

FRANCE: FLOODS

24 November, 1999

Information Bulletin N° 1

The Disaster

A period of heavy rains in mid-November has caused extremely severe flooding in the Aude, Pyrénées-Orientales, and the Tarn departments of the south of France, resulting in many deaths and injuries, extensive damage to dwellings, commercial enterprises, and other structures, as well as damage to the physical infrastructure such as electricity posts and transportation lines. The operational centre of St. Ouen l'Aumone coordinated the assistance operation, with 250 volunteers and 40 emergency vehicles.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Responding to the emergency in coordination with the prefectural and municipal authorities, the French Red Cross immediately released one million French francs and assigned emergency teams who took the following action:

- provided potable water, warm clothes, and food for the victims;
- provided tracing for those in need;
- opened reception and shelter centres;
- evacuated three retirement homes;
- carried out psychological treatment for trauma cases;

In the post-emergency phase of the operation, the French Red Cross relief teams have initiated a “*Coup de main - coup de coeur*” action which consists of cleaning and rehabilitating the damaged houses and other structures.

Needs

While the French Red Cross have requested local contributions, international assistance is not required.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Martin Faller
Acting Director
Europe Department

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