

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

BOLIVIA: FLOODS

25 February 2002

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 30,000

This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 30,000 has been released. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update

The Situation

After the heavy rains and the hailstorm on 19 February the Bolivian capital of La Paz is slowly recovering. Most of the city is cleaned, except for the worst hit zone “rio abajo”. However, there are still risks of buildings collapsing. Latest figures provided by the Bolivian Red Cross report 78 people dead, 50 missing, and out of the 138 injured and treated, 38 still are in hospital. The number of affected families is still unknown, but is estimated at 300-500. 111 families - or 438 persons - are in temporary shelters. The president of Bolivia requested international assistance on 20 February. The response to the disaster has been defined into four areas: support to those affected; rehabilitation; reconstruction; and communications/information. However, there is still a lack of inter institutional coordination and definition of roles and responsibilities. On Monday 25 February (today) there was a coordination committee meeting where clarification of who does what is expected.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Bolivian Red Cross has provided pre-hospital attention, first aid in the wake of the disaster. Rescuers also provided care to people trapped in the subway station in el Prado. On 23 and 24 February assessment teams reached the worst hit area “rio abajo” where 100 hectares of farm land was ruined by mudslides. Yesterday and today (24 and 25 February), the Bolivian Red Cross was finalizing its damage and needs assessments, with support from one of the Federation regional delegation’s disaster preparedness/disaster response delegates. In total, 57 volunteers have been active in La Paz. Bolivian Red Cross branches have also collected relief items arriving in La Paz.

The Government has assigned Bolivian Red Cross - together with eight other institutions such as Ministry of Health, Civil Defence and Caritas - to work in the broad area of supporting affected people. But there is still a great need for a clear distribution of work and a common plan of action. Based upon assessments, Bolivian Red Cross - together with the Federation delegate and German and Spanish Red Cross delegates in La Paz - have worked during the weekend on a joint Red Cross proposal on the details of the response.

The Bolivian Red Cross is not responsible for shelter management but has noted severe deficiencies in the hygiene and health standards of shelters. It has proposed improvements to the municipal Government.

After today's coordination committee meeting a plan of action is expected. If needs cannot be met by available resources, an international appeal will be launched. In the meantime, the International Federation and Spanish Red Cross have through their respective delegations made CHF 30,000 (half and half) available to the Bolivian Red Cross. The DREF has allocated another CHF 30,000 to cover planning expenses and initial operation costs, that include distribution of relief supplies to at least 111 homeless families (about 438 people) and support to the 38 injured persons. Further assistance to the same victims and an extension to other beneficiaries are planned.

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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