

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

CHILE: FLOODS

5 June, 2002

Information Bulletin N° 1

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 60,000

This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 60,000 has been released. Should the heavy rains stop soon and the disaster be duly covered by all agencies currently responding to it, the Federation does not anticipate further needs. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update.

The situation

Since Sunday, 2 June and over a 24 hour period, over 130 millimeters of heavy rains fell in Chile. Forecasters have predicted a total of 230 millimeters of rain will fall while the heavy precipitation continues. In Santiago, more than 75 percent of metropolitan streets were swamped, including the city's main highway. Among the worst affected regions are also the central and southern regions, Chile's principal agricultural areas. A state of emergency was declared in the Santiago metropolitan region. Schools were forced to close, train services were canceled and electricity was cut to many areas due to high winds. Some areas of the city were at a virtual standstill as roads were blocked and bridges collapsed.

The Government's National Emergency Committee, composed of several Ministers (Health, Education, Development, Interior, Agriculture, National Wealth, Economy, and Telecommunications, among others) is responsible for defining the emergency action plan. ONEMI is responsible for implement this plan including identifying the specific roles of the Chilean Red Cross, Fire Brigades and the Police Force. The President of Chile also indicated that 1,700 people were being provided immediate shelter and care, but authorities estimated that the number of people forced to leave their homes because of the torrential rains would exceed 50,000. According to a subsequent report issued by the National Emergency Office (ONEMI) more than 4,000 people are isolated in the III, IV and V Regions. The Civil Protection System is maintaining Emergency Operation Committees, attending the affected population. Of the total number of those affected, 28,000 people originate from the Santiago Metropolitan Region, 2,800 from the V Region, 1,366 from the VI Region, 137 from the VII Region, 288 from the VIII Region and 50 are from the IV Region. Latest estimates indicate that the number of affected persons may exceed 96,000.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Chilean Red Cross's (CRC) immediate response has been focused on the following four areas: health, shelter, logistics and telecommunications in the Santiago Metropolitan Region, and in the V and VI Regions. Senior and youth volunteers, co-ordinated through the National Relief Committee, are working together in the planning and implementation of the operation in the areas of relief and health.

The damage and needs analysis data used by the Chilean Red Cross has been provided by the ONEMI from the three most affected areas of the country (V, VI and Metropolitan). Beneficiary selection was based on the severity of their situation focusing on the most vulnerable populations.

The Buenos Aires Regional Delegation (BARD) is coordinating Federation support to the CRC in the field. The Regional DPP Delegate has been deployed to Chile and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has been contacted and is on standby to provide additional support if required. In Geneva the Americas Department and the Head of Operations for the Americas in DMC are in close communication.

Needs/Operational Focus

The initial focus of the operation is on providing food, shelter and health services to the 742 most affected families (or 3,710 people) in the identified communities, with particular attention given to children and seniors because of their susceptibility to respiratory infections. Bedding and mattresses, hygiene kits, clothes, non-perishable goods and construction materials will also be distributed to these groups.

Plans entail completing this initial phase of the operation, then shifting to community based disaster preparedness education programs in order to reduce the vulnerability of the population and communities in the future. The Chilean Red Cross is currently assessing the number of people affected, a figure which continues to change rapidly and may impact the type of assistance and items included in this proposal.

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