

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: TIDAL WAVE

17 August 1998

appeal no. 22/98

situation report no. 3

period covered: 1 - 13 August 1998

After an overwhelming response to the disaster that amply covered immediate needs, the emergency phase of the operation has ended. The National Society and Federation, which distributed relief supplies to the homeless in six care centres, is now drafting a rehabilitation plan.

The context

The devastating tidal wave, or Tsunami, that ravaged PNG's Sandaun Province coast on 17 July has resulted in an extraordinary humanitarian response -- from local PNG citizens, international governments and humanitarian agencies. While the very high fatality rate, now estimated at well over 2,000, has been traumatic for the community, the scope of the disaster, in terms of support and recovery needed, is relatively modest. There has been a comprehensive response that quickly addressed the immediate needs of the affected population and the emergency phase of the operation has now come to an end. However, the State of Emergency in the area has been extended by a special sitting of Parliament for an additional two months.

Latest events

Search and Rescue teams from both PNG and overseas have wound up their operations and handed over ongoing medical and recovery functions to PNG Government agencies or local authorities and a small number of NGOs and humanitarian agencies. The PNG Red Cross/International Federation, Salvation Army, Catholic Church, ADRA and World Vision are the main remaining agencies. They are monitoring the situation while preparing medium to longer term strategies for rehabilitation and resettlement.

Co-ordination and control difficulties have emerged and better structures to control and account for aid will be essential in the post emergency phase. For the moment, the situation remains complex. Under the State of Emergency, the central government is the controlling authority. However both district and provincial authorities are increasingly seeking roles, and a rehabilitation Draft Plan of Action has been drawn up by the Province.

Most of the surviving population are now settled in six care centres and Aitape town, and their immediate and short term needs have been fully met. A summary of the status of the affected population as at 31 July is as follows.

| Location | Survivors | Origin | Deaths | Injured |
|-----------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Ramo C/C | 1460 | Warapu | 1071 | '389 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Pou | 1404 | Arop 1&2 | 863 | 0 |
| Rowoi | 1153 | Amsor/Nimas | 89 | 49 |
| Olbrum | 862 | Maindron | 25 | 24 |
| Raimbrum | 89 | Mainyau | 0 | 5 |
| Malol | 3816 | Malol | 126 | 0 |
| Aitape | 415 | Above & others | 1 | 0 |
| Paup | | Paup | 7 | 6 |
| TOTAL | 9199 | | 2182 | 473 |

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The Red Cross emergency response team, consisting of the PNGRCS Secretary General, two volunteers from the Rabaul Branch and the Federation Water/Sanitation and Health delegates, seconded from the Bougainville operation, carried out distributions to the care centres established to accommodate survivors. A Federation chartered ship arrived from Lae with relief supplies which were quickly unloaded in Aitape. Two New Zealand delegates arrived to replace the original team and three Japanese Red Cross delegates accompanying a shipment of plastic sheeting assisted for three days.

Summary of relief goods delivered by type

| Immediate Emergency Phase | Follow up Phase | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| Plastic Water Containers Plastic Buckets Biscuits Bush Knives Plastic Sheetting Bush Knives Spades Axes | Village Packs of tools and construction equipment. Family Packs with clothes, cooking and hygiene supplies, blankets, towels and gardening tools. Medical Packs with Essential Drugs & supplies. First Aid Kits. * Clothes * Basic dry food goods * Soap * Blankets * Tarpaulins Spades, Bush Knives, Rope Water Tanks & Containers * Kerosene & Fuel * Emergency Medical Drugs * Portable latrines | Miscellaneous Donors including PNGRC HQ, Morobe Branch PNGRCS, Federation emergency stock, USAID, Japanese Red Cross, Wills (Ltd), Rotary Club of Lae. |

Relief •

Distributions continued during the reporting period, despite difficulties in co-ordinating helicopter transport. Although the Secretary General had fully informed the Assistant co-ordinator about the Red Cross disaster relief rules and principles, the system of requisitioning supplies under the State of Emergency regulations created some difficulties, requiring further explanations that this was not possible for Red Cross goods. Delivery by road or boat, which was not possible for this phase due to the conditions and the emergency rules, may be possible in future.

After the first week the majority of organisations and emergency teams departed, leaving the following operators:

Red Cross: Principal Relief Distributor

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Salvation Army: | Food, medicine, medical staff, carer support and counselling, vaccination |
| ADRA: | Water and Sanitation |
| Catholic Diocese: | Grief counselling, spiritual needs, education, health, physiotherapy |
| Government: | Food, clothing, transport, security, co-ordination |

Health and Water & Sanitation •

Health needs were assessed by the Health Delegate at health centres and the Aitape Hospital. Red Cross assistance was delivered in the form of basic medical kits and essential emergency drugs. Detailed reports on Health and Water & Sanitation needs have been presented to the PNGRCS and the Federation Secretariat and will form an essential element in future planning.

