

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Cambodia: Stampede in Phnom Penh

Information bulletin n 1°
23 November 2010

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Cambodian Red Cross Society, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

[<click here for contact information>](#)

The situation

On 22 November 2010, the final day of the annual water festival, at around 20:00, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, there was an estimated crowd of one million people on Diamond Island where celebrations were being held, including a live concert. For reasons yet undetermined, unrest took place, causing fear among the crowd and people began to stampede in order to leave the island via a bridge connecting the island to the mainland. It appears many people felt suffocated, causing several to jump into the river running below the bridge. In an attempt to disperse the crowd, police used water cannons, but this appears to have caused the electrocution of some people from loose electrical wires hanging on the bridge.

In total, 341 people have been reported dead and 387 others injured. People have been taken to four hospitals, as follows:



| Number of reported | Preah Ketomealea Hospital | Calmette Hospital | Preash Kosamak Hospital | Khmer-Soviet Hospital | Total |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Deaths | 14 | 138 | 49 | 140 | 341 |
| Injuries | 43 | 196 | 100 | 48 | 387 |

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) national headquarters and youth responded immediately to the incident by providing first aid to more than 100 cases, resulting from this catastrophe. Red Cross youth were already in place and received information about the incident quickly at their dissemination stand for HIV/AIDS, first aid and road safety on-site; and at the food stands on the island and riverside opened for all three days of the water festival.

CRC immediately held a meeting at 09:00 on 23 November including the management of all departments: disaster management, health, human resources, communication and administration. IFRC, ICRC, Danish Red Cross and French Red Cross also participated in this meeting.

CRC determined its role in two main areas: restoring family links; and psychosocial support to those affected and their families who had been affected by this catastrophe.

The Cambodian national society positioned four teams at the four hospitals mentioned: Preah Ketomealea, Calmette, Preash Kosamak, and the Khmer-Soviet; where casualties were taken. Each team consists of eight to ten people, whereby at least four are posted inside the hospital to collect the latest information; and four outside to convey this information to relevant parties. Team members consist of at least four technical persons and four youth volunteers.

French Red Cross is currently providing psychosocial technical support to these teams as well.



Cambodian Red Cross staff provided assistance and psychosocial support to the families of casualties at the Phreash Kosamak Hospital. (Photo: IFRC)

ICRC is also providing much-needed support to teams in terms of technical assistance in restoring family links (RFL) activities as well as some 200 body bags. ICRC also provided lunch for 265 hospital staff on 23 November at the Khmer-Soviet hospital. Meals have also been scheduled for staff and those injured at Calmette hospital on 24 November.

The CRC youth is also assisting in social services with authorities in the registration of needs and assistance allocated to families affected. Some 50 Red Cross youth were already on standby from the morning of 23 November with a further 50 ready to replace volunteers in the afternoon.

CRC headquarters has also informed its branches' tracing units regarding the situation.

The IFRC country office in Phnom Penh is supporting the CRC at headquarters level through information dissemination and interaction with the media. The Cambodian national society is currently focusing on technical support from its Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners. Financial support is not requested at this time.

Assistance to those and their families affected by this grievous incident lies with the government. Treatment for those injured as a result of this as well as the transportation of the bodies of casualties are free of charge. It is also expected that the government will recompense families who have lost family members with USD 1,250 for each member lost; while those injured will receive USD 250 in support.

Different government bodies will take their respective responsibilities towards those affected:

- Ministry of Health will be responsible for autopsies and the issuance of death certificates
- Ministry of Social affairs will take the responsibility of supporting families and their transportation



CRC immediately called for a meeting on the morning of 23 November to put Red Cross support in place for individuals and families affected by the incident. (Photo: IFRC)

- The military and logistics unit will transport the remains of casualties as needed

CRC itself will take responsibility for providing psychosocial support to communities where the dead are being returned. The two CRC branches of Kampong Thom and Kamport are already aware and prepared for this.

Those who wish to contribute towards assisting those affected are requested to contact the municipality office. CRC itself is not fundraising for this disaster at this time.

The national society also provided a press release for the media at noon today. This was reported on the 12:30 news in-country. International news media have also reported this event worldwide.

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 \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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