

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

EL SALVADOR: FLOODS AND VOLCANIC ACTIVITY

15 December 2005

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

Appeal No. 05EA020; Operations Update no. 01; Period covered: 25 October to 14 December 2005; Appeal coverage: 48.3 %; ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

Appeal history:

- Launched on 6 October 2005 for CHF 487,000 (USD 379,798 OR EUR 315,055) for 4 months to assist 21,000 beneficiaries (4,200 families).
- Revised Appeal launched on 24 October 2005 for CHF 1,288,347 (USD 1,000,432 or EUR 835,891) to assist 21,000 beneficiaries (4,200 families) for 6 months.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 149,400 (USD 114,820 OR EUR 96,262)

Outstanding needs: CHF 666,292 (USD 520,982 or EUR 432,895)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Central America, Mexico and Haiti: Floods from Hurricane Stan Appeal 05EA021; Central America: Annual Appeal (Appeal 05AA043); Pan American Disaster Response Unit: Annual Appeal (Appeal 05AA040)

Operational Summary:

Immediately following the emergencies, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC) began distributing relief items in the municipalities of El Congo, Santa Ana, Sonsonate, Izalco, Armenia, Nahuizalco, and Juayua. In total, 1,412 families were reached in the initial days of the disasters with food kits, hygiene kits, kitchen kits, blankets and drinking water. Families also received psychosocial support. The Federation and the SRC launched an emergency appeal on 6 October, which was revised on 24 October to reflect the increased needs of the population. To date, the SRC has assisted 8,555 vulnerable families affected by the floods and volcanic activity through the distribution of food and non-food items, including hygiene kits, kitchen sets, blankets, buckets, plastic sheeting and mattresses, with contributions provided by the Federation, the Spanish Red Cross with ECHO funding, the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation, the Swiss Red Cross and other national donors. Distributions of relief goods funded by the German Red Cross are scheduled to begin shortly. Following the recent receipt of additional funding in response to the Federation's Appeal, the SRC is now completing plans to begin a number of activities under the rehabilitation component of the Appeal, which forms part of the overall country plan of the National Society. The additional funding will go towards the rehabilitation of water systems, the provision of family educational kits, the improvement of radio communications and the distribution of volunteer kits consisting of disaster operations equipment. Despite these recent funding contributions, the Appeal coverage stands at only 48.3 percent and additional funding is required in order to implement the Appeal objectives in their entirety. As a result of the current funding levels and the slow response to the Appeal, the timeframe of the operation will be extended for an additional month until 6 May 2006.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *In El Salvador: Miguel Vega, National Director/Relief, Salvadorean Red Cross Society; email*

miguel.vega@cruzrojasal.org.sv, phone (503) 219-2200, fax(503) 222-7758

- *In Panama, Alexandre Claudon, Acting, Head, Pan American Disaster Response Unit; email alexandre.claudon@ifrc.org, phone (507) 316-1001, fax (507) 316-1082*
- *In Panama, Roy Venegas, Disaster Preparedness Delegate, Panama Regional Delegation, e-mail: roy.venegas@ifrc.org phone (507) 317 13 00; fax (507) 317 13 04.*
- *In Geneva: Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, Geneva; email luis.luna@ifrc.org, phone (4122) 730-4274, fax (41 22) 733-0392*

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>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal

The situation

In October, El Salvador was struck by two natural disasters causing much suffering, hardship and, in many cases, separating individuals from their families. Firstly, the Ilamatepec volcano began hurling out hot lava rocks on 1 October, killing at least two people and forcing more than 2,000 to flee. Secondly, the country experienced heavy rains, flooding and landslides as a result of the passage of Hurricane Stan through the region in early October. Rains brought on by Hurricane Stan killed at least 69 people in 11 departments of El Salvador; 26 in La Libertad, 22 in San Salvador, 5 in La Paz, 4 in Usulután, 3 in Sonsonate, 2 in Cuscatlán, 2 in San Vicente, 2 in Santa Ana, 1 in Ahuachapán, 1 in La Unión and 1 in Morazán.

