

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

BOLIVIA: AVALANCHE

8 April 2003

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- *This bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at the time. A balance of available disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) has been allocated and the Spanish Red Cross has contributed USD 3,000 for emergency relief. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, further DREF funds may be requested. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update.*

The Situation

On the morning of 31 March in Chima, province of Larecaja in the department of La Paz, an avalanche occurred after heavy rains that buried houses in a gold mining area. Chima is near to Tipuani, the sixth section of the province of Larecaja in the north east of the department, 300 kilometres from the city of La Paz. Access is possible by road only and, from La Paz, it takes between 14 and 20 hours to reach the area. Chima has an estimated population of 9,321 (1998 census), and poverty levels stand at 89 per cent.

Reports from the Bolivian Red Cross relief team in the field state that, as of 4 April, assessments indicate that 150 houses were buried under the mud, 22 persons have died and 34 have disappeared. According to the Civil Defence and the fire brigade, it is not expected that the number of disappearances will increase above 100 persons.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

A Bolivian Red Cross team reached the affected area on 3 April, given difficulties in accessing the isolated region, together with mechanical problems caused by the difficult terrain and continuous rains which slowed down the progress of the truck carrying relief items. The Bolivian Red Cross has assisted 200 families with the provision of 400 blankets and food supplies (38 kg) of rice, sugar, noodles, cooking oil and salt.

A balance of DREF funds from the Federation has been allocated to the operation; these funds remain from the hail and rainstorms operation carried out in Bolivia in January 2003. The Spanish Red Cross has transferred USD 3,000 of relief funds, ensuring support for the emergency phase. The Bolivian Red Cross is coordinating with the Civil Defence and the fire brigade in the area.

The German Red Cross is considering provision of support and awaits more detailed results of the damage and needs assessment currently being carried out by the Bolivian Red Cross.

The Bolivian Red Cross, the regional delegation in Lima and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit are constantly monitoring developments.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see 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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