

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

FIJI: CYCLONE AMI

15 January 2003

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- This 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

On 13 January 2003, Cyclone Ami hit Fiji, destroyed homes and flooded parts of the South Pacific Archipelago with strong winds of up to 185 km/h (115mph). It affected Vanua Levu, the second largest island in Fiji, Taveuni, Rabi and other surrounding smaller islands. Labasa, the main city of Vanua Levu is under 10 feet of water. Two children are reported to be dead on the tiny island of Druadrua after Cyclone Ami destroyed the church in which they had been sheltering. Communications were completely cut in Vanua Levu, which has 200,000 residents - a quarter of Fiji's population. Telecom team cannot leave Suva until today to repair main communication aerial in Vanua Levu.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS) immediately sent a radio message through the Government radio station to Branch Presidents in Labasa, Seaqaqa, Bua and Savusavu in Vanua Levu and Taveuni to take precautionary measures, and kept in contact with Government District Officers, so that they can be ready to undertake assessment as soon as it was safe to do so. On 14 January FRCS, as a member of National Disaster Management Council (DISMAC), met Commander of Fiji Marine Forces, Permanent Secretaries of Government Depts and CEOs of Telecom, Fiji Electricity Authority to discuss the possible relief operation and the pending Cyclone impact.

FRCS has tarpaulins and sufficient black packs (which are a black plastic sheet which can be used for a manner of uses – groundsheet, shelter wrapped and secured around clothing for 2 adults and 2 children, blanket, sheets, towels, candles, basic cooking utensils mosquito coil, matches) for 2,000 families and other disaster stock for distribution. FRCS intends to deploy their relief stock from branches in Viti Levu (main and largest island where capital Suva situated) to meet the needs of over total population over 200,000 on the three large islands of Vanua Levu, Taveuni and Rabi once the assessment result is made clear. FRCS have already commenced work of collecting stock in Vitilevu and brought it to Suva to send to the affected areas tomorrow 16 January 2003.

Currently, over 30 FRCS volunteers are working in Suva until midnight repacking stock to stack on to two 3-ton trucks to leave tomorrow on passenger/ vehicle ferry to Savusavu (on island of Vanua Levu). It will arrive 10 hours later. They had already organised this when they received a message from their colleague volunteers in the Branch who came back from Savusavu. They were working with their local District Officer, assessing cases and had already distributed 107 families with black packs and water containers. It was an SOS for more supplies, and Red Cross relief stock will arrive in Savusavu tomorrow as the first additional relief supply after the cyclone

passed the island. For the packing and distribution of relief supplies, 30-40 Red Cross volunteers are working in each Branch in Savusavu, Bua, Seaqqa, Labasa, and Taveuni.

Director General of FRCS will travel to Labasa to survey the damage on a domestic flight tomorrow. It is still unknown what part of Labasa and surrounding districts are accessible by road. She hopes to meet up with branch personnel and access their needs. It is evident that we need to replenish relief stock since the branch building and relief stock would have gone under 10 feet of water. FRCS President, Mr Sashi Singh has been invited on an aerial survey tomorrow morning.

The Federation regional delegation in Suva has released FJD 3,000 for the FRCS' relief activities from the regional DREF. Suva regional delegation and Secretariat Geneva have been in close contact with FRCS to monitor developments of this disaster relief.

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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