

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

COSTA RICA AND PANAMA: FLOODS

8 May 2002

Information Bulletin N° 01/02

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 25,000

This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 25,000 has been released, and 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

Heavy rains in Costa Rica over three consecutive days have resulted in flooding in the province of Limón on the Atlantic coast, in Turialba, province of Cartago and in Sarapiquí in the province of Heredia. It is estimated that over 4,000 families are victims of the floods, and that Valle la Estrella and Siquirres in the Limón region have been worst hit; a total of 17 villages have been affected. Some 3,000 houses have been flooded, approximately 10 per cent of these having incurred serious damage. In addition, wells have been contaminated, plantations and small farms flooded and aqueducts have also sustained damage. In total some 6,000 people have been evacuated, and as of 7 May, around 4,000 remain in shelters. The government has declared a red alert in the region and has initiated rescue operations; meteorological services predict several more days of rain.

In Panama, three days of relentless rainfall have resulted in flooding in the province of Bocas del Toro on the Atlantic coast. Seven villages are particularly affected in addition to several indigenous areas. Five banana plantations have been evacuated. It is estimated that, to date, there are some 1,500 flood victims and 800 people have been evacuated to shelters. Further heavy rain is forecast in the region over the next few days.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

The Costa Rican Red Cross is monitoring the situation in the affected areas. The National Society is currently carrying out search and rescue operations and is assisting with the evacuation of those affected. National Society teams have rescued a total of 150 families whose lives were in danger. A national fund-raising campaign to assist those affected by the disaster has been launched, and a plan of action has been drawn up to assist 1,000 of the worst-affected families in Limón province.

The Red Cross Society of Panama is carrying out search and rescue operations. Three villages affected by the flooding remain inaccessible, together with several indigenous areas where it has not yet been possible to assess the level of damage. The National Society has launched a national appeal for assistance.

Needs

Costa Rica

Following are the immediate needs for 1,000 families in Valle la Estrella, Limón province:

- Food rations for one month consisting of 2 kilos of maize flour, 10 kilos of rice, 4 kilos of lard, 4 kilos of pasta, 4 kilos of beans, 500 g of salt, 6 kilos of sugar and 4 small tins of tuna.
- Hygiene kits consisting of 16 toilet rolls, 6 tooth brushes, 2 large tubes of tooth paste, 1 bar of soap and 1 pack of sanitary towels.

Panama

- Drinking water.
- Mattresses.
- Blankets.

Further information will be provided shortly.

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

For further details please contact :

- *The Costa Rican Red Cross in San José; Phone (506) 233 7033 Fax (506) 223 7628 email info@cuzroja.or.cr*
- *The Red Cross Society of Panama, Phone (507) 315 1389; Fax (507) 315 1401; email cuzroja@pan.gbm.net*
- *Olaug Bergseth, Federation Desk Officer, Phone 41 22 730 45 35 Fax 41 22 733 0395; email bergseth@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.

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