The Ilamatepec volcano, also known as Santa Ana, located 66 kilometres (41 miles) west of the capital, began rumbling and emitting thick plumes of smoke that reached more than 10 kilometres (nine miles) into the sky just after 8:30 a.m. (1430 GMT) on Saturday, 1 October. Military emergency sirens blasted, calling for an immediate area evacuation of the nearby towns and soon after the volcano began hurling glowing lava and ash from its crater. The volcano began to expel magma on the side of the town of San Blas, while the ash was carried by a south-south-westerly wind. Hot lava rocks expelled by the volcano ranged from the size of a football to the size of a car. Layers of ash up to five millimetres thick spread over the canton of Los Naranjos, to the west of the volcano. The



The Ilamatepec volcano began rumbling and emitting thick plumes of smoke that reached more than 10 kilometres into the sky on Saturday, 1 October.

municipalities of Nahuizalco and Juayúa in the department of Sonsonate and La Hachadura in the department of Ahuachapán were also affected. The National Emergency Committee (COEN) declared a red alert in the area within 4,000 metres of the volcano, and a yellow alert in other nearby areas. Some 20,000 people live in the area surrounding the volcano.

Officials with the National Emergency Committee said that by 1 p.m. Saturday 1 October 2,250 people had been evacuated from the danger zone and at least seven people were injured by red hot lava rocks spewed into the air by the eruption, according to the national police. Two people were killed when 200 residents were evacuated from the town of Palo Campana, located just two kilometres from the crater. Residents fled aboard trucks when a flood of boiling water from an underground lake rushed down from the crater from three directions. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture estimates that some 7,000 km² of the country's coffee crops have been covered in ash and have likely been destroyed.

In addition to the activity in the Ilamatepec Volcano, localized tremors were detected in the Chaparrastique Volcano, in the department of San Miguel, according to the National Service of Territorial Studies (SNET). The

Chaparrastique Volcano, also known as the San Miguel Volcano, has been one of the most active volcanoes in El Salvador in recent years.

El Salvador was also seriously affected on 4 October by heavy rains when Hurricane Stan, at that time a category one hurricane, passed over the Gulf of Mexico, near the Yucatan Peninsula. Hurricane Stan, the 18th named storm of an extremely busy Atlantic hurricane season, first formed as a tropical depression off the east coast of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula. It quickly strengthened to a tropical storm as it moved across the peninsula, bringing heavy rains to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and southern Mexico. The storm continued to build strength once it was again over the waters of the Gulf of Mexico and became a category one hurricane just before coming ashore in the Mexican state of Veracruz. Rains brought by Stan were particularly heavy on the Pacific coast of Central America.

The rains from Hurricane Stan were compounded by a particularly heavy rainy season in El Salvador; according to SNET, the country received 500 percent more rain during September than the historical average for that month. In addition, in May the country experienced heavy rains due to the passage of the first hurricane of the hurricane season in the eastern north Pacific. COEN declared a red alert as the intense rains caused severe flooding in many areas of the country. The National Legislative Assembly also declared a State of Public Calamity and National Disaster, effective 4 October 2005.

The heavy rains caused several of the country's rivers and lakes to overflow, causing flooding in the following 12 departments:

| Department | Rivers |
|-----------------------|---|
| Ahuachapán | Paz, Carasucia, El Rosario, Los Zanjones El Chino and Aguacate, Sacramento |
| La Libertad | Sucio, Perla, Majahual, Colón, Cosamagua, Chilama, Huiza, Tihuapa and Sunzal |
| La Paz | Comalapa, comapa, Jiboa, Afluentes Tilapa y Sepaquiapa, Jalponga, Amayo, Sapuyo, Guayabo con sus afluentes San Antonio and Aguacate |
| La Unión | Sirama, Goascorán, Pasaquina and Santa Rosa |
| Morazán | San Francisco, San Carlos and Corola |
| San Salvador | Guazapa, Las Cañas, Acelhuate and its tributaries in the metropolitan area of San Salvador |
| San Vicente | Lempa |
| Sonsonate | Suncita, San Pedro, Sensunapán, Ceniza, Apancoyo and Ayacachapa |
| Usulután y San Miguel | Grande de San Miguel and smaller tributaries |
| Department | Lakes |
| Santa Ana | Lago Coatepeque and Lago de Guija |
| San Miguel | Laguna de Olomeda |
| San Salvador | Lago de Ilopango |

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society, in coordination with other relief agencies, evacuated thousands of people affected by the flooding and volcanic activity and transported them to shelters that were set up in the affected areas. At the height of the emergency, 69,603 people were accommodated in 653 shelters in 14 departments.

Operational developments

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society is working in the framework of a two year "Country Plan" which the National Society drew up in order to address the needs resulting from the volcanic activity and floods emergencies. The rehabilitation component of the Revised Appeal is taken from the overall country plan which includes numerous medium to long-term objectives and activities. Should you be interested in receiving the El Salvador country plan for volcanic activity and floods in the wake of Hurricane Stan, please contact the National Society.

