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## Information bulletin

# Dominican Republic: new cholera outbreak

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

### Information Bulletin n° 1 21 December 2011

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Dominican Red Cross (DRC) with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

[<click here for detailed contact information>](#)

On 7 December the health authorities of Monseñor Nouel province confirmed a cholera outbreak in Bonao municipality. Some 220 persons were hospitalized with symptoms of **diarrhoea, vomiting and abdominal pain**. As a result, the DRC activated their contingency plan and mobilized Health National Intervention Team members, and the National Society's water and sanitation unit to carry out assessments and develop a plan of action.



The Dominican Red Cross (DRC) supported the governmental authorities in the assessment and monitoring of the Rio de Blanco aqueduct, the suspected source of the outbreak. Source: DRC

In response to the emergency situation, the National Society carried out initial disease prevention and control activities such as distribution of oral rehydration sachets (ORS) and chlorine droppers to families in affected areas as well as to patients to treat water at household level. The distribution was complemented with a cholera awareness-raising campaign in coordination with community members and health authorities. In addition, the DRC supported the early detection and referral of patients with ambulance services. The National Society worked alongside governmental authorities to assess and monitor the Rio de Blanco aqueduct, the suspected source of the outbreak. As of 14 December the number of suspected cases had decreased significantly and only 13 patients were still hospitalized indicating the possible containment of the outbreak.

The activities described in this information bulletin and those to be carried out under the DRC's plan of action are funded by the Emergency Appeal for Cholera (MDR49007 – Cholera outbreak: response and preparedness).

## The situation

On 7 December the Public Health Provincial Director of Monseñor Nouel province confirmed a cholera outbreak in Bonao municipality, located some 93 Kilometres from Santo Domingo. On that day, 13 new

cases with symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting and abdominal pain were recorded in Dr. Pedro Emilio de Marchena Hospital in Bonao and figures increased during the following days. Patients were from the communities of Jima, El Abanico, Blanco, La Base, Caño Piedra, Canal Piedra and Seiba which are all dependent on the Río de Blanco aqueduct. Consequently, the contamination of this water supply was considered the main source of the outbreak.

Although precise figures are still unclear, provincial health authorities estimate that some 220 persons have been hospitalized, with one fatality reported. However, as of 14 December, and after intense measures to contain the outbreak, the number of suspected cases had decreased significantly and only 13 patients were still hospitalized.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action



**A new disinfection brigade was trained to support sanitation activities in Bonao municipality. Source: Dominican Red Cross**

As the outbreak was declared, the Dominican Red Cross (DRC) activated their cholera contingency plan, coordination centre, and all branches of Monseñor Nouel province to support the government efforts of containment. To increase the efficiency of the response and reduce the duplication of efforts, the DRC facilitated mechanisms for permanent coordination with municipal and provincial public health authorities. Furthermore, to facilitate the approach to communities and complete awareness campaigns, the National Society met with neighbourhood residents' committees and educators from institutions of the areas at risk.

Two Health National Intervention Team (NIT) members<sup>1</sup>, one recently trained with the support of the Hispaniola cholera operation, were deployed to the area to carry out rapid health assessments and develop a plan of action to contain the outbreak in the area. They worked alongside the DRC's water and sanitation unit which was also deployed to Bonao municipality. Currently, the National Society is working on a plan of action which targets 2,000 families (10,000 persons) in the area.

In response to the emergency situation, the DRC used pre-positioned stock to distribute family kits containing two oral rehydration sachets (ORS), one chlorine dropper, one red waste bag, and educational materials. These kits were distributed to 500 families in the affected communities, and 500 more kits have been dispatched to the area, as rapid health assessments indicated the need for them. In addition, cholera supply kits (containing jars, mugs and chlorine, ORS) were distributed to 90 cholera patients, and 50 more have been pre-positioned in the area.

The DRC also supported the National Institute of Potable Water and Water Systems (Instituto Nacional de Aguas Potables y Alcantarillados - INAPA) in the assessment and monitoring of the Río de Blanco aqueduct, the suspected source of the outbreak. Furthermore, a new disinfection brigade was trained to support the disinfection of households of cholera patients and health facilities to prevent further spread of the disease.

In coordination with community members, the Dominican Red Cross carried out trainings to reach vulnerable populations with preventive health and hygiene promotion messages agreed with health authorities. Their awareness-raising campaign includes door-to-door case finding and information, education and communication activities such as talks and distribution of educational materials covering the topics of water treatment and safe storage, personal hygiene, and excreta and solid waste management.

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<sup>1</sup> Specialized in health in emergencies with emphasis in epidemic control through the Epidemic Control for Volunteers (EVC) toolkit.

