

TOGO: FLOODS

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The Disaster

Since the beginning of October 1998, a succession of heavy rains has fallen on Togo, systematically playing havoc with both the urban and the rural populations. The worst affected are in the Lakes prefecture in the South, and in Oti and Kpendjal prefectures in the North of the country.

The amount of rain sharply increased towards the end of October. Some rivers, such as the Mono in the South and the Oti in the North, burst their banks and flooded the bordering villages, causing serious material damage and disrupting human life.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

At the very beginning of the disaster, the Togolese Red Cross dispatched a team to the field to assess the situation and needs. 30,405 persons were identified as affected in the following regions :

Lakes prefecture :	15,785 persons
Oti prefecture :	6,530 persons
Kpendjal prefecture :	8,090 persons

The Togolese Government, via the Ministry of Social Welfare, convened a meeting of all the NGOs active in Togo. The aim of the meeting was to explain the situation of the affected populations to the NGOs and to request their assistance.

In view of the National Society's limited resources, it was unable to provide immediate assistance to the afflicted populations. The deterioration of the socio-political situation in Togo since 1990 has seriously affected the capacity of the Togolese Red Cross to provide prompt, appropriate assistance as its emergency stocks are practically depleted.

An outbreak of cholera is feared, and the possible occurrence of other diseases may increase in the affected areas. The regions where food stores were destroyed from floods may also be prone to food shortages.

Needs

A second team is currently on the spot and should provide additional timely information on the situation and the state of the affected population. There are many outstanding needs. The TRC is requesting

contributions in cash and kind from donors with which it will be able to procure the following relief supplies (amounting to CHF 170,000) needed for a 3-month period:

- 5,000 blankets
- 608 bales of second-hand clothing
- 5,000 mosquito nets
- Medicine : tetracycline, paracetamol, chloroquine

A similar disaster struck Togo already in 1995, and the Togolese Red Cross carried out an effective relief operation with assistance from the Federation and Participating NS's.

Although the National Society is experiencing difficulty in providing information as communication with the remote regions is hampered, needs nevertheless exist. The Federation has released CHF 25,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to allow the Togolese Red Cross to launch the operation.

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