

# 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

## VENEZUELA: FLOODS

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*DREF Allocated: None*

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

### The Situation

As a result of continual heavy rain in Venezuela since June 2002, the State of Apure, located in the southwestern plains, has been seriously affected by widespread flooding, mostly produced by saturation of the soil. The rains have continued this week and flooding is now also affecting four additional States of Venezuela; this has prompted the declaration of an emergency situation by the regional governments in the States of Apure, Amazonas, Bolivar, Delta Amacuro and Monagas, while in the State of Barinas an alert has been declared. The situation is likely to worsen as the usual period for the rainy season has not yet started and more rain is expected.



The flooding has impacted more people than previously thought with estimates now reaching over 40,000 inhabitants in Apure only. Four people were killed this week in the surge of flood waters in the town of Guadualito, 500 miles (800 km) southwest of Caracas, and huge expanses of surrounding farmland. In the area of Guadualito, approximately 10,000 people were evacuated to neighbouring municipalities and are now staying with family, neighbours or in temporary shelters. A total of some 8,338 people were housed in shelters. Some families are already beginning to try to return to their houses as the flooding gradually subsides.

Damage to infrastructure such as bridges and roads is extensive, as is loss of crops and livestock. In addition, there is a lack of drinking water as many wells have been contaminated by the flood waters. The flooding has led to a proliferation of mosquitos and other vectors spreading disease and there has been a significant increase in skin diseases. As a result, Federal officials are planning to fumigate the region to eliminate mosquito breeding sites. On 29 July, the national government announced the beginning of the reconstruction phase following the floods.

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

The Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC) has been responding to the disaster from the outset, and is working in coordination with the government. A beneficiary survey was carried out by the VRC which has at least 500 volunteers working in the operation, including members of the national intervention team (NIT). The Colombian Red Cross is collaborating and has mobilized relief volunteers who are also working in the affected area. The VRC has established four distribution centres and a solidarity network has been set up with contacts in towns and cities all over the country.

There are three coordination entities, the military, the Civil Protection and the Venezuelan Red Cross. Each entity has been allocated a specific geographic area for intervention. The selected communities to benefit from assistance provided by the VRC are:

- Iglesia "El Carmen".
- Las Playitas.
- 1er de Diciembre.
- El Terraplén de Morrones.

In these communities, the VRC distributed food kits and water containers to 640 families and hygiene kits to 320 families during the weekend of 27 - 28 July. The American Red Cross (ARC) is providing support to the VRC in water and sanitation activities over one month in the town of Guadualito, the most affected area. The ARC will provide the means to purify water, ensure clean storage as well as adequate sanitation facilities. The ARC will procure all the necessary material for these activities.

The health department of the VRC is working on a plan of action, particularly to ensure prevention of outbreaks of disease in the wake of the flooding in the four selected communities. Health activities have been carried out at the same time as the distributions of relief items and psycho-social support needs of the affected families have also been evaluated.

Several meetings have taken place between the VRC and potential donors, including the private sector, in order to secure funding for further hygiene and kits and to support health activities. Outstanding needs in the affected communities are for mattresses, mosquito nets, plastic sheeting, blankets, children's clothes and footwear.

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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