The National Society also supported the early detection and referral of patients with cholera to health facilities. Their ambulance service transported 22 dehydrated persons to the Dr. Pedro Emilio de Marchena Hospital.

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## Contact information

### For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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## How we work

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All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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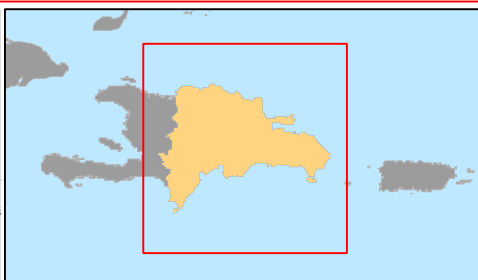
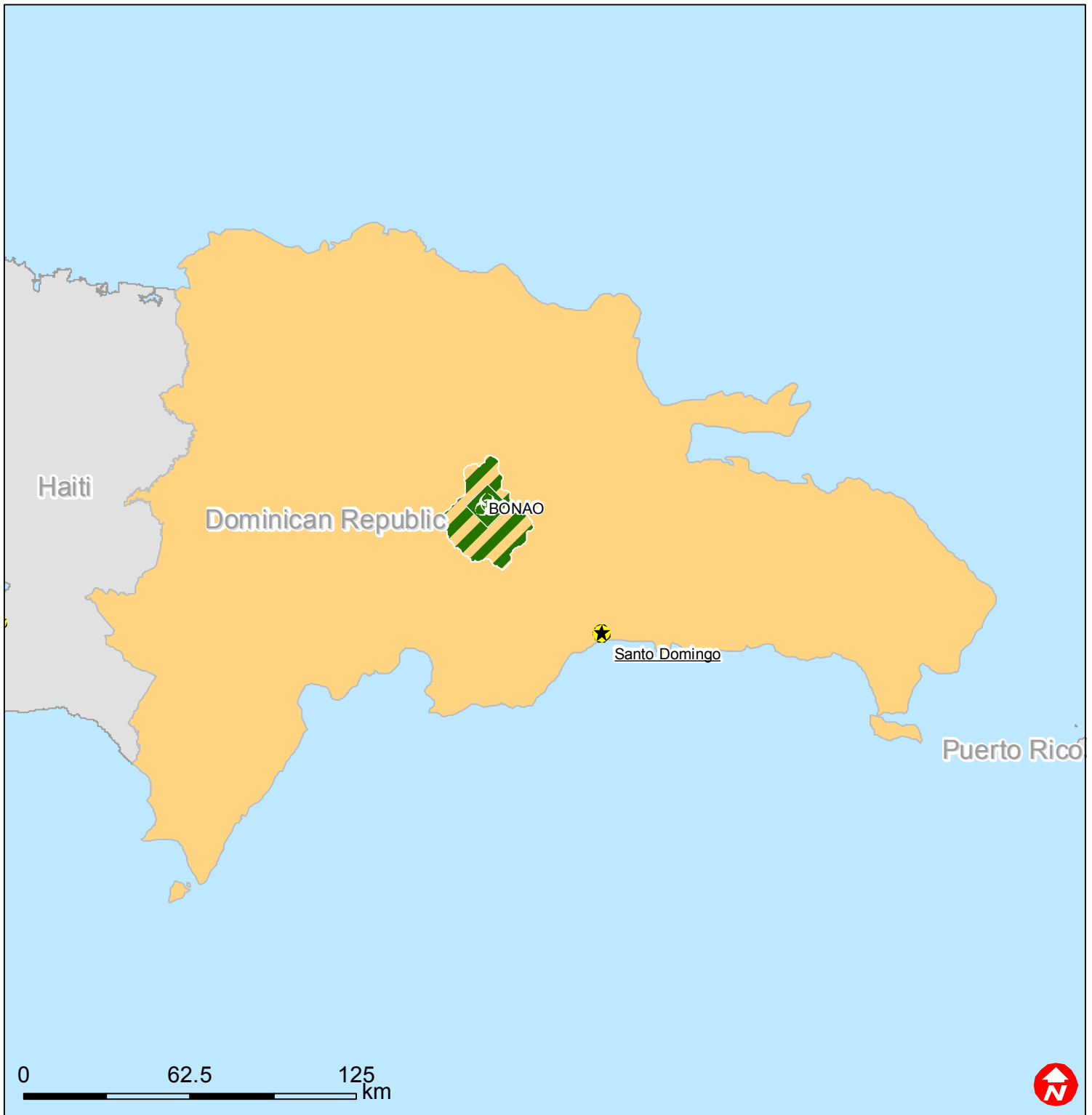


The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.



# Dominican Republic: Cholera outbreak



Cholera outbreak in Bonao



Monsenor Nouel province