

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

SRI LANKA: FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES

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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.



Volunteers supporting the relief efforts of the Hambantota branch of the SLRCS

In mid-January 2007, heavy rains caused by the north-east monsoon resulted in severe flooding and landslides in several districts of Sri Lanka. The national disaster management centre reports that so far 18 people have been killed and about 25,000 people have been forced to leave their homes. In total, as many as 90,000 people have been affected by the extreme weather conditions.

The two worst hit districts are Hambantota and Nuwara Eliya. In Hambantota, the heavy rain in January 2007 has caused additional damage in the areas that were already hit by floods in December 2006. Information indicates that current damages exceed those reported in December 2006.

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The Situation

This season, the north-eastern monsoon rain has caused damage to human lives and agricultural products in several parts of Sri Lanka, which is unusual compared to previous monsoons. A combination of monsoon conditions and a disturbance in the monsoon stream has led to particularly heavy rains across the central and southern districts of Sri Lanka, causing severe landslides and floods. The central, southern and eastern districts, particularly Nuwara Eliya and Hambantota districts, have been affected. The national disaster management centre reports that about 90,000 people have been affected by the heavy rains, with 18 people killed and approximately 25,000 people forced to leave their homes during the week prior to the date of reporting.

The 18 deaths, caused due to landslides, have been reported from Nuwara Eliya district. The landslides have forced 18,383 people to temporarily leave their homes. Another 2,000 people in the country's central highlands, affected by the landslides, are currently cut off from relief supplies.

Nuwara Eliya district consistently receives the highest annual average rainfall in the country due to its high elevation (1,990 metres above sea level) and its location in the wet zone.

In Hambantota district, heavy rainfall occurring from 10 January 2007 caused severe flooding as streams and rivers burst their banks and irrigation reservoirs overflowed. During the worst of this situation on 13 January, 5,815 people were displaced to temporary camps set up in schools in different parts of the district.



Massive damage and displacement of people, due to flooding, in Hambantota district

Even in December 2006, Hambantota district was badly affected by heavy rainfall. Water tanks and reservoirs overflowed, which resulted in severe flooding in the area. Nearly 1,000 people had to take temporary shelter in seven camps, set up in schools and community centres in the district, at the end of last year. The heavy rain in January 2007 has caused additional damage to the previously flood-ridden areas.

The flat landscape of Hambantota is naturally prone to flooding, as rivers from the highlands meet the sea in this district, located in the dry zone of the country. Due to this, flash floods occur in this area, even without rainfall.

Water and sanitation facilities, such as wells and toilets, have been badly affected in Hambantota by the two recent incidents of flooding. As wells are the most important source of drinking water in the affected areas, there is an urgent need for well-cleaning.

The situation in other districts has been less severe. The government agent in Ampara district reported that about 40,000 people have been affected by flooding in this district, which reached its worst on 16 January 2007. The immediate needs of the affected people have been met by the government and no further relief assistance is required from humanitarian organisations.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Items	Quantity
Sleeping mats	1,500
Sarees (women's clothing)	875
Sarongs	1,000
Soaps	2,000
Bed sheets	1,000
Sarees underskirts	1,150
Jerry cans (10 litres)	700
Hygiene parcels	250
Lanterns	100
Baby parcels	500

Table 1: Distribution of non-food relief items in Nuwara Eliya district, as on 17 January 2007

Nuwara Eliya district, as well as to 100 people airlifted to the city of Kandy. Stocks have been released from Federation warehouses in the cities of Galle, Colombo and Ampara. In addition, 250 boxes of hygiene parcels were supplied by the Canadian Red Cross.

The Nuwara Eliya branch of the SLRCS has obtained the services of approximately 75 volunteers to help with the distribution of relief items and drinking water, as well as to assist with the removal of debris on roads. The branch

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) was quick to respond to the disaster and, supported by the Federation and its partners, is providing relief assistance to people affected by the floods and landslides, particularly in the worst affected districts of Nuwara Eliya and Hambantota. The SLRCS, through its branches, has provided first-aid and distributed non-food relief items (see table 1 and 2) in the affected areas. In addition, national disaster response team members were deployed in all the affected districts, along with hundreds of volunteers.

Nuwara Eliya district

The SLRCS have been distributing non-food relief items to displaced people living in temporary welfare centers in

has provided first-aid to people injured in the landslides, and a team consisting of psycho-social officers and search and rescue personnel has been working in the district, since 15 January, to provide counselling to people traumatized by the disaster and help with restoring family links. The branch has also been imparting advice on camp management.

Hambantota district

In Hambantota district too, where a large number of people were affected and displaced due to two cycles of flooding in a span of only three weeks, the SLRCS has been distributing non-food relief items. These stocks have also been released from Federation warehouses in Galle, Colombo and Ampara. As a measure to prevent an increase in vector borne diseases due to heavy rains, the Canadian Red Cross has supplied 1,000 mosquito nets.

Items	Quantity
Sleeping mats	1,000
Bed sheets	1,000
Mosquito nets (double)	1,000
Jerry cans (10 litres)	1,000
Sarongs	500
Sarees (women's clothing)	499

Table 2: Distribution of non-food relief items in Hambantota district, as on 17 January 2007

The Hambantota branch of the SLRCS responded to the situation with the support of 40 volunteers. Information collection and coordination is currently being carried out by the volunteers. The branch has also been providing first-aid services, supplying drinking water and assisting with management of the camps.

