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Information bulletin

Papua New Guinea: Ferry sinking

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.



Red Cross distributing essential relief items donated by AusAID and Morobe Mining to survivors from Bougainville

The situation

On 2 February, Thursday, a ferry, the MV Rabaul Queen, travelling from West New Britain to Lae in Morobe Province sent a distress signal before sinking at sea.

Media reports have quoted that 246 people survived. The ferry had a capacity of 310 although it is known to have been carrying many more people. Passengers on the boat included school children and teachers returning to the mainland for the new schooling year.

Four bodies have been recovered and identified. The remaining number of missing persons is still being established pending a commission of inquiry. Search and recovery has now ended.

Survivors were offered temporary accommodation by the Salvation Army and the Catholic Diocese.

A government memorial service will be held once the coroner has released an official list of the missing.

Morning and afternoon briefings are being conducted for the public each day at the Provincial Disaster Centre, where the Red Cross Morobe branch is also located.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Red Cross Morobe branch staff and volunteers responded to the needs of survivors and families of the missing.

In Lae, Red Cross provided first aid, assisted with registration of survivors and has distributed relief items to 184 survivors at the Salvation Army and the Catholic Diocese care centres, as well as at the Red Cross branch office. Items included blankets, sleeping mats, water bottles, biscuits, drinks, laundry soaps and

powders, bath soaps, toilet tissues, sanitary pads for women and pre-paid phone cards for contacting families.

A total of 184 individual survivors were assisted with relief items (figures as at 17 February)

Male	120
Females	64

Total number distributed from 3 - 14 February 2012 (Donor - AusAID)

	Blanket	Sleeping Mat
Total	149	149

Total number distributed from 5 - 14 February 2012 (Donor - Red Cross)

	Water bottles 600mls	Oreo cream biscuits	Tang powder	Flex cards	Travel bag	Laundry powder	Laundry soap	Toilet roll	Bath soap	Bath Towel
Total	272	136	136	207	136	136	136	136	136	81

Total number distributed from 5 - 14 February 2012 (Donor - Morobe Mining)

	Water bottles	Oreo cream biscuits	Paradise stubby biscuits	Lae snax	Globe canned beef	Protex bath soap	Toilet tissue	Sanitary pads (women only)	Klina cut soap	Laundry powder lime 320g	Laundry powder lime 90g	Bottles of orange crush cordial
Total	732	122	122	122	110	122	122	44	122	122	122	30

Red Cross also donated a large rice cooker, double gas burner and gas cylinder to the Catholic Diocese to assist with the catering of food for survivors.

An Australian Red Cross delegate travelled to Lae to work alongside the branch and provided on-the-spot training for staff and volunteers in Restoring Family Links, a programme that helps people reconnect with their families in times of disaster or conflict.

The IFRC sent an operational manager from the regional office in Suva to support PNG Red Cross responses to all current disasters.

Australian Red Cross sent a communications delegate to support PNG Red Cross's media, communications and reporting needs.

The New Zealand Red Cross sent two information technology and telecommunications delegates to support PNG Red Cross in resolving their technical issues on getting connected.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC 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 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.