More than two months after the floods and volcanic activity struck the country, the majority of the people who were forced to evacuate have been able to leave the shelters and return home. However, it is worrying that many families who live near the foot of the volcano have also decided to return to their homes, despite warnings of the

possibility of additional volcanic activity. This is a concern for the SRC because another volcanic eruption would require that that SRC would need to undertake additional evacuations. At present, there are still 90 shelters operating in 7 departments in El Salvador, housing 8,351 people who have been affected by the floods and volcanic activity, as follows:

| Department | No. of people in shelters | No. of shelters |
|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| AHUACHAPAN | 17 | 2 |
| CUSCATLAN | 139 | 3 |
| LA LIBERTAD | 969 | 10 |
| SAN SALVADOR | 3,051 | 38 |
| SAN VICENTE | 0 | 0 |
| SANTA ANA | 3,957 | 33 |
| SONSONATE | 218 | 4 |
| TOTAL | 8,351 | 90 |

Despite the fact that many shelter residents have been able to return to their homes, there is still a very high level of need among the affected population. Many of the affected communities are heavily dependent on the fishing, coffee and tourism industries, which have now been almost totally destroyed by floods and volcanic ash. Many residents are also subsistence farmers who rely on crops of corn beans and sorghum or the sale of animals to meet their basic needs. Long term recovery activities will be necessary to ensure that these families have food and shelter and can pay school and medical costs.

In the initial phase of this operation, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society mobilized 85 vehicles to the affected areas, including ambulances, pick ups and water tankers, carrying 2,500 volunteers, relief supplies and generators, among other equipment. The distribution of relief items was carried out by the SRC relief department, in coordination with departmental branches and with the support of National Intervention Teams (NITs) and volunteers from the affected departments.

The SRC was also able to carry out psychosocial support and distribution of relief supplies including drinking water to shelters, as well as undertake damage and needs assessments. The SRC began distributing relief items on 2 October in the municipalities of El Congo, Santa Ana, Sonsonate, Izalco, Armenia, Nahuizalco, and Juayua. In total, 1,412 families received food kits, hygiene kits, kitchen kits blankets and drinking water on the first day of the relief operation. Volunteers also received personal protection equipment, including gloves, masks and protective goggles. In addition, families have been reunited and information provided as to the whereabouts, health conditions and needs of those with whom contact was lost through the use an internet web site and access to a telephone service provided by the ICRC.



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

Emergency relief (food and non-food)

Objective: 1,000 families affected by the volcano and 3,200 families affected by the floods will have benefited from the distribution of food and non-food relief items.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

During the relief phase of the emergency operation, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society, with national and international donations, has provided relief to 8,555 vulnerable families affected by floods and volcanic activity through the distribution of food and non-food items. Of these 8,555 families, a total of 500 families have been assisted through direct contributions to the Federation's emergency appeal. The Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit dispatched from Panama 17,500 blankets, 3,500 hygiene kits and 3,000 kitchen kits to the Salvadorean Red Cross Society for use in the operation, of which 10,000 blankets, 2,000 hygiene kits and 2,000 kitchen sets were mobilized on behalf of the Spanish Red Cross.

In addition to the 500 families assisted through this appeal, 2,000 families have been assisted by the Spanish Red Cross with ECHO funding, 1,000 families have been assisted by the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI) and 1,500 families were assisted by the Swiss Red Cross. The remaining families were assisted through national donations. With German Red Cross funding, the SRC is planning to distribute relief items to a further 1,000 families. In addition to the distributions of food and non food items, the SRC is also giving educational talks on hygiene, nutrition and mental health as part of the emergency relief phase of the operation.

The following table shows the distribution of food and non-food items to families affected by floods and volcanic activity in 11 departments in El Salvador. In addition to the below items, private donors have provided those affected by the disasters with powdered milk and water.

