

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

## ***BOLIVIA:FLOODS***

22 February 2002

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*This Information Bulletin is for information only. The Bolivian Red Cross is currently in discussions with the government. A decision will be made soon as to whether international assistance is required.*



### ***The Situation***

Forty-nine people have been killed and 41 injured in La Paz after heavy rains and a hailstorm, the Bolivian Red Cross have reported. The 50-minute storm on 19 February was the worst in decades. Buildings collapsed and torrents of water raged through the streets destroying road surfaces and brick walls. After the Choqueapu river

burst its banks the subway beneath La Paz's main street flooded. The Government declared a state of emergency in the department of La Paz. Classes have been suspended until next week because of damage to school buildings.

The worst affected zone is "rio abajo"; an area of narrow valleys that has been flooded. Access has been made more difficult because two bridges have been destroyed.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The national society is a member of the departmental emergency committee, operational since the morning of 20 February. Bolivian Red Cross efforts have focused on pre-hospital attention, first aid and rescuers caring for those affected. The society will probably be in charge of a temporary shelter in La Paz. Relief efforts were initially focused on rescuing those trapped in the subway station in el Prado. Bolivian Red Cross put up tents, a kitchen and brought water extraction pumps. For the time being the Bolivian Red Cross has the capacity to carry out the operation without external support. The Bolivian Red Cross is carrying out a needs assessment and in discussions with the government will decide whether further actions will require international support.

The Bolivian Red Cross has been active in relief efforts in the wake of the disaster. Thirty volunteers (including the one pictured above) of the La Paz branch were directly involved. A Red Cross disaster preparedness initiative - The Urban Disaster and Emergency Symposium and Simulation - last December in La Paz was one reason for the rapid response. The event aimed to 1) improve the capacity of the Bolivian Red Cross, and in particular the La Paz branch in responding to urban disasters; and 2) improve inter-institutional coordination between the Red Cross and local disaster response bodies. A total of 278 people attended the event, which included an explosion and fire simulation.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org).

*For further details please contact :*

- *The Bolivian Red Cross in La Paz ; Phone 591 22 202 934; Fax 591 22 359 102; email [cruzrobo@caoba.entelnet.bo](mailto:cruzrobo@caoba.entelnet.bo)*
- *Luis Luna, Phone 41 22 730 4274; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email [luna@ifrc.org](mailto:luna@ifrc.org)*

*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

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

John Horekens  
Head  
Relationship Management Department

Santiago Gil  
Head  
Americas Department

