

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

ALGERIA: STORMS & FLOODS

20 November 2001

Appeal No. 35/01

Launched on 12 November 2001 for CHF 2,034,000 for up to three months.

DREF Allocated: CHF 100,000

Beneficiaries: 6,000 families

Operations Update No. 2 Period covered: 15 -20 November (

"At a Glance"

Appeal coverage: 61.6%

Related Appeals: Middle East North Africa regional programmes 01.64/01

Outstanding needs: CHF 782,000

The Disaster/Situation: The Algerian Red Crescent Society, with the support of the Federation, continues to meet the urgent needs of thousands of Algerians in the wake of the floods and mudslides that affected several areas on 10 November. Provision of medicines in several districts is ongoing. Efforts are currently underway to strengthen the logistics chain so that vital supplies are distributed more effectively.

Operational Developments:

After several months of drought, torrential rain and strong winds of up to 211kph caused huge mudslides and floods on Saturday 10 November in the capital Algiers and other villages, particularly in the coastal zones. The effects are still being felt. The Algerian Red Crescent Society (ARCS) was at the forefront of essential relief operations in areas where assistance was most needed.

The death toll has been estimated at 729 and thousands have been injured. The number of homeless is about 30,000. ARCS set up relief centres at sites sheltering homeless families and distribution of food supplies and materials is occurring at these places.

The government has released 5 million dinars (CHF 23,000) to the relief operation and each member of the government has contributed 20,000 dinar to a special fund for food.

The government has put in place an emergency camp and the ARCS has been mandated as the coordinator of humanitarian aid.

Several health institutions and dispensaries have been damaged by mudslides and floods. ARCS volunteers report that vulnerable people are receiving good treatment in temporary structures as well as permanent ones.

Red Cross Red Crescent action w

About 1,000 ARCS volunteers were mobilised in the aftermath of the disaster and have been at the forefront of relief efforts since. Of these, 120 volunteers, trained in first aid, provided some of the most urgent assistance.

After the storm and floods, the ARCS launched a national appeal on November 11 and then requested the Federation to help in the launch of an international appeal the day after. In response to this appeal, the OPEC Fund for International Development donated USD 400,000 (CHF 664,000) and ECHO has given EUR 400,000 (CHF 588,000). Many governments and National Societies also responded with in-kind donations.

The ARCS has been active in several districts, both in capital Algiers and in rural areas. Thousands of people have been assisted. The immediate focus was to provide first aid, food and shelter. ARCS assistance posts remain at the centre of this programme and they are still supplying many essentials, including hot meals, infant milk, water, blankets, clothes, cooking utensils and medicine.

The ARCS has also linked up with the Ministry of Health to provide medical help via a fixed and mobile units. The mobile units are visiting several communes but are being constrained by a lack of transport and traffic problems. Transport is one of the issues that needs to be addressed urgently.

ARCS medical teams, however, are still treating people in need and distributing free medicine. If necessary, patients are being referred to hospitals for further treatment. ARCS assistance posts are staffed at night so that people can receive urgent attention. The ARCS is also helping to ensure that patients having treatment for chronic conditions before the disaster are still receiving their regular medicine. The ARCS is currently evaluating its stocks of drugs and equipment and will provide a full list of needs soon. Early indications are that there is a growing shortage of first aid kits, disinfectant and dressing material.

Two pharmacists have volunteered their services to the ARCS and are beginning to improve the stocking and supply of medicines by establishing a logging system of various drugs and supplies received.

Many thousands of people have suffered post-traumatic stress and the ARCS is supporting a team of psychologists to assist those most traumatised by the disaster.

In rural areas, 13 provinces have been affected and the ARCS plans to provide one basic medical kit, part of the World Health Organisation new emergency health kit, to each branch to enable them to mobilise teams to help the affected population. Discussions continue with the Ministry of Health how best to provide longer-term health care and repair damaged health institutions.

The international response to the disaster has been impressive. The German, Swiss, French, Belgian and Iranian National Societies have sent a total of 900 tents, 23,100 blankets, 900 pieces of shelter material, 1,250 camp beds, 3,500 cooking sets, and 578,000 water purification tablets. In addition, the Iranian Red Crescent has donated 1.5 tonnes of medical assistance.

Despite communications problems, transport hitches and exhaustion among ARCS volunteers, the National Society has maintained its assistance to vulnerable people. The original operation sought to assist 6,000 families but ARCS volunteers are being approached by communities for help from many more.

The ARCS, with Federation support, is currently establishing a logistics chain. A logistics emergency response unit (ERU) will be helping the National Society on this.

During the second stage of the operation, ARCS and the Federation field assessment coordination team (FACT) will be looking at the rehabilitation and future disaster preparedness needs.

The attached annex of donations shows hard pledges only.

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All International Federation Assistance Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

In line with the Minimum Reporting Standards, the first operations update on this appeal will be issued within 30-days of the launch and the second will be issued over the course of the operation; a final narrative and financial report will be issued no later than 90 days after the end of the operation.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support and these programmes are outlined on the Federation website.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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