCANO-ASH RAINS**

20 August 2001

*Information Bulletin N° 1/01*

*DREF allocated CHF 75,000*

*This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below and the information available at this time. Should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider a further request for assistance. CHF 75,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to be used in the health and community-awareness components of the disaster-response operation. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update.*

### ***The Situation***

Ecuador's Tungurahua volcano, located 5,020 metres above sea level in the Andean highlands, has been in the process of intermittent eruption since 1999, sending a persistent rain of ash that has blackened the Andean landscape, destroyed crops and affected some 20,000 people living nearby. The volcano is located 180 km south of Quito. Some residents have already fled their homes and taken refuge in neighbouring areas.

Since October, Tungurahua has been on "yellow alert," indicating that an eruption is imminent (within months or years). The volcano has been particularly active since the beginning of the month, but has recently intensified its activity with the increased potential that magma might be released, directly affecting the three country provinces of Tungurahua, Chimborazo and Pastaza, affecting a total of more than 7,200 families. The President of Ecuador declared a state of emergency on 14 August in seven communities threatened by the Tungurahua volcano.

#### ***Health***

The inhalation of ash and fumes is causing respiratory disorders, as well as skin irritations (dermatitis) and ocular problems.

#### ***Live-stock:and agriculture***

There is insufficient quantity and quality of food to feed the livestock, and fields planted with various crops have been buried by volcanic ash. A total of 6,000 animals have been moved.

#### ***Infrastructure***

Assessments of damaged houses are underway. The transport and trade of products and supplies has been affected.

#### ***Government action***

The Ecuadorian government is providing medical assistance to the affected population. The Ministry of Urban Development has provided USD 84,000 to replace the zinc roofs of 420 houses. The construction of 300 houses for the most affected families is planned. The Ministry of Agriculture is providing support by moving cattle and food stocks to safer areas.

## ***Red Cross / Red Crescent action***

The Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC), through its branch network, has provided the following support:

- Updated contingency plans: since the declaration of the “yellow alert”, the Ecuadorian Red Cross National Disaster Programme started an evaluation process with the support of five provincial branches. The action includes updating of the risk areas and distribution of duties at different levels.
- Preliminary census were developed in different communities.
- Basic assistance, including food distribution and medical assistance, in the most affected areas of the Chimborazo Province.

The Spanish Red Cross has provided support to the Tungurahua branch, and the Federation’s Buenos Aires Regional Delegation is working to support the Ecuadorian Red Cross.

According to the initial field evaluation, following are the main needs (estimated at a total of CHF 250,000):

- supplementary feeding to the population.
- personal protective material.
- medical and psychological attention.

	CHIMBORAZO		TUNGURAHUA		TOTAL
	Guano		Quero	Mocha	
	Santa Fé de Galan	Llapo	Quero	Mocha	
<b>Population</b>	<b>1,695</b>	<b>1,747</b>	<b>11,956</b>	<b>5,167</b>	<b>20,565</b>
<b>vulnerable population (approximately)</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(*) affected families</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

*(\*) estimate, at an average of 6 persons per family.*

The possibility for the three PNS present in the country providing feeding and protection materials is being considered.

### **Health care w**

***Objective To improve health and hygiene conditions of the affected people, including psychological support.***

To achieve this objective, the following activities will be undertaken, based upon the assessment carried out by the ERC’s national health director, the plan of action and adequate equipment and human resources:

- To create a regional team responsible for the provinces of Chimborazo and Tungurahua.
- Four medical brigades will be formed, each one consisting of 4 doctors, 4 psychologists and locally trained relief volunteers. Each brigade will visit the “parroquias” of Llapo and Santa Fe de Galan (Province of Chimborazo) and Quero and Mocha (Province of Tungurahua). The targeted beneficiaries are those persons not receiving similar assistance from other organizations.
- Medical doctors will conduct two visits per week, with the psychological support team visiting twice per month. Medicine for those persons treated by Red Cross doctors will be administered through the public health centres.

### **Disaster Preparedness w**

***Objective 1: To provide protective material to beneficiaries and the relief volunteers team.***

The following activities are planned:

- The purchase of protective items to be distributed to 6,000 beneficiaries, to be distributed together with the food kit.
- A total of 100 relief volunteers (medical team, distribution and branch volunteers) will receive protective equipment, including masks, glasses and a helmet (DREF funded).

***Objective 2: To strengthen local capacities to address future emergencies and disasters.***

A one month promotion campaign for 15,000 people living in risky areas will be carried out, with volunteers and communities trained to detect the secondary effects of the Tungurahua volcanic eruption. Brochures will be distributed and presentations will be organised throughout the risk area.

### **Capacity of the National Society w**

The National Society has proven effective capacity in its disaster response. An Ecuadorian RIT delegate whose mission on the Peru earthquake operation is finished has been assigned to the affected area. The national society and five branches involved are able to manage the relief operation, and there is no need for expatriate personnel support.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

### **Present Capacity of the Federation w**

The Federation's Buenos Aires Regional Delegation is providing the Ecuadorian Red Cross technical support through a three-person regional DPP team and the regional information delegate.

*For further details please contact:*

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*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

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