| Department | Persons | Families | Hygiene Kits | Food Kit | Kitchen Kits | Blankets | Buckets | Plastic Sheeting | Mattresses |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|------------|
| Ahuachapán | 1,145 | 229 | 229 | 229 | 140 | 0 | 229 | 0 | |
| Cuscatlan | 1,325 | 265 | 361 | 175 | 0 | 260 | 225 | 27 | |
| La Libertad | 3,417 | 836 | 1,631 | 760 | 523 | 530 | 744 | 0 | |
| La Paz | 7,168 | 1,529 | 1,161 | 802 | 0 | 1,147 | 3 | 98 | |
| La Unión | 175 | 35 | 35 | 35 | 0 | 70 | 35 | 0 | |
| Santa Ana | 3,200 | 640 | 655 | 595 | 492 | 862 | 112 | 0 | |
| San Miguel | 2,260 | 452 | 445 | 445 | 0 | 890 | 445 | 0 | |
| San Salvador | 8,869 | 1,449 | 1,410 | 978 | 26 | 2,469 | 538 | 152 | 13 |
| San Vicente | 4,240 | 848 | 815 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 757 | 681 | |
| Sonsonate | 3,754 | 772 | 772 | 18 | 0 | 1,544 | 397 | 0 | |
| Usulután | 6,970 | 1,500 | 1,498 | 1,498 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | |
| Total | 42,523 | 8,555 | 9,012 | 5,535 | 1,181 | 7,772 | 3,485 | 958 | 13 |

Impact

The actions by the SRC in response to the two natural disasters which struck El Salvador on 1 and 4 October have provided families with essential relief supplies which are helping them to recover from the effects of the floods and volcanic activity. These activities have also had a positive impact on the overall mental health of the beneficiaries, and particularly school aged children by providing beneficiaries with much needed support.

Constraints

The relief distributions have been implemented with no particular problems.

Federation Coordination

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society is part of the National Emergency System (SISNAE), which coordinates all disaster response activities on the part of the Salvadorean government through the Emergency Operations Centre. The SRC is also coordinating its actions with international organizations, such as the United Nations agencies and NGOs. The SRC is working in close coordination with the Panama Regional Delegation and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), as well as Partner National Societies present in the country.

The National Society is working closely with the Spanish Red Cross, the Spanish International Cooperation Agency and the Swiss Red Cross in order to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts. As a result of this coordination, although contributions channelled through the Appeal have benefitted only 500 families, additional families have been assisted through the response of the Spanish and Swiss Red Cross Societies and the Spanish International Cooperation Agency which all worked in the framework of the Federation Appeal; these, as well as national donations have allowed the Salvadorean Red Cross Society to reach 8,555 families to date.

Shelter

Objective 1: 1,000 families (5,000 people) whose homes were destroyed by the floods will have constructed temporary houses enabling them to move back to their communities and Red Cross branches damaged by the floods will have been repaired.

Activities under this objective have not been carried out as of yet and are subject to the receipt of additional funding. However, the SRC will work with the government and UNICEF in order to promote the rehabilitation of damaged schools so that children can resume classes as soon as possible once the occupants leave the shelters, and in order that facilities are in place in the event of the future need to use these schools as emergency shelters in a disaster situation.

Water and Sanitation and Health

Objective 1: 1,000 families (5,000 people) will have access to clean drinking water, benefit from improved sanitation and will have increased awareness of sound hygienic practices.

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society's plan of action for the use of recently-received contributions includes the rehabilitation of 4 water systems, including protective structures for water distribution, intake and collection tanks, and repair of pumps and of valves. In addition, the SRC will undertake the repair, cleaning and disinfection of wells damaged by the hurricane in the following communities: El Jicaro, San Matias; El Zaité, Zaragoza; and Ojos de Agua y Santo Tomas, Taxispeque.

In order to promote awareness of health and hygiene issues, the SRC is using the relief distributions as an opportunity to share information with the beneficiaries about food preparation, personal hygiene and disaster preparedness. Posters are being hung in shelters, schools and other public areas containing educational messages on these themes.

Psychosocial support

Objective 1: The Salvadorean Red Cross Society's capacity in psychosocial support is strengthened and care is offered to vulnerable families targeted by the appeal as well as volunteers and staff working in the disaster operation.

As part of the ongoing distributions of relief items, the SRC is providing psychosocial support sessions to beneficiaries. In addition, SRC volunteers, in coordination with the National Intervention Teams, organized recreational activities for children in shelters to help them cope with the disaster. The implementation of further activities is subject to the receipt of additional funding towards the emergency appeal.

Agricultural Support

Objective 1: 1,000 families (5,000 people) will have sown crops with the perspective of a successful harvest, thus contributing to ensuring the availability of adequate food.

Activities under this objective, which intends to distribute seeds and fertilizer to families who have lost their crops, have not been carried out as of yet and are subject to the receipt of additional funding. A similar project was launched in El Salvador in the context of the severe drought which hit the region in 2001 and 2002; the project which assisted farmers with seeds and tools was a particular success in El Salvador, producing a good harvest and boosting farmers' livelihoods.

