

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

MOZAMBIQUE: TRAIN CRASH

27 May, 2002

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: None

This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time.

The Situation

At 06:30 on 25 May, 2002 a train carrying both passengers and cargo crashed in Tenga, Moambe District, Maputo Province, approximately 31 kilometres north-west of the Mozambique capital of Maputo.

At the time of the accident the train was travelling from the border town of Ressano Garcia, a district on the border with South Africa, with approximately 600 passengers on board six wagons. It appears that the six wagons involved had been separated from the main locomotive to allow the train to negotiate a sharp incline. Once being separated, the wagons containing the passengers moved backwards, down a hill, gathering speed before derailing and crashing.

The majority of the passengers on the train were either miners who worked in South Africa or market traders bringing stock to Maputo from the border.

Latest reports indicate a total of 193 people were killed as a result of the crash, with a further 169 injured. As of 27 May some 60 of the injured have been released from hospital. Two Mozambique Red Cross volunteers were among those killed in this terrible accident.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Mozambique Red Cross (CVM) immediately reacted to the needs of the injured by sending 11 persons, including 1 technical health officer and 10 volunteers from its Maputo Provincial branch to the scene. These teams were able to assist in immediate first aid and rescue actions to assist the survivors.

Delegates from the Spanish Red Cross, including the Head of Delegation, who have projects within Maputo Province, and were alerted to the news of the accident by radio, were also able to mobilise delegates to help in ferrying the wounded to local hospitals.

These teams were reinforced in the early afternoon by additional resources (2 health technicians and 4 volunteers) from the Maputo City Branch who worked alongside the other rescue services from the Army, Police and Railway company to free both the injured and dead from the carriages.

The Secretary General of the Mozambique Red Cross also travelled to the scene in the early afternoon to help co-ordinate the Red Cross response.

All the injured were moved either to local hospitals or, in the case of the more seriously injured, to the main hospital in Maputo.

Once the full extent of the number of injured was known, the Ministry of Health issued an urgent appeal for all medical staff to return to their clinics and hospitals to assist the injured. At the same time the Mozambique Red Cross was asked by the Ministry what material support they could provide, to support the medical services. As a result of this appeal, the CVM were able to release blankets (210) and body bags (150) from its Disaster Preparedness stocks held for such disasters in its central warehouse in Maputo.

On 26 May, the CVM provided essential support to the central hospital and other reception centres, by providing twenty of its volunteers to both assist in the collection of blood donors from their homes as well as providing blood themselves. As a result of these actions, a total of 500 people provided blood donations to the health authorities. Following these donations, the hospital authorities were able to carry out emergency surgery on many of the seriously injured.

Another team, under the direction of the Secretary General of the CVM, travelled to Moambe, to help in distributing food and offering psycho-social support to the families of the two Red Cross workers who were killed in the accident.

Initial funds were made available (on a loan basis) from the Spanish Red Cross to assist the CVM to provide the necessary food and incentives to the volunteers. Further support may be forthcoming from embassies within Maputo - however the full extent of this support is not known at this time.

Once a full picture of the overall unmet needs of the CVM (including the replacement of local DP stocks used during the response) is known, further information will be made available.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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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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