All relief goods surplus to the emergency stage, now over, have been returned to central storage in Lae and Port Moresby for future use in coming projects and as a DPP emergency stock.

Rehabilitation and resettlement •

At present, conditions in the care centres are quite good, but if long delays occur in rehousing people and the weather deteriorates, monitoring will be needed to ensure a reasonable standard of living and health in the centres.

The Federation and the PNG Red Cross, with support from the Federation Suva Regional Delegation, are beginning the planning process for a Red Cross rehabilitation programme .

Rehabilitation of the Aitape area will focus on improvements to and reconstruction of essential infrastructure and communications. A number of major international government donors have offered assistance in this area. It is another complex issue, because of land ownership questions.

Outstanding needs

Thanks to the unprecedented emergency response all immediate needs are covered. The next step will be acceptance of a Red Cross Rehabilitation Programme. A Federation Programme Co-ordinator to replace the emergency phase delegates is required and should take up the post rapidly in order to participate in the planning process. As soon as the Rehabilitation Programme is finalised, the Federation will inform National Societies.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The PNG Red Cross Secretary General, as a member of a number of Relief Committees is well placed to monitor government, donor and NGO activities and will report on a regular basis to the planning team. Regular contacts are also maintained with UNDP, EU, NGOs and individual officials in the field and at Provincial and District level. Concern remains regarding possible interpretations of powers under the State of Emergency and a close liaison will be needed to ensure all officials are fully aware of the Red Cross mandate.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The Red Cross has responded well to this sudden emergency by resisting pressure to act in areas that were beyond its capacity or its specific area of expertise. Search and Rescue, emergency medical care and general health activities were by and large fully and professionally covered by others. Certain areas which might have been addressed will be examined to draw pointers for the future.

From very early on, the PNGRCS, with full support from the Federation, maintained that the key requirements of the situation were: the responsible delivery of relief goods, moderate quantities of supplies, and targeted distributions, and it publicly urged all other agencies to exert control and balance in their response.

A review of the relief operation will undoubtedly highlight some areas for improvement (notably in communications and transportation) to speed up response and reduce dependence on outside support.

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PAPUA NEW GUINEA - TIDAL WAVE

APPEAL No. 22/98

**PLEDGES
RECEIVED**

17/08/98

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

CASH

| REQUESTED IN APPEAL | VALUE CHF | DATE |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| | 907,000 | |
| AUSTRALIAN - RC | 250,000 AUD | 220,700 28/07/98 |
| BRAZILIAN - RC | 500.00 USD | 750.00 24/07/98 |
| BRITISH - RC/GOVT | 75,000 GBP | 184,035 23/07/98 VILLA |
| CANADIAN - RC | 2,000 CAD | 2,049 22/07/98 |
| CANADIAN - GOVT | 100,000 CAD | 102,460 24/07/98 |
| COOK ISLANDS RC | | 11,880 07/08/98 USD 3 |
| ICELANDIC - RC | 200,000 ISK | 4,187 22/07/98 |
| ITALIAN GOVT/Emergency Fund | 100,000 USD | 150,000 21/07/98 |
| JAPANESE - RC | 11,000,000 JPY | 118,536 13/08/08 |
| NETHERLANDS - RC | 300,000 NLG | 03/08/98 TO BE |
| NORWEGIAN RC/GOVT | 1,298,701 NOK | 254,000 22/07/98 |
| NEW ZEALAND - RC | 600,000 NZD | 447,300 25/07/98 PUBLI |
| POLISH - RC | 1,000 USD | 1,500 22/07/98 |
| SWISS - RC/GOVT | | 150,000 24/07/98 |
| AMERICAN - RC | 75,000 USD | 112,500 24/07/98 |
| REP. OF KOREA - RC | 20,000 USD | 30,000 28/07/98 |
| WESTERN SAMOA | 87,050 SAT | 40,200 07/08/98 |
| PRIVATE DONOR | 250.00 CHF | 250.00 |
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH | | 1,830,347 CHF |

KIND AND SERVICES (INCL. PERSONNEL)

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

| | | |
|--|------------------|------------|
| JAPANESE - RC | 1 DEL X 1 MONTH | 5,000 |
| NEW ZEALAND - RC | 2 DEL X 2 MONTHS | 20,000 |
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES | | 25,000 CHF |

**NOT REQUESTED IN
APPEAL**

| DONOR | CATEGORY | QUANTITY | UNIT | VALUE CHF | DATE |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------|------|-------------|----------------|
| JAPANESE - RC | PLASTIC SHEETING | | | 175,000 | 31/07/98 INCLU |
| SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED | | | | 175,000 CHF | |