

# 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

## HAITI: FLOODS

24 September 2004

*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.*

### In Brief

**Preliminary Appeal No. 22/04; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 22 – 24 September 2004 Year; Appeal coverage: 1.1%;** ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

#### Appeal history:

- Preliminary Appeal launched on 22 September 2004 for CHF 4,246,000 (USD 3,376,771 or EUR 2,746,024) for 6 months to assist 40,000 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 150,000

**Outstanding needs : CHF 4,199,100**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Haiti: Social Unrest (Appeal 07/2004; Dominican Republic & Haiti: Floods (Appeal 13/2004, Caribbean Annual Appeal (Appeal 01.52/2004), Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) Annual Appeal (Appeal 01.51/2004)**

**Operational Summary:** The situation in northwest Haiti and, in particular in the town of Gonaïves, is dramatic. It is estimated that 250,000 people are without shelter in the region, following torrential rains caused by the passage of Hurricane Jeanne between 17 and 19 September. Around 1,000 people are confirmed dead and as many as 1,250 are still missing and feared dead. Many parts of the city of Gonaïves remain inaccessible given the depth of the flood waters. Food and water are urgently needed and there are major risks of epidemics given the stagnant, contaminated waters. The Haitian National Red Cross Society (HNRCS) has been active from the outset of the disaster and the local branch in Gonaïves raised the alert, requesting support from the Saint Marc branch. Red Cross volunteers, although themselves affected, are on the spot, helping to ensure that the injured reach health centres and assisting in the distribution of food, water and relief items. They have also been involved in the recovery and burial of bodies. The Federation has supplied a small quantity of relief goods stocked in Port-au-Prince to the National Society and these have been transported and distributed in Gonaïves. The National Society has dispatched 32 tons of rice, 10 tons of beans and 6 tons of cooking oil which have now reached the town for distribution. In addition, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has sent in a cargo plane carrying blankets, hygiene kits, kitchen kits and plastic sheeting. The Federation has deployed a Field Coordination and Assessment (FACT) team, together with a water distribution and trucking emergency response unit (ERU) and a logistics ERU. The Belgian, Canadian, French, Spanish and Swiss and Red Cross Societies are also sending in planes of relief supplies to support the emergency operation. Coordination is taking place at the level of the Federation headquarters, in Port-au-Prince and on the spot in Gonaïves, where many agencies are working. In Gonaïves, given the atmosphere of tension, agencies are cooperating closely to promote secure distributions of aid and to ensure that the most vulnerable are reached.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Haïti: Haitian National Red Cross Society, Dr. Michaële Amédée Gédéon, President, Port-au-Prince; email [croro@haitiworld.com](mailto:croro@haitiworld.com), phone (509) 510-9813, fax (509) 223-1054
- In Haiti: Hans Havik, Federation Representative, Haiti Country Office, Port-au-Prince; email [ifrcht03@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcht03@ifrc.org), phone (509) 513-5067, fax (509) 221-8633
- In Panama: Gilberto Guevara, Head of Regional Delegation, Panama; email [ifrcpa51@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcpa51@ifrc.org), phone (507) 317-1300, fax (507) 317-1304
- In Panama: Nelson Castaño, Head of Pan American Disaster Response Unit, Panama; email [ifrcpa07@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcpa07@ifrc.org), phone (507) 316-1001, fax (507) 316-1082
- In Geneva: Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, Geneva; email [luis.luna@ifrc.org](mailto:luis.luna@ifrc.org), phone (41 22) 730-4274, fax (41 22) 733-0395
- In Geneva: Eva Calvo, Strategic Communications, e-mail; [eva.calvo@ifrc.org](mailto:eva.calvo@ifrc.org), phone (41 22) 730 4357; fax (41 22) 733 0395

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## Background

Tropical storm Jeanne hit Haiti between 17 and 19 September with torrential rains causing severe flooding and landslides in the north of the country. The most affected departments include l'Artibonite, Plateau Central, Sud and the Nord-Ouest. The town of Gonaïves, with a population of around 200,000 people, and its surrounding area has been hardest hit. The town is surrounded by mountains with an opening towards the sea; however, all the natural channels for rain water to run off are blocked given the concentration of housing. In addition, drainage systems were cluttered with garbage, which resulted in the backing-up of flood waters. As of Saturday evening, 18 September, flood waters in the town had reached a depth of 2 metres. People began to climb on top of roofs to escape the rising waters which increased to a level of 5 metres in some parts of the city as rain continued to fall until Sunday. Both electricity and communications were cut off. On Sunday, people began to take shelter in churches and administrative buildings. However, it was not until Monday, 20 September that the UN peacekeeping mission, MINUSTAH, was able to clear a route through the flood waters for aid supplies to be brought into the town.

