

MADAGASCAR: CYCLONE GRETELLE

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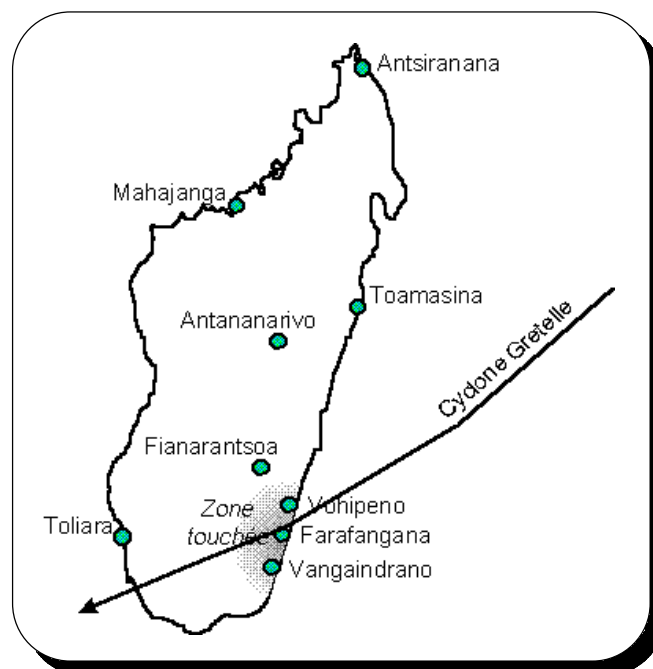
Information Bulletin no. 01

The context

Six people are confirmed dead, 100 more are missing and several villages have been levelled by Cyclone Gretelle which tore through south-western Madagascar on the night from Friday to Saturday. The cyclone is the worst to hit the African island in living memory, and many villagers survived only by clinging to trees. Normal communications have been cut and boats which could have been used in the rescue effort have been swept out to sea.

Serious damage has been reported in the Vangaindrano region, in Vangaindrano, Farafangana, Vohipeno, Manakara and Midongy. Some 80 % of the homes have been ravaged. A hospital, houses and even a prison have been felled by the force of the storm, which has caused rivers to burst their banks.

The disaster zone is well known for production of coffee, bananas, lychees, oranges and maize, the region's staple food, which is normally ready for harvest in February. As such,



the cyclone will have medium and long-term effects, as well as the obvious immediate impacts.

Latest events

Gretelle has now moved towards Mozambique, where only limited damage has been reported. The Malagasy Government interior ministry's National Relief Committee, of which the Malagasy Red Cross is a part, is now formulating a response to the disaster. The anticipated number of people seriously touched by the cyclone lies between 30.000 - 60.000 people.

Government/Red Cross/Other agencies' action

Members of the National Relief Committee (including government, Red Cross, MSF, CRS, UNICEF, Care, UNDP and USAID) are participating in an aerial survey, following which a meeting will be held to co-ordinate relief effort. Following the aerial survey an assessment team consisting of the same institutions will be heading to the field on Tuesday. The aim is a more in-depth evaluation, but due to a destruction of communication means details of the needs have not been easy to get. The Malagasy Red Cross, will have five members on this evaluation team.

The International Federation has processed out of its Disaster Relief Emergency (DREF) emergency funding for this operation of the Malagasy Red Cross.

One tonne of clothes has been donated by the Seychelles Red Cross, and is on its way to the disaster zone as well as six hospital tents sent by the Malagasy Red Cross donated by the ICRC. Care International is ready with plastic sheeting and MSF is preparing medicaments for the injured and sick. ADRA is assisting with transport of goods. Outbreaks of diarrhoea and scabies are anticipated. The Branch of the French Red Cross in La Reunion has sent some drugs for immediate assistance.

Needs to be met

Based on the immediate evaluation of the Red Cross and other organisation on the ground the needs are estimated for approximately 30.000 people including;

- Shelter and blankets
- Cups, plates and cooking utensils;
- First aid materials;
- Treatment for contaminated water;
- Food such as: Rice (locally available) and Maize to be imported in the future;
- Construction material (locally available).

Plan of action

The Malagasy Red Cross Society will aim to assist some 10,000 of the 30,000 victims of this latest disaster. It will distribute one tonne of clothing donated by the Seychelles Red Cross and erect six hospital tents, donated by the ICRC. The Red Cross will serve a hot soup and a tea to the victims for at least 15 days as well as overseeing the distribution

relief items. Outside assistance will be sought for transport costs and local purchase of necessary materials. The National Society is presently equipped with the above-mentioned clothes and tents, 200 litres of oil donated by the National Relief Committee, stretchers, three vehicles and 120 volunteers in the local Red Cross branches. The Red Cross has been co-ordinating the work through its branches on the ground.

Conclusion

The Malagasy Red Cross Society is ready to engage all its human and material resources to render assistance to the victims of Cyclone Gretelle. External assistance will be sought to cover needs which fall outside its capacity.

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