

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

VENEZUELA: FLOODS

24 July 2002

Information Bulletin N° 1/02

This Information Bulletin is for information only. For the time being the Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. A further assessment is being carried out given the persistence of the heavy rains and the outcome will be shared with donors.

The Situation

Due to heavy rain in Venezuela since June 2002, Apure State has been seriously affected by a large number of floods principally produced by soil saturation and declared an emergency alert situation announced by the authorities of the regional government.

This situation worsened due to constant heavy rainfall on July 18,19 and 20, which caused the banks of the Sarare River to overflow. The resulting flooding affected 1160 families, or approximately 5800 people. Many bridges collapsed between the communities of Guasqualito and Elorza, and roads that join Guasqualito with El Amparo and which connects El Amparo with the town Arauca Republica de Colombia have been washed out. Yuca, plantain and corn crops have been destroyed and there have been significant losses of domestic animals such as hens and cattle. There is a lack of potable water and pipe systems have collapsed,

Information from the from the National Civil Protection Agency and the Apure branch of the Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC) estimate that water levels have risen approximately 1.5 meters.

The Operations Groups of the National Army Forces has not yet estimated the number of families that lost their belongings, but have set up temporary shelter in order to assist and protect the population. There have been no reports of any loss of life or serious injury.

The Venezuelan government has requested general financial support in order to meet the emergency requirements. In addition, the VRC has been asked to manage distribution of humanitarian relief goods. The government is coordinating the transport of goods to the region The National Armed Forces has been active in protecting affecting populations from injury due to downed electrical lines. They are also carrying out evaluation of damage in the area.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The VRC acted immediately upon receiving notice of the disaster. A team of three disaster response specialists was dispatched to the affected area to carry out an Evaluation of Damage and Analysis of Needs (EDAN). Seventy VRC volunteers in the area are providing first aid, general emergency and health intervention services.

The VRC has sent a plane of humanitarian relief goods to the affected region consisting of hygiene kits, blankets, mattresses, water containers and plastic sheeting. They have also visited temporary shelters in order to determine relief needs. 2 water and sanitation teams have also been sent to the region to assess needs and provide appropriate expertise. VRC staff are also in process of training personnel from the National Civil Protection Agency in the use of the SUMA logistics software programme.

Inter-institutional coordination meetings have been held with the National Civil Protection Agency at the national and local levels and the VRC has been integrated into the response coordinating body of the National Armed Forces.

If the disaster remains of the size mentioned in this bulletin, the Venezuelan Red Cross can cope with it with the help of the PNSs already represented in the country. If the further needs assessment being carried out concludes on bigger needs, given the continuation of the heavy rainfall, help will be requested from DREF and donors.

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

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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