

# 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

## YEMEN: LANDSLIDE

6 January 2006

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 Bulletin No. 2 is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance at this time.**

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### The Situation

On the night between 28 and 29 December, 2005, a devastating mountain landslide occurred in al-Dhafir village, Bani Matar District, Sana'a Governorate. The village is situated on a rocky slope about 40 kilometres west of the capital city of Sana'a with a population of some 270 people. It was about 9:00 p.m. when 27 out of the village's 31 houses were destroyed and buried under huge piles of rocks. As of Tuesday 3 January 2006, Yemeni rescue workers have recovered the bodies of 65 villagers killed in that landslide, and officials said the search and recovery teams have finalized their work and left the area.

According to civil defence sources, 11 persons have been rescued from beneath the rubble. Some 50 military and civil ambulances have been transporting the rescued to hospitals in the governorate of Sana'a. The efforts have been impeded by the rugged terrain of the region and the deep pile-up of the huge rocks. It is still not clear what caused the landslide. Yemen's seismology centre had no word of an earthquake and there were no reports of severe weather.

The Yemen Red Crescent responded along with other government and non-government organizations. Despite the limited capacity of YRCS as regards to search and rescue equipments and skills, a number of volunteers moved to the location during the early hours to assess the situation. In the morning of the first day more volunteers joined from several branches mostly from Sana'a, Mahweet, and Amran branches. The YRCS team consisted of 30 individuals including trained volunteers who provided first aid not only to those injured in the disaster but also

those who participated in the search and recovery process including the members of the local community, Civil Defence, Ministry of Health, Police forces, Republican Guards, etc. The team also provided psychological support to children and adults who were devastated by the appalling disaster. By the end of that day the team assisted in recovering 22 bodies, mostly women and children.

When the Federation team arrived a hospital unit was set up in one of the tents with four medical doctors on standby to immediately assist any people who were found. In order to transport the surviving victims to better equipped hospitals in Sanaa, about 10 ambulances were on standby in the village. To move the huge pile of rocks heavy machinery, ie caterpillars, were in operation.

On the second day, 30 December, the YRCS team made another assessment to identify the most important needs to assist the affected community. The Federation Office made required funds available to purchase manual digging tools to help in the search and to assist volunteers involved in the operation. The YRCS president and secretary general visited the area early Thursday morning to oversee the operation and meet officials to coordinate efforts. The Federation Representative also visited the village and met with Governor of Sana'a where they discussed ways of support that can be provided by Federation and YRCS .

The vice president on his visit to the village headed a meeting including the prime minister, the minister of justice, the governor of Sana'a to review the current situation and organize rescue works and relief. The meeting formed a committee to perform these task including the braking and removal of rocks. Yemeni President Saleh soon gave directives to senior officials to rescue and support victims with necessary aid. A camp was set up for the homeless families there.

Among other international organizations is UNICEF, which provided in kind, relief items including 22 medium size water containers, 440 blankets, 220 Jerry cans, 110 kitchen kits, and 110 gas cylinders. The director of UNICEF's information programme said the aid was delivered to the YRCS, which was chosen to be responsible for distributing relief to affected villagers.

The Islamic Relief also made a good contribution. In the first days of the disaster Islamic Relief intervened with aid for 150 families, both evacuees and those directly affected by the landslide. Two truckloads of aid were distributed. IR staff distributed 15 tents, bags of sugar, flour, rice, oil, tea and milk. Blankets, pillows, and mattresses were also given out to survivors, and masks were provided for rescue workers digging up bodies from the rubble.