

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

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: LANDSLIDES

4 April 2002

Information Bulletin N° 1/02

This Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time

The Situation

A massive landslide at midnight on Monday 01 April 2002 in Papua New Guinea has killed or buried alive 36 people. So far nine bodies have been retrieved from the mud and debris. The disaster occurred in the Wantoat area, 79km north west of Lae-Morobe Province. Heavy rain had been reported throughout the province in the past few weeks. An earthquake, measuring 5.3 on the Richter Scale, was felt earlier on Monday and could have been a contributory factor to the disaster.

Twelve houses have been buried by the landslide and about 36 people are presumed buried at the Napna, Piung and Damiping hamlets of Kobung village, 6km south west of the Wanton Government station, according to the provincial administrator. The hamlets were on the edge of a river. The disaster was sparked by a side of a mountain slipping and crashing into a river below, throwing tonnes of mud into the air that then fell on the nearby hamlets. The landslides covered about 1 sq km. Over 50 villagers have been evacuated to higher ground. The provincial governor visited the site and is considering declaring the area an emergency zone.

The road network is cut-off due to heavy rain. The provincial administration sent an assessment team, along with 20 tarpaulins and 50 blankets, by helicopter on Wednesday 3 April. They will provide more information tomorrow.

The Red Cross at HQ and at the Branch level immediately started contacting the various agencies in Morobe to gather information and their action.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The PNG Red Cross, through its branch network in Morobe, has assisted the provincial administration in the provision of emergency relief. Liaison is being maintained between branch, provincial disaster management office, headquarters and the delegation. A branch disaster assessment & response team (DART) member has also been asked to join an assessment planned for tomorrow. Tarpaulin, blankets, cooking utensils, old clothing are available in the Morobe branch disaster preparedness stock for distribution as required. Other organisations, such as World Vision and Caritas, are communicating with the PNG Red Cross and the delegation for the latest updates.

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

For further details please contact :

- *The Papua New Guinea Red Cross National Society in Port Moresby ; Phone 675-3258-577; Fax 675-3259-714; email hqpngrcs@dg.com.pg*
- *Satoshi Sugai, Desk Officer, Phone 41 22 730 4273; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email sugai@ifrc.org*

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.

John Horekens
Head
Relationship Management Department

Simon Missiri
Head a.i.
Asia and Pacific Department