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Information bulletin Italy: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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

The Italian Red Cross, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

In the last 10 days, severe flooding has hit the regions of Liguria and Tuscany, in the north-western part of Italy, killing at least 16 people.

The Italian Red Cross is focusing on urban search

and rescue (USAR), health care, food assistance and shelter activities for those

affected by the floods. The National Society has also intensified its humanitarian efforts in Liguria and Tuscany with the activation of psychosocial support teams. The National Society is distributing blankets, water and food to alleviate the most pressing needs of the population, and is present in the affected areas with different teams specialized in USAR, shelter and coordination.

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The situation

As of 1 November, at least ten people had been killed in Liguria and Tuscany as a result of flash flooding and landslides occurred during the previous week, while at least four others remained missing.

Despite emergency clean-up operations in the regions, a number of towns and villages continue to experience severe infrastructural damage; La Spezia province was the worst affected, particularly the



Search and Rescue activities. Photo: Italian Red Cross

popular tourist area of Cinque Terre, on the coast. Ongoing disruption in these and other areas should be anticipated while the severe weather persists.

At least six people were killed when the Italian port city of Genoa, the largest city on the north-western coast of Italy, was hit by flash floods during a torrential rainfall on 4 November. The Genoa city website advised people not to leave their homes and to climb to the upper floors. Television footage showed cars floating and people wading knee-deep through flooded streets in the city. Hundreds of shops were flooded and emergency officials urged residents to move to high ground as two rivers burst their banks. Fire fighters used rubber dinghies and divers to evacuate people, officials said. Motorways in the area were also closed off and flights re-routed away from the local airport.

The Civil Protection Department, together with the prefectures, regional and local civil protection structures, is constantly following the development of adverse weather phenomena that have recently affected northern-western Italian regions, particularly the city of Genoa. The Crisis Unit met in the afternoon of 4 November in order to assess the urgency, and the Operating Committee is permanently active at the Headquarters of the Civil Protection Department and will follow up the situation by providing the necessary measures. One Italian Red Cross Emergency Manager is present there.

The Italian Civil Protection System was activated to provide assistance and support to the affected population and to guard the territory. The perturbation is in fact destined to last for 36-48 hours, still insisting on areas already affected.

The rainfall will persist over north-central areas till tomorrow, hitting severely Piedmont, Valle d'Aosta and Liguria where heavy rain is expected to fall.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Ten days after the floods that hit La Spezia and the region of Lunigiana, work is still being done to bring help to the population hit by the disaster. Just after the weather forecast alerted of another wave of bad weather in Liguria and Tuscany, Piedmont is getting ready to face a possible worsening of the situation.

The Italian Red Cross is working in Genoa (affected on 4 November for violent cloudburst) with volunteers and motor pumps, and a USAR unit.

At the moment there are about 190 Italian Red Cross volunteers working in the implicated areas with 83 supporting vehicles.

In **Brugnato**, a municipality in the province of La Spezia among the most affected, the Italian Red Cross is present with 44 volunteers and around 40 tools (motor vehicles, ambulances, all-terrain vehicles, trucks and minibuses). A tent city is also operative for displaced people and volunteers with a field kitchen, dining hall and warehouse. The field kitchen now produces around 500 meals per day but can increase them up to 1,000 in the most critical moments of the emergency. A base camp with 200 places to accommodate volunteers and relief workers has been set up inside the town's sports hall. Italian Red Cross is in charge of the distribution of food provisions, water and medicines. The volunteers are in charge of taking the mud out with spades, hydro pumps and excavators or with their bare hands.



Food distribution to the affected people. Photo: Italian Red Cross

Italian Red Cross psychologists and social service specialists were assigned to the disaster-affected regions to provide psycho-social support for the people who lost their relatives and those who experienced post-traumatic stress disorder because of the shock caused by the floods.

Within the scope of the response activities, the Italian Red Cross pre-alarmed all of its units all over the country in order to meet the urgent needs of the affected population.

For the purpose of preliminary damage assessments in the affected area, information has been collected through the Italian Red Cross Branch and communicated to the Emergency Operation Centre, located near Milan.

The Italian Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) are closely monitoring the situation. The International Federation's Europe Zone Office has offered its assistance to the Italian Red Cross in the areas where it may be required.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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 Disaster 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.

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

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
 2. Enable healthy and safe living.
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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