

FIJI: FLOODS

21 January 1999

Information Bulletin N° 1

The Disaster

Fiji is in the grip of the worst floods since rainfall records began. Floods this week swept through the towns of Nadi, Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba and Lautoka, among others, directly affecting an estimated 20,000 people. According to the Disaster Management Programme, South Pacific Office (DMP-SPO) in Suva, the worst-affected area is the Western Division of the main island of Viti Levu. This is the centre of Fiji's sugar cane industry and there is heavy damage to the sugar cane crop.

The towns of Nadi, Rakiraki, Tavua, Ba, and Lautoka were left without electricity when the Sub stations were submerged by the floodwaters. The supply of potable water is problematic and sewerage is overflowing the catchment ponds and flowing out to sea.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Fiji Red Cross Society, as a member of the National Disaster Committee, is participating fully in Committee activities. The Society has sent a 4x4 ambulance into the field to assist the Branches and has distributed food rations, clothes, water containers and hurricane lanterns. Fiji Red Cross Ba Branch building is being utilised as an evacuation centre for the affected people in the area.

A local newspaper has started an appeal for funds and contributed FJD 50,000 (CHF 36,000) to get it started. Also the British Department for International Development (DFID) has committed funds for purchasing water purification tablets and mattresses. Fiji Red Cross has purchased FJD 10,000 (CHF 7,300) worth of rice, flour and dal. Relief items in the emergency relief containers donated by the Japanese Red Cross Society have been distributed and replenishment costs of CHF 100,000 will be required.

For further information, please contact Kentaro Nagazumi, Desk Officer for the Pacific 41.22.730.42.73 or nagazumi@ifrc.org

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Director
Asia and Pacific Department

This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>