

# 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

## ***EGYPT: TRAIN DISASTER***

*21 February 2002*

### ***Information Bulletin N° 1***

***This Bulletin is being issued for information purposes only. A Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation of CHF 30,000 has been made. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors at this time.***

### ***The Disaster***

More than 350 people are believed to have been killed in the worst train disaster in Egypt's history. The death toll is still rising. The latest estimate of those injured is 75 but this is set to increase.

The Egyptian News Agency Al Ayatt said that fire swept through a crowded passenger train at al-Ayatt, close to Cairo, along the Nile early on Wednesday 20 February. The blaze engulfed seven carriages. Firefighters extinguished the flames after several hours. The official Middle East News Agency (MENA) said the fire started when a gas cylinder exploded in the train's cafe. Most passengers were heads of families returning home for the Eid al-Adha holiday. The train was an old, slow-moving model that stopped at almost every station. It was overcrowded with passengers and their luggage. Passengers jumped out of windows and doors to escape but many were stuck inside and were burned beyond recognition. The victims came from the nine provinces along the River Nile: Al-Jeeza, Bani Sweif, Al-Minia, Asyoot, Souhaj, Qana, Luqsar, Aswan and Al-Wadi Al-Jadid.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Egyptian Red Crescent (ERCS) immediately mobilized several hundred volunteers from eight branches to provide first aid to the injured and their transport to hospitals. Food, blankets, clothes and financial assistance were provided. Psychological support is also being given to families of the dead and injured.

The relief section of the ERCS established an operation room at the ERCS offices in Cairo to coordinate the operation. A committee of ERCS staff and volunteers was also established at the Al-Jeeza branch to care for the injured at hospitals. The committee is visiting hospitals to extend assistance to the injured.

ERCS branches in the nine affected provinces have been requested to establish relief committees to deal with an expected influx of injured, those suffering from shock and people looking for information about their loved ones. 'Operation rooms and committees are working round the clock to deal with the situation,' the relief section head said.

## *Needs*

A Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation of CHF 30,000 has been released by the Federation to support the action of the Egyptian Red Crescent. The National Society will inform the Geneva secretariat if they need any further support.

*Further information can be obtained from desk officer Cynthia Petrih, e-mail address [petrih@ifrc.org](mailto:petrih@ifrc.org), Ph: 41 22 730 4312*

*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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**This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>**