

# Information bulletin



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Colombia: Volcanoes

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11 November 2008

**This bulletin is being issued for information only.**

On 9 November 2008, several seismic events were felt in the eastern sector of the Machin volcano, located in the municipality of Cajamarca in the central department of Tolima.

The Colombian Red Cross Society, with the support of the Federation, has determined that external assistance is not required at this moment since need and damage assessments are still being carried out.



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**Nevado del Huila volcano in the department of Huila.**

**Source: Colombian Red Cross Society**

## The Situation

On Sunday, 9 November approximately 375 tremors were felt near the **Machin volcano** in the department of Tolima. The tremors have a depth between 2.5 to 5 kilometres. The strongest felt tremor measured 3.4 on the Richter scale. The people living near the Machin volcano reported changes in ash clouds, cracks on the ground and damages to homes. The Machin volcano is currently at level three (yellow alert) and it is considered to be the most dangerous volcano in Colombia.

The **Nevado del Huila volcano** has also been demonstrating an increase in activity since 7 November. During the past two days a total of 3,290 tremors were registered, of these 1,967 occurred in the past 20 hours. The Colombian air force flew over the Huila volcano along with the Colombian National Police and noticed a continuous emission of gases and ashes towards the surface. Currently, the Nevado del Huila volcano is at level two (orange alert), which means a probable eruption can be expected in the next days or weeks.

The Colombian Mining and Geology Institute (Instituto Colombiano de Minería y Geología - INGEOMINAS) has been following the events closely in order to report any changes on the volcanoes' activities. All the local emergency committees have been activated in the area near Machin volcano and the regional emergency committees in Tolima, Quindío and Cundinamarca are following the situation closely.

The Colombian National Direction for the Prevention and Attention to Disasters is permanently monitoring the Del Huila volcano through the Colombian Civil Defence, Fire department and the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS). Other agencies including the National Police, INGEOMINAS and the Social Protection System have also been monitoring the situation.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Colombian Red Cross Society, since the beginning of these two volcanic events has activated the contingency plan in the areas of Tolima, Cauca, Huila, Valle Caldas, Quindio and Cundinamarca. The American Red Cross provided the National Society with a satellite phone to evaluate the affected zone in Tolima. The local branch in Tolima with support from the National System for the Prevention and Attention to Disasters is elaborating damage and needs assessment to verify the conditions of the families affected.



CRCS volunteers monitoring the Nevado del Huila volcano.  
Source: Colombian Red Cross Society

A shelter was opened in coordination with the Disaster Attention Prevention Committee (Comite de Atencion y Prevencion a Desastres - CLOPAD). The local branch in Tolima provided basic relief items including 100 food parcels, 100 comforters, 17 mattresses, 50 sheets, 70 blankets, 100 hygiene kits and one 2,000 liter water tank. There are six volunteers who assist in the shelter per shift. Additionally, the CRCS has an all terrain vehicle available to be used in the emergency.

The local branch in Cauca activated the early alert system as well as the National Intervention Teams (NIT) in the areas near the Huila volcano. The local branch in Cauca has personnel and equipment available in case the situation worsens and is closely monitoring the volcano's activity through the mud flow sensors and a

seismograph machine. The local branches of Cauca, Belalcazar, Huila, Valle and Tolima have a total of 84 relief volunteers' and 16 temporary shelters in coordination with the CRCS headquarters.

The International Federation, through the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation for Andean countries in Lima, have been in close contact with the CRCS and are on standby to provide support if needed. A PADRU Water and Sanitation officer is currently in the country and will provide assistance to the National Society if required.

The Colombian Red Cross Society will continue to respond to the current situation and closely monitor and prepare for any further developments.

### How we work

*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.*

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its 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.

## Contact information

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