

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

COOK ISLANDS: TROPICAL CYCLONE

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This Bulletin is intended for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

Tropical Cyclone Trina passed between the islands of Rarotonga and Mangaia on 1-2 December 2001, causing the worst flooding in the Cook Islands for almost 50 years. Flooding, landslides and high winds damaged a number of farming areas of Mangaia. Low-lying parts of the island were covered by up to 2m of water. While initial reports indicated that up to 90% of the taro crop, the staple food for the island's population, was reported to be inundated and lost and 60% of livestock drowned, subsequent reports showed that the losses were not as extensive as initially estimated. Due to delays in clearing-up efforts and repairs, crop replanting has been slow.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

Responding to the needs, the Cook Islands Red Cross (CIRC) has organized the provision of supplementary rice, flour and corned beef for the island's population of 735 people. This was carried out with financial assistance from the New Zealand Red Cross and the New Zealand Government, as well as funds raised in a local "Rotaract" campaign. The first food distribution was carried out by five CIRC volunteer teams from the Mangaia branch on 23 February. Each team (staffed by at least two Red Cross members and Junior Red Cross supporters) drove around the assigned villages by pickup truck with the prepared list of household names and family members. This CIRC food distribution was publicized on TV beforehand, and the beneficiaries were therefore well informed and waiting for items to be distributed in exchange for a signature by the beneficiaries.

The CIRC food distribution was also assisted by Government workers with their pickup trucks. Local authorities also made the Council Chambers and the market rooms available as storage for the CIRC. The CIRC is currently monitoring further needs for assistance. The Secretary General of the CIRC is scheduled to visit Mangaia in the second week of April to reassess the island's food situation.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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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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