Educational Support

Objective 1: 2,000 families' children will have school stationery and supplies, facilitating their continued attendance in class.

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society's plan of action for the use of recently received contributions includes the provision of educational kits for 1,000 families, which are intended to assist primary school aged children affected by the emergencies who were forced to flee from their homes without their personal belongings. This distribution will be coordinated through the departmental branches, the National Intervention Teams and volunteers.

Disaster Preparedness for Response

Objective 1: The Salvadorean Red Cross Society has restocked essential emergency relief items and has received additional training in response and preparedness activities in order to facilitate future disaster response.

Activities under this objective have not been carried out as of yet and are subject to the receipt of additional funding. In order to facilitate efficient response to a disaster situation, the SRC ensures that emergency relief items are pre-stocked and can be mobilized immediately. It was this policy that enabled the National Society to distribute hygiene kits, blankets and water containers to over 2,000 families during the first 72 hours of the emergency. It is essential that these relief items be restocked in order to ensure that the SRC has the capacity to respond to future disasters. A part of the recently-received funding will be used to provide volunteers with a kit which includes a poncho and a pair of boots for improved readiness for emergencies.

Objective 2: National Society branches communicate effectively by radio in the event of a disaster.

The SRC branches in Santa Ana, Sonsonate and Juayua have been provided with portable radio communication equipment as well as equipment to repair the repeater that is being used near the volcano. Two additional repeaters have been moved from the National Society headquarters in San Salvador to the affected areas to further facilitate communication. The Salvadorean Red Cross Society's plan of action for the use of recently-received contributions includes new radio equipment at branch level which will facilitate effective communication in the event of a disaster.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives

- Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the vulnerability of those affected.
- The relief operation is 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 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.

National Society Capacity Building

The relief operation will further build the capacities of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society headquarters and branches. Now that the relief phase has been completed, further emphasis will be placed on the strengthening of branches, and disaster preparedness and mitigation work in vulnerable communities. Previous to these most recent natural disasters, the SRC was able to significantly strengthen its national structure through the relief operation following Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and earthquakes in January and February 2001.

Communications – Advocacy and Public information

Communications and visibility activities are being carried out by the public relations department of the SRC, through its national communicators' network, which exists in all 14 departments in the country. From 1 October to date, communications and visibility activities carried out by the SRC public relations department include institutional activity write ups, articles on the operations and numerous information bulletins about the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and the provision of humanitarian aid to those affected by the disasters. Several of these articles being made available on the Federation's web site.

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

El Salvador - floods and volcanic activities

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA020

PLEDGES RECEIVED

13/12/2005

| DONOR | CATEGORY | QUANTITY | UNIT | VALUE CHF | DATE | COMMENT |
|-------|----------|----------|------|-----------|------|---------|
|-------|----------|----------|------|-----------|------|---------|

CASH

| REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF -----> | | | | | TOTAL COVERAGE | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------|-----|---------|-----------------------|--------------|
| | | | | | 1,288,347 | 48.3% |
| CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/HAPS | | 50,000 | CAD | 55,225 | 07.10.05 | |
| CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/HAPS | | 50,000 | CAD | 54,410 | 02.11.05 | |
| JAPANESE - RC | | 12,500 | USD | 16,175 | 14.10.05 | |
| JAPANESE - RC | | 20,500 | USD | 26,250 | 09.11.05 | |
| LICHTENSTEIN - PRIVATE DONOR | | | | 50,000 | 28.10.05 | |
| MONACO - RC | | 5,000 | EUR | 7,785 | 25.10.05 | |
| NETHERLANDS - GOVT | | 42,781 | EUR | 66,610 | 14.10.05 | |
| NEW ZEALAND - GOVT | | 100,000 | NZD | 89,600 | 13.10.05 | |
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH | | | | 366,055 | CHF | 28.4% |

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

| DONOR | CATEGORY | QUANTITY | UNIT | VALUE CHF | DATE | COMMENT |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|------|-----------|----------|--|
| SPANISH - RC | | | | 136,000 | | 10000 BLANKETS, 2000 KITCHEN SETS, 2000 HYGIENIC PARCELS |
| SWISS - RC | | | | 120,000 | 07.10.05 | BILATERAL: PROCUREMENT OF RELIEF ITEMS, |
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES | | | | 256,000 | CHF | 19.9% |

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

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