

# **PAPUA NEW GUINEA: TIDAL WAVE**

24 July 1998

*appeal no. 22/98*

*situation report no. 1*

*period covered: 20 - 24 July*

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*As the full horror of the disastrous tidal wave that swept away a dozen villages becomes clear, the Federation is rushing delegates and emergency supplies to the stricken area. A full needs assessment is being made; the results of which will be incorporated in a full appeal.*

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## ***The context***

During the night of Friday 17 July a series of tsunami waves hit the north coast of Papua New Guinea at the Sissano lagoon, devastating 23 kilometres of coast and affecting 12 villages. By 23 July, 823 deaths had been confirmed by the authorities, some 551 people were seriously injured and hospitalised, and 3,074 people were accommodated in two care centres. A further 6,000 have still not yet been accounted for. It is believed that many fled into the forest, fearing another tidal wave.

The Federation preliminary appeal targets relief and rehabilitation assistance for a population of 10,000. The response will be readjusted in the light of emerging needs.

## ***Latest events***

Further to the fear of contamination in the Sissano lagoon (30sq.km), the Government of Papua New Guinea has temporarily restricted access to the area. The Red Cross response is developing fast with more personnel/delegates in the field and an effective mobilisation of human, financial and logistical resources.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

### **Assessment team •**

As of July 23, the Papua New Guinea Red Cross/Federation team had covered 25% of the affected area and reported that medical needs are well catered for by a number of teams provided by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand. A large number of survivors are hiding in the forest and it is anticipated that by Saturday the entire area will be covered by the team. The assessment will serve as basis for Federation and Papua New Guinea Red Cross (PNGRC) to review the plan of action, mainly with regard to rehabilitation. Travel in the area remains extremely difficult.

### **Relief assistance •**

The Federation/PNGRC has already provided some basic supplies, water containers, plates, emergency biscuits, axes, and shovels. By Saturday one 4WD vehicle, 412 family rehabilitation kits with plastic sheets, water containers, blankets and tools, nine cubic meters of clothes, six village rehabilitation kits and six medical kits are expected to arrive from the Federation's Lae logistics base.

**Logistics •**

The logistics base in Lae will be a strategic point for the operation. Located at 340 km North of Port Moresby, it is also the centre for the Bougainville relief operation. A helicopter and plane have been rented to ensure transport from Port Moresby to the affected area.

For the time being, the National Society and the Federation can procure locally all relief supplies needed.

**Federation technical support •**

The Federation PNG Delegation currently comprises seven delegates. It will be strengthened to ten with the addition of delegates from the New Zealand and Japanese Red Cross Societies. By next week five delegates will be assigned to the tidal wave operation, including the head of delegation.

In Geneva, the Federation Media Service is effectively responding to the high number of enquiries from the international press.

***Outstanding needs***

So far the Federation preliminary appeal, launched July 21, has a positive response. It is anticipated that by the end of next week the plans for rehabilitation works will be known.

***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The Papua New Guinea Red Cross is permanently in contact with government authorities. The Federation maintains contacts with NGOs to facilitate co-ordination.

***Contributions***

So far, thanks to a number of national societies 49% of the budget has been covered. Donors are reminded to support the operation with cash contributions where possible in order to facilitate the implementation of the emergency response. The PNGRC/Federation procurement system is already in place and operational. See Annex 1 for details of contributions.

***Conclusion***

Although the situation remains grave, with high numbers of casualties, response to this disaster has been positive, and the Federation is confident, that through its Delegation, Papua New Guinea Red Cross and operational partners, it will be able to make an important contribution towards mitigating the suffering of the thousands of affected persons.

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**APPEAL No. 22/98**

**PLEDGES  
 RECEIVED**

**24/07/98**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE
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**CASH**

<b>REQUESTED IN APPEAL</b>		907,000	
BRITISH - RC/GOVT	75,000 GBP	184,035	23/07/98
ICELANDIC - RC	200,000 ISK	4,187	22/07/98
NORWEGIAN RC/GOVT	1,298,701 NOK	254,000	22/07/98
POLISH - RC	1,000 USD	1,500	22/07/98
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH</b>		443,722 CHF	

**KIND AND SERVICES  
(INCL. PERSONNEL)**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES</b>					0.00 CHF

**NOT REQUESTED IN  
APPEAL**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED</b>					0.00 CHF