

ECUADOR: VOLCANO

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The Disaster

During the last five days the seismic activity of the volcano *Guagua Pinchincha*, located only 14 kilometres from the capital city of Quito, has dramatically increased. The crater has enlarged and explosions are heard. Volcanic ash has fallen in various parts causing the government to declare an orange alert, meaning that a major eruption could occur at any time. 1,500 persons have been evacuated of whom 300 are sheltered in schools in Quito. The evacuees are from the villages of Lloag, Mindo and Nono located at the base of the volcano. Most evacuees have been extremely reluctant to leave their homes.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Ecuadorian Red Cross has sent ambulances, rescue units, first aid workers and paramedics to the areas at most risk. The blood bank is on alert. An extensive information campaign is being carried out to inform the public of the situation, to squash rumours, and to advise the population what to do in case of an eruption. The National Society has recently completed extensive Community Based Disaster Preparedness training and 100 community brigades are on alert. The Red Cross is assisting Civil Defence authorities with the evacuations and in the management of the shelters. Services are being rendered 24 hours a day with 150 volunteers from the Quito branch.

Needs

So far the Ecuadorian Red Cross is able to cope with the situation but in the case of an eruption, outside assistance will be requested. More information will be shared with National Societies should the situation worsen.

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