

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

NIAS: EARTHQUAKE

1 April 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 06/2005) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking additional funding from donors for this operation at this time.

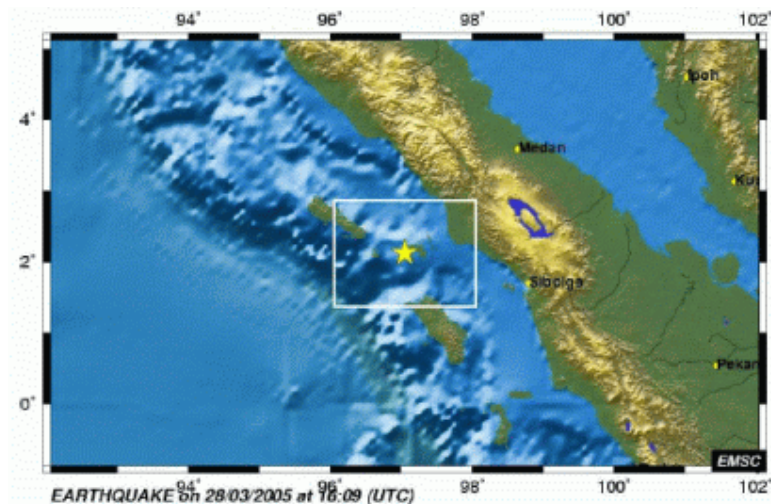
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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

On 28 March 2005, the second Great Quake within a span of just three months shook the coastal area of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, with a force of 8.7 on the Richter scale, causing widespread destruction and as yet



undetermined numbers of deaths throughout three small sets of islands off the coast of Aceh Province: Nias, Simeulue and the isolated Banyak island group. With roads and bridges heavily damaged, and an added burden of rainfall and overcast conditions over the past two days, rescue workers are experiencing severe difficulty reaching rural areas. Aid efforts are similarly constrained by poor weather. Smaller fixed and rotary wing aircraft have been able to deliver some medical and relief supplies, as well as additional aid and rescue workers, however high seas and damaged seaports are limiting access by marine craft other than large vessels with

self-contained offloading ramps.

Loss of life on Simeulue is estimated to be relatively low, numbering in the low hundreds, while UN figures for the death toll on Nias range between 1,000 to 2,000 – although the number of destroyed buildings yet to be searched leaves much uncertainty about casualty rates on Nias. Conditions in the Banyak islands still remain to be confirmed.

The most recent report published by BAKORNAS, the Government's national disaster coordination entity, estimates that 40% of all buildings on Simeulue and 80% of structures on Nias have experienced some degree of damage. That same report declares 394 identified registered dead to date, of which 12 were from Simeulue, 269 from Nias (mostly in the island's largest town of Gunung Sitoli), with the remainder from other parts of the impact area.

The Government has identified and re-confirmed the most urgent needs to be medical supplies, water and sanitation equipment, food, heavy equipment for rescue and road clearance, generators, shelter materials and body bags.

WFP figures estimate that food aid will be required for some 200,000 residents of Nias over the next 60 days at minimum, however an early start to meeting that need is being hampered by damaged air strips, ports and roadways, and by the current bad weather.

Aftershocks continue, with the largest since the last published Bulletin registering Richter 6.3 according to the Hong Kong observatory. Survivors who fled to high ground are beginning to appear in Gunung Sitoli, still traumatized and fearful of further quakes, but driven by hunger and thirst. Few people are sleeping indoors, wary of the potential for further collapse of weakened building structures.

Emergency medical and relief supply ships, rotary wing aircraft and support personnel have been dispatched to the affected area by several governments, including Japan, Singapore, the Philippines, Australia, the Russian Federation and the US. The Government of Indonesia has not issued any formal request for international assistance, while offers of help at the state-to-state level are being coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Although severely constrained by difficult weather and sea conditions, Red Cross Red Crescent efforts continue unabated. A limited amount of relief supplies have been successfully transported onto Nias by air, being mostly tents, medical supplies, generators, motorbikes, and fuel, together with Federation, PMI and PNS staff. Return flights to Meulaboh and to Medan carry injured residents, mostly from Nias Island.

Relief provisions from existing stocks acquired for the tsunami recovery programme are being aggregated in Meulaboh and Sibolga, to be expedited to Nias and Simeulue by air and sea immediately upon weather conditions permitting.

A Spanish telecom ERU and a Danish logistics ERU (Emergency Response Units) are en route to the disaster zone, and a first round of six RDRT members (Regional Disaster Response Teams) are being deployed from surrounding country national societies.

The Norwegian Red Cross is sending an additional 14 rubble halls to Medan for deployment as needed, based upon the findings of the assessments that are now ongoing.

The Japanese and French Red Cross medical personnel who had been located in Meulaboh, remain active on Nias, and the French Red Cross Puma helicopter continues to provide invaluable air support in difficult working conditions.

The Spanish Red Cross watsan delegate has located a fresh water source nearby Gunung Sitoli, however transportation and distribution of that water remains a challenge.

The Chairman of PMI was able to get to Nias, in order to assess personally conditions on the Island. PMI volunteers continue to play an active role in the search and rescue efforts, and the Society's first aid volunteers are helping with the injured at a temporary clinic set up on a soccer field in the capital town.

Food and water are in short supply, and the surviving population is remaining outdoors day and night in unseasonably cool and damp weather.

Outstanding needs

Given the build-up of Red Cross Red Crescent capacity following the 26 December tsunami, the required supplies are already mostly in-country and/or relatively nearby. Unless advised to the contrary, Red Cross Red Crescent partners are asked not to mobilize additional resources.

However, due to the continuing severity of air, sea and land transportation constraints, outstanding needs remain the same as previously reported, including shelter materials, food and non-food relief supplies, generators in large numbers, safe drinking water, hygiene kits, child and family kits.

The Movement's response capability is currently hampered by the forces of nature, as is the case for all humanitarian actors at this most unfortunate time.

Coordination and information sharing

The Government of Indonesia has designated SATKORLAK, the Disaster Management Coordination (DMC) Unit of Aceh Province, as the coordinating body for relief operations on Simeulue Island. For Nias, SATKORLAK working jointly with POSKO, the coordinating body of DMC based in Medan, is overseeing response efforts.

GoI, UN, Red Cross Red Crescent and other agency information sources are reporting on a timely basis as assessment data is determined and distributed. The problems are not based upon lack of information. The barriers, as was the case in the initial stage of the 26 December emergency, are caused by the original destruction – and in this second instance, by poor weather conditions in the immediate aftermath.

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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