

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

MADAGASCAR CYCLONE 8 March, 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider international support through an Appeal.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Cyclone "Gafilo" hit the northern coast of Madagascar at Antalaha on Sunday, 7 March 2004 and crossed parts of the island with wind speeds in excess of 300 km/hour. The latest information indicates that the cyclone has dropped in intensity to a tropical depression and moved towards sea, south of the capital Antananarivo.

There is very little information on the extent of damage at the moment, but this is considered to potentially be the most serious cyclone since 1994, when Cyclone Geralda affected more than 450,000 people. Heavy rains continue, with a risk that the storm could again intensify. The Government of Madagascar has appealed for international assistance.

An aerial survey by a government helicopter on 7 March, carrying members of the Red Cross Platform of Regional Intervention for the Indian Ocean (PIROI), could not land in Antalaha due to heavy flooding. A meeting of the Government's National Disaster Committee was organized to give a brief assessment of the damage and an indication of Government action. Representatives of the Malagasy Red Cross and PIROI attended. It is now the cyclone season in the Indian Ocean Islands. The most recent cyclone (Elita) hit Madagascar three times between 26 January and 4 February 2004, causing 29 deaths, injuring 100, and leaving 44,190 homeless.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Information continues to arrive, and the Malagasy Red Cross has a team on standby to initiate an assessment of the damage in the affected areas. Many houses in rural Madagascar are made from mud and straw which makes them particularly susceptible to damage.

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The French Red Cross has activated PIROI, and a logistician and a coordinator have been deployed to support the Malagasy Red Cross in the assessment. The PIROI has emergency water treatment equipment on standby at La Reunion for 20,000 people; temporary shelters for 10,000 people, and telecommunication equipment. These will be transported to Madagascar by two planes provided by the French Army based in La Reunion.

Because they are deploying all their emergency stocks and equipment, PIROI has requested assistance from the Federation. Based on the magnitude of the situation, the Federation is considering a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation for an assessment and initial response, including a possible preliminary appeal. A member of the Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRDT) from the Seychelles Red Cross will be deployed to travel to Madagascar to assist in the assessment. The French Red Cross is ready to launch an appeal depending on the size and scope of the damage. A second update will be issued shortly with more detailed data on the extent of the damage.

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

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