Today, 24 September, only some 30 per cent of roads are accessible, complicating access for aid to be brought in to the town. 95 per cent of Gonaïves has been affected and only houses on the side of the hills have been spared. In the small town of Gros Morne, it is reported that 1,500 people have been affected by the floods and some 100 houses have been totally destroyed. The death toll has risen to over 1,000 in Gonaïves alone and the number of missing and feared dead has been placed at around 1,250. Burials are taking place in mass graves and few of the bodies have been identified. Relief workers are attempting to deliver aid in conditions complicated by the mud and high flood waters, and there is growing tension since many survivors have been without food and water since the weekend. UN peacekeepers strengthened security on 23 September, given fears of looting as initial relief supplies reach the city in an atmosphere of increasing despair on the part of the population. There are major concerns that there may be outbreaks of epidemics given that people have no access to clean drinking water, and latrines and sewers have been flooded. The two main hospitals in the town and over 90 per cent of private clinics were destroyed by the disaster. However, local medical services have set up a treatment centre in the premises of the Town Hall and Médecins du Monde have opened a centre in the Ebenezer hospital, in the southern part of the town. In addition, Médecins sans Frontières has set up a health centre in Raboteau in the premises of the Ministry of Education. There is an urgent need for health care as many people were injured during the flooding and their wounds are now becoming infected. It is estimated that around 250,000 people in the region, including the town of Port-au-Paix, also badly hit, are now without shelter as a result of the devastating floods, having lost their homes, belongings, livelihoods and loved ones.

## Operational developments

A FACT team arrived in Haiti on Thursday morning, 23 September, made up of a team leader and a relief delegate, who joined a water and sanitation delegate, a relief coordinator and an information and reporting

delegate already on the ground. The Federation Secretariat has deployed a water distribution and trucking ERU with a five member team. This will reach the area tomorrow, 25 September. The unit will ensure distribution of water and work in hygiene promotion activities. In addition, a logistics ERU is on the way to Haiti and is due to reach the country today, 24 September. The unit will receive all incoming relief flights, determine transportation, customs clearance and ensure tracking of goods.

Haitian National Red Cross Society volunteers from the Gonaïves area have been on the spot since the onset of the disaster and are assisting as best they can, although they themselves have been affected by the floods. As of Sunday, 19 September, volunteers helped to ensure that people took shelter in safe places and transported the injured to treatment centres. Red Cross volunteers, in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), have recovered over 100 bodies and have taken them to the morgue. The HNRCS has now issued a radio announcement, encouraging people to collect body bags and to bury bodies as soon as they can. On Wednesday evening, 22 September, 150 bodies at the morgue were buried with the assistance of Red Cross volunteers, the ICRC and the Gonaïves Town Hall.



Flood waters rose to 5 metres in some parts of Gonaïves, where more than 1,000 people were killed. The affected population is in urgent need of food, water and shelters.

*Photo courtesy of Reuters*

An estimated 40,000 people are in urgent need of both food and water in Gonaïves. Since Monday, 20 September, the Saint Marc branch of the Haitian National Red Cross Society has been sending two tankers per day to Gonaïves to help alleviate the vital need for clean drinking water. Repair of damaged water systems and pipes in the town could take ten days or more. Given that stoves and household items were swept away in the floods, people require cooked food. The World Food Programme (WFP) has shipped around 80 tons of food to Gonaïves, and is also sending in 4,500 loaves of bread each day. On Monday, the WFP began distributing food in centres where flood victims are taking shelter. Three distribution points have been set up in Gonaïves: L'autre Bord Canal, Parc Vincent and Raboteau. These, as well as a warehouse managed by CARE, have been secured by the UN peacekeeping force, MINUSTAH. All agencies, including the Haitian National Red Cross Society, are pooling their resources at this warehouse. The HNRCS has set up a first aid post at the Hôpital de la Providence, previously renovated by the ICRC; to date, 150 people have been treated there.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact**

### **Emergency relief (food and non-food)**

**Objective: 40,000 beneficiaries (8,000 families) will have benefited from the provision of food rations including drinking water through secure distribution centres and will have been assisted with non-food relief items including kitchen sets and blankets.**

### **Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)**

The HNRCS sent trucks of food relief from Port-au-Prince which reached Gonaïves yesterday, 23 September. The consignment consisted of: 32 tons of rice, 10 tons of beans, 6 tons of cooking oil and 1 ton of bottled water. These goods were transported to the CARE warehouse and will be distributed by Red Cross volunteers with the assistance of staff from other agencies. Relief items have been sent to Gonaïves from the Federation's warehouse

in Port-au-Prince in coordination with the Haitian National Red Cross Society and the French Red Cross, including 657 hygiene kits, 5 rolls of plastic sheeting and 200 boxes of aqua tabs. Since Monday, 20 September, the Saint Marc branch of the Haitian National Red Cross Society has been sending two tankers per day to Gonaïves to help alleviate the vital need for clean drinking water.

