

El Salvador: Explosion

12 May 2000

Information Bulletin N° 01

The Disaster

At 17:30 hours local time on Wednesday, 10 May, 2000, an explosion in a Military Police ammunition dump to the north of the capital, San Salvador, set off a large fire, followed by blasts within the arsenal.

The fire was being extinguished by the National Fire Brigade with help from the National Police and members of the army when at about 18:20 hrs a 500 pound bomb exploded, killing 60 firemen, police, journalists, members of the Army and civilians.

This explosion destroyed the whole arsenal and damaged houses and apartments in the neighbourhood. The shock wave extended for 1.5 kilometres, causing total or partial damage to buildings and homes in its path.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Ten minutes after the explosion, the Salvadorian Red Cross was on the scene and called immediately for reinforcements from the National Society Emergency Operations Centre. They mounted a command centre to co-ordinate their assistance, transported the injured to hospital, and co-operated with the Army in evacuation and rescue efforts.

In total, the Salvadorian Red Cross sent 12 rescue vehicles to the scene, together with 27 paramedics and rescue personnel. They transported 41 people to hospital. The Women Volunteers service organised food for 120 children in the affected area.

Needs

The Salvadorian Red Cross does not require any outside assistance since it has adequate disaster preparedness resources and trained personnel for such a situation.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Santiago Gil
Director

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