

DREF Bulletin Update



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: FLOODS AND LANDSLIDES

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this update: 27 November 2006 to 26 February 2007.

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 145,912 allocated from the Federation's DREF on 27 November 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation. <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDRCG001.pdf>
- This operation was implemented over 3 months and was completed by 28 February 2007; a DREF Bulletin Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation.

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's 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.

Background and current situation

Brazzaville, the capital city of the Republic of Congo (RoC), is situated at the bank of the River Congo and it experiences recurrent floods during the rainy season. The floods occur with an enormous impact. In late October 2006, the city registered torrential rains that caused flooding and left more than 4,000 people homeless. Densely populated areas such as Mpila, Mikalou, Tsiémé, Ma Mboualé, Peit-Chose, Yoro and Mfilou were affected. These areas have very poor infrastructure and drainage systems.

The water rose up to two meters high, flooding most houses and resulting in loss of lives as well as destruction and loss of property, particularly in Mpila and Kinsoudi. By November 27, 2006, flooding had claimed six lives. Most of the affected people sought refuge with relatives living in areas at lesser risk of flooding, but many others had nowhere to go.

In Mpila, the central water collector had remained blocked for the past twenty five years, resulting in water overflowing during the rainy season. There was a lack of latrines due to the marshy soil, exposing the population to waterborne diseases. This necessitated an urgent hygiene and sanitation intervention.

Elsewhere, landslides had affected Kombo, Eméraude, Ciespac and Kinsoudi areas. It was feared that the situation might worsen if no action was taken since the rains continued. Public cemeteries of Itatolo, situated in the northern

Congo Brazzaville: Floods and Landslides: DREF Bulletin no. MDRCG001; Update no. 1.

part of Brazzaville grave, had not been spared by the landslides as many of the graves had been washed away. More than 1,000 graves for children had been destroyed and a huge gully had been dug exposing many of the remaining. A site was provided for the re-burying of the corpses that had been unearthed by the landslides.

Close to the cemeteries, there was a water pond where people fetched water. The landslides had polluted this water and exposed the population to high risks of contamination which could result in the outbreak of waterborne diseases.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In response to the disaster, the Congolese Red Cross (CRC) mobilized an assessment team which comprised of volunteers, the national disaster management (DM) coordinator, the DM officer of the Federation sub-regional office in Yaoundé, a Regional Disaster Responses Team (RDRT) member and the Federation field health delegate from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to assess the situation and respond to the needs of the affected population. CHF 145,912 (USD 120,888 or EUR 91,711) was allocated from the Federations Disaster Relief Fund to the national society on 27 November 2006.

In line with the plan of action that was published in late November 2006, the following activities have been carried out with the support of a Federation's Regional Disaster Response Team (ERDAC¹).

Achievements

50 Red Cross volunteers have been carrying out hygiene and sanitation activities such as cleaning of gutters, drainage of stagnant water, disinfection of latrines and treatment of water wells in order to prevent the outbreak of potential epidemics and reduce the effects of the disaster in the localities of Brazzaville that have been affected by floods. Volunteers have cleaned 15 km of gutters and drained considerable quantities of water in Mpila Gallieni, Jean Opango, Ndolo, Emeraude, Talangai, Lénine, itoumbi and Mpiaka. In addition, the volunteers have treated over 150 water wells so far and disinfected more than 250 latrines in the same localities.

Red Cross volunteers identified about 3,500 persons from 550 families affected by floods and distributed non-food items (NFIs) such as 1,100 insecticide treated mosquito nets (ITNs), 1,000 blankets, 100 mattresses, 2,000 bars of soap, 550 cooking kits, 56 tarpaulins and 10 bundles of clothes. The same beneficiaries who came from the Mikalou, Petit chose, Fleuve Congo, Mbouale Hotel-Emeraude and Mpila Gallieni neighbourhoods of Brazzaville will continue to benefit from the hygiene and sanitation activities of the Red Cross (treatment of water points, disinfection of latrines and destruction of mosquito breeding places).

Several training sessions have been organized to build the operational capacities of the Congolese Red Cross. Red Cross and community-based volunteers have been trained on how to respond to floods. A simple community-based alert system has been put in place. 50 volunteers from the Brazzaville divisional committee of the Red Cross have also been trained on water and sanitation (WatSan) and on the promotion of hygiene. The trained volunteers tested their skills immediately as they took part in the treatment of wells, the disinfection of latrines and the destruction of mosquito breeding places in the localities affected by floods.

In addition, 10 volunteers were trained on the Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) method. Furthermore, a training of trainers' (ToT) session was organized on community-based first aid to ensure sustainable training of new volunteers. Hygiene, sanitation and first-aid materials have been put at the disposal of the national society for further intervention.

Coordination

The Congolese Red Cross continues to work in close collaboration with other Movement partners and humanitarian agencies to ensure smooth coordination of ongoing operation.

¹ ERDAC = Equipe régionale de réponse aux désastres pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre (ERDAC in French) or Regional Disaster Response Team for West and Central Africa

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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.

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