

# 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

10 June, 2002

Information Bulletin N° 2/02

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 recession of the floods continue and Government & other agencies maintain their intention to cope with all needs, the Federation does not anticipate further funding request. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update.*

### The Situation

The heavy rains which pounded Chile from 3 to 5 June have now begun to subside although threats exist of a new cold front bringing additional precipitation over the next few days. In the cities of La Sarena, Valparaiso and the metropolitan area of Santiago, 500% more rain than is normal fell during this 4 day period and caused extensive flooding which affected 199,511 people in both urban and rural zones. The government estimates that the flooding has resulted in damage in excess of USD 1,000,000, primarily to homes and infrastructure. This amount does not take into account losses to agricultural production, workers lost time, tourism, etc.

According to the latest information from the National Emergency Office (ONEMI) 12 people died as a result of the disaster. The table below provides details on the number of people who have been affected by the disaster.

Roads throughout the affected areas have been cut off and many communities remain without electricity and water. ONEMI is maintaining a red alert for Region V, VI and for metropolitan Santiago and all corresponding Regional, Provincial and Municipal Emergency Operations Committees remain active 24 hours a day. The agency has distributed over 40 truckloads of relief items to the hardest hit areas. Through their National Emergency Operations Center, and under the supervision of the municipalities, rescue, relief and cleanup operations continue in co-ordination with fire departments, health units and the Civil Defense. Approximately 10,000 workers are involved in repairing roads and bridges as well as constructing water retention barriers.

Number of People and Homes Affected

Region	Persons Affected	Persons who have lost their Homes	Persons in Temporary shelters	Houses with Minor Damage	Houses with Major Damage	Houses Destroyed
Metr. Region	169.917	32.693	5.229	12.526	1.716	45
III		149		36		
IV		5.263	223	1.185	146	33
V		7.927	2.015	7.822	1.077	148
VI	27.004	2.723	210	2.268	184	11
VII	1.982	547		230	11	

<b>VIII</b>	<b>600</b>			<b>130</b>		
<b>IX</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>199.511</b>	<b>49.310</b>	<b>7.685</b>	<b>24.197</b>	<b>3.134</b>	<b>237</b>

The number of people severely affected, as well as homes damaged, is expected to rise as people in isolated rural areas move to shelters and as temperatures begin to drop over the next several days.

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

The Chilean Red Cross (CRC) has been active since the beginning of the floods. Rescue teams reacted immediately evacuating people isolated by the flood waters. Five medical teams, each made up of 7 doctors, continue to provide health services throughout the Metropolitan Santiago area addressing the increased risk of respiratory and digestive problems.

The CRC continues to receive in-kind donations in the form of clothes, food, blankets and mattresses and have distributed more than 19 tons of relief goods to 48 distribution points, including communities and temporary shelters, in the Metropolitan Santiago region benefiting over 4,500 people. In total, more than 12,000 people in the country have received support from over 2,500 volunteers, many of whom have also been affected by the flooding, in 89 participating branches.

To date 5,000 diapers, 200 fifty kg food packages, 600 clothes packages, 80 packages of bedding, 80 mattresses and 840 blankets were distributed during the first 2 days of the operation.

The responsibility for disaster response lies within the mandate of the government (specifically ONEMI). While there is significant capacity, government resources are being stretched and many regions have received a minimal amount of humanitarian goods.

The CRC in conjunction with Mega, a principal television station, has embarked on a collection campaign of in-kind donations. This has also helped to increase the profile of the National Society in the country. The CRC also has setup phone lines for people to make cash donations to the operation. Cash and in-kind donations have also been received from the Taiwanese and United States embassies, as well as several national companies. Support has also been provided from the Armed Forces in the form of transport and personnel.

On 8 June a distribution of 200 food packages, clothing and coal was carried out in the town and surrounding rural area of Til-Til, one of the hardest hit areas. The distribution was organised in conjunction with government authorities with the support of a Santiago-based 4 wheel drive club. 56 members donated their time and vehicles to deliver goods to isolated areas that had not received goods to date because many of the roads had been destroyed. The campaign was extremely successful.

The regional DPP/DR delegate from the Regional Delegation in South America, based in Buenos Aires, went to Chile to support the operation. The focus of this support is concentrated on working with the CRC in the design and implementation of the operation structure, training of CRC personnel in the required operational systems, and support in the development of the national society plan of action. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) is maintaining contact with the DPP/DR delegate and is prepared to support the operation if the need arises. The Spanish Red Cross is also prepared to contribute to ongoing efforts.

## ***Needs/Operational Focus***

The CRC has a strong and lengthy relationship with ONEMI. The CRC is their official recipient of in-kind donations from the population. The two institutions work closely together, with the CRC taking on much of the responsibility of collecting and distributing food donations to the temporary shelters set up by the municipal governments. In the case of Region V, the municipality is supplying the necessary resources to the CRC Regional Committee for the management of 13 shelters.

While ONEMI has significant capacity, they have also been confronted with specific difficulties, principally in the area of reaching and distributing relief items to some of the more isolated. They have, therefore asked for

assistance from the CRC. Specifically, a request has been made to work in the community of Batuco in the municipality of Lampa, an isolated area located approximately 80 km from Santiago. While there are some questions of validity, ONEMI estimates that 1,000 families have been affected, most of whom are in temporary shelters having lost their homes.

This beneficiary population is almost exclusively comprised on rural self-sufficient farm families with very little disposable income. During favourable years they are able to sell excess production to supplement their incomes. As a consequence of the flooding, the land has lost much of its productive quality and already marginalised families will find it difficult to meet their basic food needs.

Along with ONEMI staff, a field trip to meet with community members and municipal authorities was carried on 7 June in order to assess the impact, assess numbers of victims entitled to become beneficiaries and analyze the type of support required. The communities in the area have received 1 week food packages and those in shelters are being fed for the short-term. In general, temporary shelters are closed very quickly in Chile.

During discussions with ONEMI, local authorities and community members the following items were identified as appropriate relief items:

- food packages.
- family hygiene kits.
- blankets.
- coal (for heating).

Currently the CRC is receiving quotations of these items and, on the basis of a precise procurement estimate, the current plan of action to use CHF 53,400 received from the DREF (after deduction of PSR), CHF 16,640 from USAG and some other contributions, will be developed into a detailed operational document by Monday 10 June. It is estimated that the distribution of these items can be completed by 20 June.

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

*For further details please contact :*

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*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.*

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