

**Date of issue: 16 November 2017**

**Date of disaster:  
15 November 2017**

**Point of contact: Agnes Rajacic, Senior DM Officer,  
IFRC Regional Office for Europe**

**Host National Society: Hellenic Red Cross (HRC)**

***This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time.***

## The situation

Press has reported extensively that, on 15 November 2017, flash floods in the western outskirts of the Greek capital, Athens left roads destroyed and blocked by mud and debris, and inundated commercial and residential buildings.

The flooding came after severe weather overnight, with a storm bringing driving rain to the area. The muddy torrents carried away vehicles, tossing them into piles on roadsides and against fences and buildings. Several walls from yards and low buildings collapsed, filling roads with rubble. The industrial towns of Mandra, Nea Peramos and Megara were the worst-affected. Parts of the South Aegean region were also hit badly, including the island of Symi (see *Image 1*).

A section of the highway between Athens and Corinth was completely blocked, with floodwaters inundating an underpass, and trapping cars, trucks and buses. Firefighters using ropes rescued passengers from a bus and from cars trapped on the highway.

Floodwater carrying debris charged toward the coast, sinking fishing boats in a small harbour. Several people are being treated in a hospital for various injuries, including hypothermia.<sup>1</sup>

The current situation in the field has been reported by the authorities to be very severe. According to reports, at least 15 people have died as of 16 November and 21 have been injured, and police have reported 5 people missing.

The Hellenic government has declared a national day for mourning. The government has given specific directions to handle the first phase of needs – including shelter, electricity and water. A government representative also noted that the tragedy could partially be attributed to semi-finished and badly-designed works, and that those responsible would be investigated. The government has so far not requested international assistance.

More hazardous weather was predicted for large swaths of Greece in coming days, with storms predicted for western Greece and for parts of the Greek capital.



**Image 1.** Road and vehicles destroyed by floods in Symi.  
*Photo: Hellenic Red Cross*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ekathimerini.com/223287/article/ekathimerini/news/flood-toll-rises-more-bad-weather-predicted>

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Following continuous coordination with the local municipal and regional authorities of the Attica Region, all HRC **Samaritan Rescue and Lifeguard (SRL) branches of Attica (Athens, Piraeus and Nea Smyrni)** have been placed in immediate operational readiness. All branches are coordinated by the head of the SRL division, and have, until the time of writing, assembled a force of **20 volunteers**, which is currently operating in the field. An **additional 20 volunteers are on their way** to the field to reinforce the existing team.

The **HRC Rescue Team** has already assumed its operational status, operating in continuous 8-hour shifts for the next days and nights, until the situation is normalised. There are two vehicles operating in the field (one for rescue and one for personnel transport). HRC volunteers – with patrols every 30 minutes – are engaged in **water drainage, rescue operations, water distribution, towing of cars, provision of first aid, and technical and material support** to other teams.



**Image 2.** Red Cross rescue team in action after flash floods.  
Photo: Hellenic Red Cross

The focal location currently is the municipality of Mandra. Another team is on stand-by in case there is an operational need at the site of the shelters in Nea Makri. The teams are equipped with rescue and first aid equipment and special machinery including power generators and water pumps. A local radio communications network has been established to assist all operational communications.

The SRL division, in direct communication with the President of the HRC, is closely monitoring the situation, both in the worst-affected areas and nationwide, and teams are ready to act immediately wherever needed.

IFRC Greece communications coordinator has been deployed to affected area to gather content and provide support to National Society communications team. Social media content has been produced in conjunction with Athens, Budapest and Geneva.

---

## Contact information

**For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:**

**In HRC:**

- Marina Stamati, Head of Samaritans, Rescuers and Lifeguards Division  
phone: +30 210 5248132; email: [secretariat@samarites.gr](mailto:secretariat@samarites.gr)

**In IFRC:**

- Ruben Cano, Head of IFRC Country Office, Greece; [ruben.cano@ifrc.org](mailto:ruben.cano@ifrc.org)
- Niklas Saxen, Programme Coordinator, IFRC Country Office, Greece  
phone: +30 210 5248132; [niklas.saxen@ifrc.org](mailto:niklas.saxen@ifrc.org)
- Agnes Rajacic, Senior DM Officer, IFRC Regional Office for Europe  
phone: +36 1 888 45 37; email: [agnes.rajacic@ifrc.org](mailto:agnes.rajacic@ifrc.org)
- Nichola Jones, Communications Coordinator, IFRC Regional Office for Europe  
phone: +36 1 888 45 38; email: [nicholalyndsay.jones@ifrc.org](mailto:nicholalyndsay.jones@ifrc.org)

↘ Click [here](#) to return to the title page

## How we work

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 Humanitarian 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.

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



**Save lives.**  
protect livelihoods,  
and strengthen recovery  
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**  
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**  
and a culture of  
**non-violence and peace.**