

BOLIVIA: FLOODS

*14 February,
2001*

appeal no. 05/2001

situation report no. 2

period covered: 8 - 13 February, 2001

With the rains continuing and based on ongoing assessments, recent estimates indicate the number of severely affected people has increased to at least 85,240. CHF 150,000 allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) has enabled the Bolivian Red Cross to start the relief operation. The National Meteorological Service has forecast continued intensive rains over February, and cold fronts in the "altiplano" (high plain) region will directly affect agricultural crops. Damage and needs analysis assessments continue to be carried out by the Bolivian Red Cross's departmental branches.

The context

Exceptionally heavy rains have been falling continually throughout Bolivia since December 2000 causing floods and landslides. The rainy season usually begins in mid-January and continues until March. The latest figures indicates that more than 100,000 people have been affected throughout the country, most of them severely. Based on initial the initial damage and needs analysis assessments carried out by the Bolivian Red Cross, assisted by the Federation's regional disaster preparedness and relief delegate based in La Paz, an appeal for CHF 1,503,575 was launched on 1 February to support the national society's efforts to assist 36,200 persons (7,240 families).

Latest events

Further assessments and the continuation of the heavy rains have raised the total number of severely affected families from 7,240 on 1 February to 17,048 on 9 February. This means that the total number of most affected people is estimated at 85,240 instead of 32,600.

The Bolivia’s national authorities, in particular the Civil Defense, recently held an information meeting with operational agencies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both the Bolivian Red Cross and the International Federation Delegate participated. One of the main concerns specified by the government is to take measures against the possible outbreak of epidemiological diseases as dengue, cholera and malaria.

Needs assessments carried out by a group of national and international aid agencies, namely the Ministry of Health, the National Civil Defense Service, the Bolivian Red Cross, the International Federation, the World Food Programme, the Panamerican Health Organization (PAHO), USAID; CARE and Doctors without Borders yielded the following figures of affected families in the nine departments of the country:

Department	Province	Municipality	Families	Affected by
La Paz	Larecaja	Guanay, Tipuany	1,130	Floods
La Paz	Loayza	Luribay, Sapahaqui	327	Floods and “mazamoras” *
La Paz	Ingavi	Viacha, Guaqui, Desaguadero, San Andres de Machaca	2,518	Floods
La Paz	Aroma	Patacamaya, Umala	393	Floods
La Paz	Los Andes	Pucarani y Laja	737	Floods
La Paz	N. Yungas	Coroico, Coripata	141	Landslides
La Paz	S. Yungas	Cairoma, Yanacachi	121	Landslides
La Paz	Murillo	La Paz, El Alto, Mecapaca, Palca	287	Floods, landslides
Beni	Ballivian e Iturralde	Rurenabaque, Reyes, San Buenaventura	937	Floods
Cochabamba	Capinota	Capinota	40	Floods
	Quillacollo	Vinto, Colcapirhua	795	Floods
	Jordan	Cliza	333	Floods
	Punata	Punata	328	Floods
	Mizque	Mizque, Alalay, Vila Vila	800	Floods
	Chapare		675	Floods
Oruro	Cercado & rural area	Oruro	392	Floods
Tarija	Méndez		27	Flooding and hail
Santa Cruz	Ñ. De Chávez		393	Floods
Pando	Manupiri		923	Floods
Potosí			4,041	Floods
Chuquisaca			1,710	Floods
TOTAL	0		17,048**	

* A “mazamorra” is a combination of mud, stones and water which carved a path of destruction through the eroded hills.

** Or 85,240 people.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Bolivian Red Cross (BRC) •

Despite the limited resources available, all nine BRC departmental branches have been involved in assisting the affected people through local campaigns. It is estimated that approximately 100 volunteers are involved in the relief efforts around the country.

In Viacha (department of La Paz), those people who were housed in four temporary shelters (schools and churches) have been moved to camps. Volunteers from the La Paz branch are now helping them in the management of the new shelters. Four commissions have been set up: health, water sanitation, food supplies and cleaning. Although the branch does not have financial resources, the volunteers are assisting the affected people by providing instruction on the importance and use of clean water, maintaining contact with the Civil Defense and local authorities, and assisting in maintaining a clean camp environment.

International Federation •

Relief distributions: With the funds available from the Federation's DREF, the procurement of relief supplies has been carried out and the first distributions are due to take place in Luribay and Oruro this week (12-16 February).

Logistics: nine companies responded to the Bolivian Red Cross tender for food procurement, and one thousand plastic bags marked with the Red Cross and Red Crescent logo have already been purchased.

Delegation: A relief delegate from the Ecuadorian Red Cross joined the International Federation team on February 5 for a 3-month mission which will focus on supporting the BRC during the relief operation. The Buenos Aires Regional Delegation (BARD) is providing general support to the delegates in the field.

Outstanding needs

Funds are urgently needed to cover the rest of the appeal launched by the Federation.

External Relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The Ministry of Health, in coordination with the WHO/PAHO, has developed an emergency health plan which will provide drinking water, epidemiological control medicines, educational material and transportation cost. Coordination meetings between aid agencies continue, and the Federation and the Bolivian Red Cross attend and participate actively in all fora.

Interviews from national and international media were carried out during the entire week. Also, CNN TV channel (Spanish version) carried out a live interview with the Federation relief and disaster preparedness delegate, and BBC (Spanish web page) published an article on February 6 and 7. In addition, most of the national TV stations and main newspapers have extensively covered the work done by the Bolivian Red Cross and the Federation. A journalist from the Bolivian Times traveled with a Red Cross and Federation team to Huanay, one of the most affected areas in the La Paz Department.

Contributions

Indications of in-kind support in the form of food, clothes, blankets and tools have been received from the Mexico, Danish, Spanish, and Uruguay Red Cross. USAID/BHR/OFDA have also indicated the potential for a USD 25,000 donation, pending discussions to take place in Bolivia.

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