

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

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PANAMA: FIRES

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 185 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin 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.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve 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.**

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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.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

At approximately 6:30 a.m. on Monday 21 May a fire occurred in the neighbourhood of Santa Cruz, located in the Curundú district of Panama City, Panama. Based on initial assessments it is estimated that three wooden buildings – containing at least 106 rooms - were completely burnt down, leaving some 85 families (approximately 380 persons) affected.

The Ministries of Housing and Health, the National System of Civil Defence (Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil-SINAPROC) and other governmental institutions provided initial response to the emergency situation by supporting activities such as search and rescue, needs assessments and first aid care. One adult and one minor with 2nd degree burns were immediately transported to the hospital by the Panama Fire Brigade (Cuerpo de Bomberos de Panamá). The Red Cross Society of Panama (RCSP) also provided direct assistance by transporting a fainted adult to the hospital.

On 21 March 2007 a previous fire had devastated 137 houses in the Curundú neighbourhood affecting some 725 people and killing three minors.

On 23 March 2007, two days after the first fire, the Ministry of Housing opened bidding for the construction of three two-floor buildings that would replace the 106 rooms that were consumed by this second fire, in light of the high risk of these buildings. Due to the works taking place, authorities had requested that residents evacuate the buildings, but that request was ignored.

The Panama Fire Brigade (Cuerpo de Bomberos de Panamá) is currently looking into the cause of this new devastating fire.



The fire brigade trying to control the devastating fire. Source: International Federation.



The Red Cross Society of Panama provides assistance with activities of search & rescue and first aid care. Source: International Federation.

Red Cross action

The Red Cross Society of Panama supported search and rescue and first aid care activities being carried out by the government. There is coordination with the Mayor's office, community leaders, with other non-governmental institutions that are in the field and with SINAPROC's Emergency Operations Centre in the city's capital.

The RCSP, in coordination with the International Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) will closely monitor the situation in order to assess the necessity of further Red Cross involvement, as the immediate needs are now being covered by governmental institutions.

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