Emergency relief items were sent by PADRU on a plane that arrived on Wednesday, 22 September. The consignment consisted of the following relief items: 5,000 blankets, 1,100 hygiene kits, 495 pieces of plastic sheeting and 900 kitchen sets. The Canadian Red Cross has also sent in a plane with some 20 tons of blankets, plastic sheeting and high energy biscuits. These two flights have reached Port-au-Prince and have been unloaded at the HNRCS warehouse.

The French and Spanish Red Cross Societies are sending planes carrying relief items to support the relief effort. The Spanish Red Cross is supplying a water unit that provides water for 50,000 people together with 500 hygiene kits, 200 jerry cans and 1,000 high energy biscuits. The Swiss Red Cross is supplying 1,000 kitchen sets, 3,500 blankets and 512,000 water purification tablets, which will be transported with the goods supplied by the French Red Cross. In addition, the Belgian Red Cross will send a plane of relief supplies on Monday, 27 September. The Mexican Red Cross has been in contact with PADRU and is ready to supply food parcels through its agreements with large food suppliers in Mexico.

**Impact:**

The population of Gonaïves and the surrounding areas is in urgent need of food and water. The HNRCS consignment of rice, beans, cooking oil and bottled water, together with the provision of water from the two Red Cross tankers dispatched daily from Saint Marc are helping to alleviate the suffering. However, much more aid is required.

**Constraints:**

Transportation of relief goods to the Gonaïves area is complicated by difficult conditions. Just outside Gonaïves, there is a large expanse of flood waters and a number of trucks have slipped off the road. The tense atmosphere in Gonaïves and the lack of security is delaying the distribution of relief items which can only take place from distribution points secured by UN peacekeepers.

**Shelter**

**Objective: 40,000 beneficiaries (8,000 families) will have been assisted through the setting up of communal temporary shelters and the distribution of plastic sheeting and tarpaulins.**

Initial distributions of plastic sheeting and tarpaulins from stocks held at the HNRCS warehouse in Port-au-Prince have taken place. However, given that thousands of people have lost their homes and many people have nowhere to sleep, there is an urgent need for shelter materials.

**Constraints:**

There are overwhelming needs for shelter and many areas have yet to be assessed. For example, evaluations have not yet taken place in the town of Port-de-Paix.

**Water and Sanitation**

**Objective: 40,000 beneficiaries (8,000 families) will have benefited from the provision of hygiene articles and will have an enhanced understanding of basic sanitation.**

Initial distributions of hygiene kits have taken place. The water and sanitation and health delegates on the ground in Gonaïves have put forward a proposal for the site of the water treatment facility, to be set up immediately once the water distribution ERU reaches the area; in addition, the Spanish Red Cross has shipped a water treatment plant to Haiti.

**Constraints:**

Potable water is a major concern; the population of Gonaïves is currently obliged to drink from contaminated water sources since water supply systems have been damaged. There are risks of outbreaks of epidemics and many people are in need of medical attention.

**Strengthening of capacities**

**Objective: The Gonaïves branch of the Haitian National Red Cross Society will have been reinforced and will be better prepared in the event of future disasters.**

Activities towards this objective will be carried out once the emergency phase of the operation has been finalized.

**Federation Coordination**

The Federation is working in close cooperation with the ICRC and with external partners in Haiti. In Gonaïves, all agencies are working closely to ensure maximum efficiency and to avoid duplication of efforts. All incoming relief goods are being housed in the warehouse managed by CARE. In the area of health, the HNRCS is working closely with Médecins du Monde and Médecins sans Frontières. All water and sanitation initiatives undertaken on the part of the Federation/HNRCS will take place in coordination with OXFAM.

**Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives**

- Relief activities being carried out are based on the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the vulnerability of those affected.
- Relief operations are being conducted with respect for the culture of the beneficiaries, ensuring gender sensitivity and prioritizing assistance to children and the elderly.
- Activities are based on the SPHERE Project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response.
- Transparency is being ensured through the production of regular reports and news bulletins.
- All objectives put forward in the appeal are in line with Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement.

**Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

The provision of information influencing public opinion regarding the Red Cross is a key activity. From this point of view, relations with the media are particularly important in order to convey the message of the Red Cross Movement. A reporting and information delegate is in Haiti. A number of media interviews have been given by both the delegate and the Federation representative in Haiti. News articles concerning the disaster have been placed on the Federation's web site and a press release was issued yesterday, 23 September concerning the launch of the Federation's Emergency Appeal.

**[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)**

# Haiti - Floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 22/2004

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

24/09/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

						TOTAL COVERAGE
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				4,246,000		1.1%
CANADIAN - RC		50,000	CAD	46,900	20.09.04	ASSESSMENT MISSION
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				46,900	CHF	1.1%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	