

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

MOZAMBIQUE: MUNITIONS EXPLOSION

30 March, 2007

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 183 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin (no. 2/2007) is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. Please refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/rpts07/Mz070330.pdf> for details on Information Bulletin no. 1

Activities undertaken are aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

The Situation

On 22 March 2007, a series of explosions occurred in an arms depot located in the Malhazine Residential Area, District Municipality 5 of Maputo, Mozambique. The explosions, which lasted around 4 hours, launched rockets from the arms depot into nearby densely populated slum areas, killing 101 people and injuring approximately 492 others¹. According to the Mozambique National Emergency Operation Centre (CENOE²), 64 houses were completely destroyed, seriously affecting 64 families (320 people). Field visits conducted by the Mozambique Red Cross Society (CVM³) revealed that the number of affected people was significantly higher than existing estimates and that an unknown number of houses have also been partially damaged. In addition, health facilities, factories and other social and economic infrastructures were damaged.

Photo left: A Red Cross Volunteer in front of a building that was affected by the explosion



¹ 19 deaths were recorded in hospitals; 82 deaths occurred in residential areas.

² In Portuguese: Centro Nacional de Operações de Emergência (CENOE).

³ In Portuguese: Cruz Vermelha de Mocambique (CVM).

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Similar incidents have occurred at the arms depot in the past, including explosions in September 1985 and again in January 2007, where an explosion injured two people.

The Mozambique Emergency Operation Centre (COE⁴) in Maputo is working in collaboration with CENOE and coordinating implementation of relief and recovery activities. Initial first aid assistance and evacuation of wounded people and bodies to health facilities was followed by a needs and damage assessment coordinated by CENOE and COE. A multi-sectoral team, consisting of CVM, the National Disaster Management Institute (INGC⁵), the municipal police force and Mozambique Armed Forces, is providing moral and psychological as well as material support (food and non-food items) support to the affected families. Provision of relief items has been prioritized as follows (1 is the highest priority): 1) Families whose houses were completely destroyed; 2) Families whose houses were partially destroyed and are unsafe for habitation and 3) Families whose houses were partially destroyed.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Three teams of staff and volunteers from the CVM Maputo City branch, with support from staff from the national headquarters including specialists in community work, health care, social support and information and dissemination, have been in the affected areas since the explosions occurred. The 27 CVM volunteers and 16 staff members have worked round the clock to assist affected families. Teams are working in close collaboration and coordination with members of the INGC, Mozambique Armed Forces and the police force involved in the relief and recovery operation. So far, the following activities have been carried out:

- Evacuation of injured people;
- Removal of bodies and body parts;
- Reuniting separated family members;
- Identifying appropriate local authority care for unaccompanied children;
- Providing moral and psychological support to families directly affected by the explosions, with assistance from six volunteer university students in their final year of psychology;
- Setting up of tents to accommodate displaced families/ as well as temporary classrooms for the schools that were damaged;
- Distribution of non-food relief items.



Zaina fled with her husband and children just minutes before a rocket completely destroyed her house. CVM is providing her and other affected families with basic household items and psychological support to help them come to terms with the disaster.

Table 1: Distribution of non-food items

Non-food relief items	Amount*
Tarpaulins	154
Mosquito nets	116
Kitchen sets	58
Family emergency kits (including tent, kitchen set, 3 tarpaulins, soap, towels, mosquito nets)	26
Kerosene lanterns	Total no. not available

* *The above relief items were provided by CVM, INGC and Visabeira*

Actions undertaken by other actors:

The Mozambique fire brigade is providing water to Mavalane General Hospital and to the Psychiatric Hospital located in Infulene Residential Area as well as at Zimpeto Cemetery, where burials are being conducted for the

⁴ In Portuguese: Centro Operativo de Emergência (COE)

⁵ In Portuguese: Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades (INGC)

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people who were killed by the explosions. Residents of the affected areas have also played a key role in supporting affected families through donations of food and voluntary service.



A CVM volunteer erecting a tent together with the Mozambique Armed forces.

CVM has been facing a number of challenges during their relief distribution and recovery efforts. The national society experienced some difficulties while collecting and compiling data on its ongoing activities. The Maputo city branch resolved this by holding daily planning and debriefing meetings as well as compiling relevant data to share with all involved staff and volunteers.

The damage assessment conducted by the local authorities has not identified all the needs of affected families. CVM is simultaneously distributing relief goods and updating the damage and needs information provided by local authorities.

The areas for pitching tents are littered with rubble and debris, and CVM volunteers have been involved in clearing the land. In addition, pitching tents has been delayed as tent materials provided are inadequate.

Over the coming days, CVM will continue to report on all its activities and continuously monitor the needs of affected families.

Provision of mosquito nets to families whose houses have been partially destroyed is necessary as well as training in psycho-social first aid be provided to volunteers to enable the volunteers to interact with people who have been affected psychologically by the explosion.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

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