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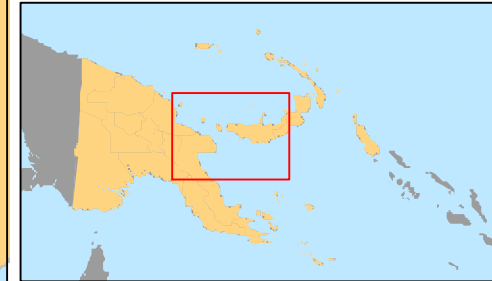
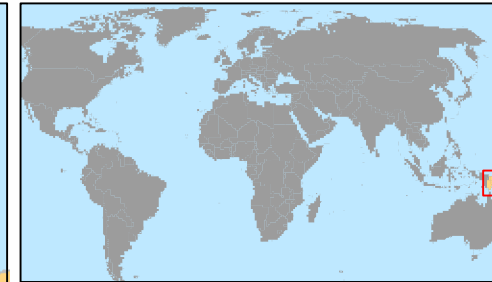
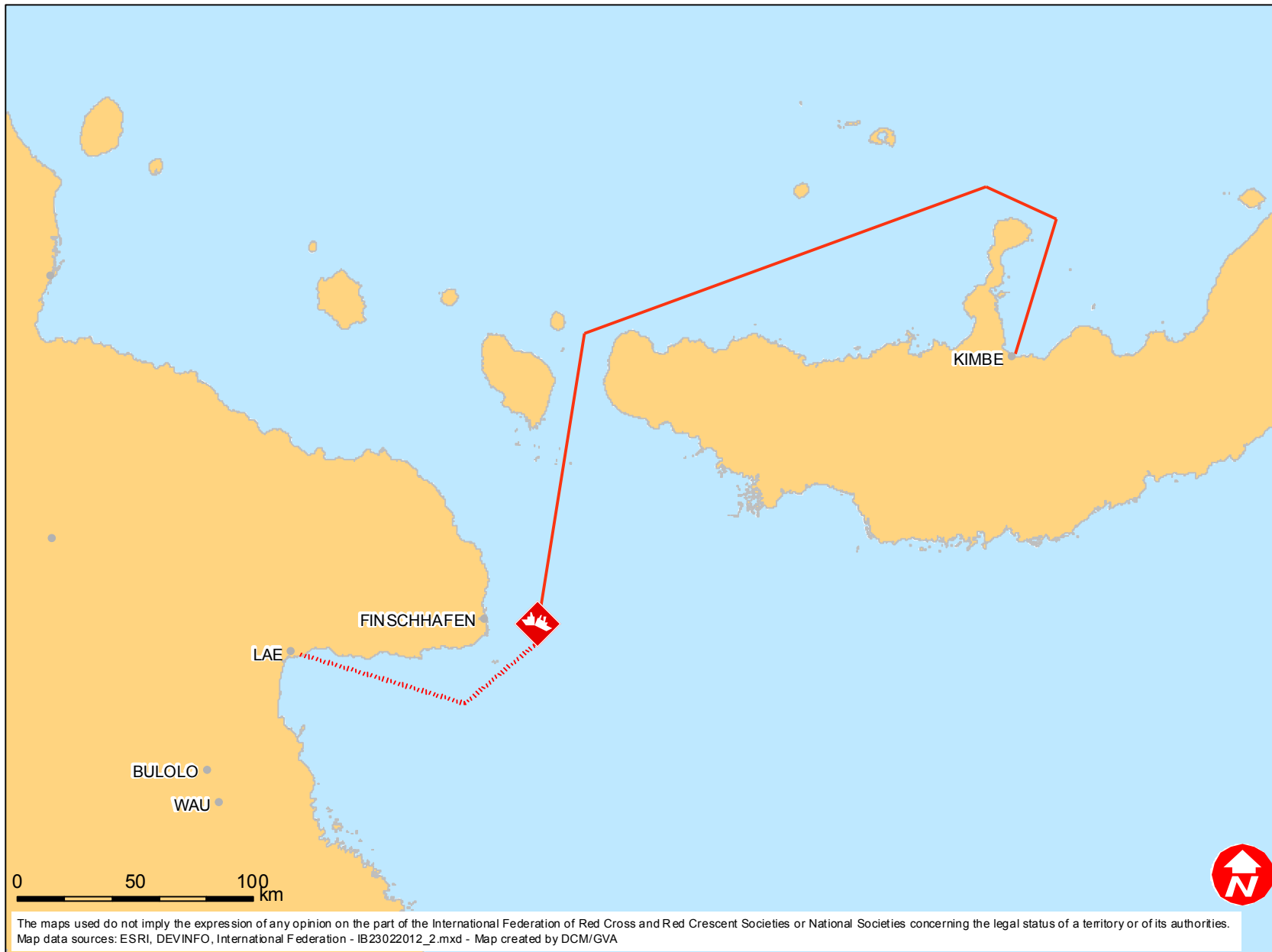


The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

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.
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MV Rabaul Queen path



Ferry_sinking