A team, consisting of psycho-social officers and a member of the national disaster response team, has been deployed in the district (from the neighbouring branch of Matara district) to carry out an initial assessment of the situation.

[Please return to the title page for contact information](#)

This operation is 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:

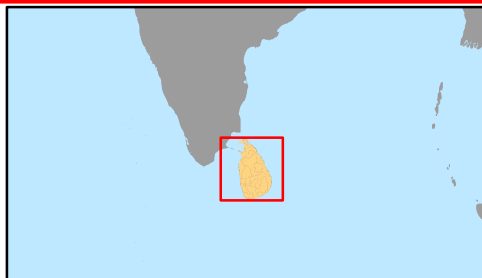
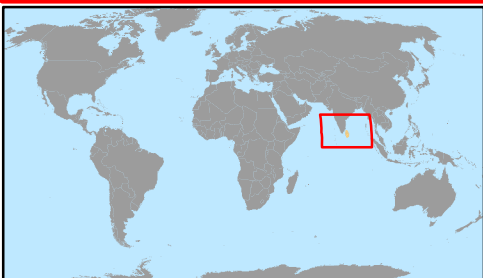
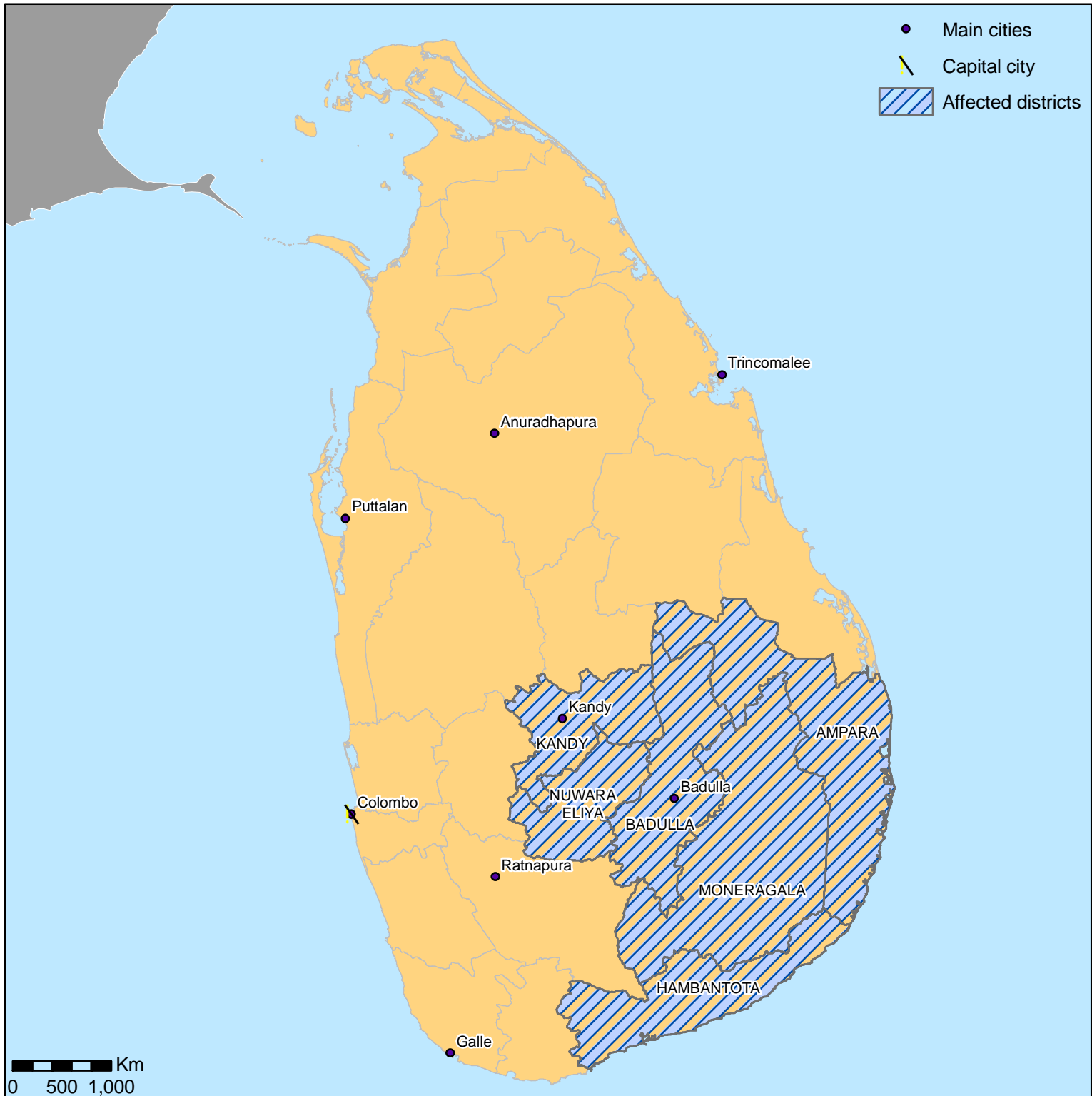
- *Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.*
- *Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.*
- *Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.*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

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>



Sri Lanka: Flooding and landslides



Heavy rains caused by the north east monsoon have resulted in severe flooding and landslides in several districts of Sri Lanka. The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) reports that 18 people have been killed and up to 25,000 people were forced to leave their homes at some point over the last week. In total, as many as 90,000 people have been affected by the extreme weather conditions in mid-January 2007.