



EGYPT: FERRY DISASTER

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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 181 countries.

In Brief

DREF Bulletin (no. MDR64001), Update no. 2; Period covered: 6 to 9 February, 2006

THIS DREF BULLETIN, UPDATE NO. 2, IS BEING ISSUED BASED ON THE SITUATION DESCRIBED BELOW, REFLECTING THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. CHF 50,000 (USD 38,109 OR EUR 32,123) WAS ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR 2 MONTHS. UNEARMARKED FUNDS TO REPAY DREF ARE ENCOURAGED.

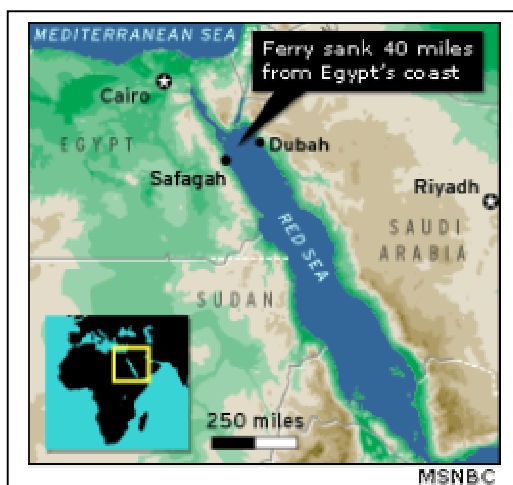
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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The situation



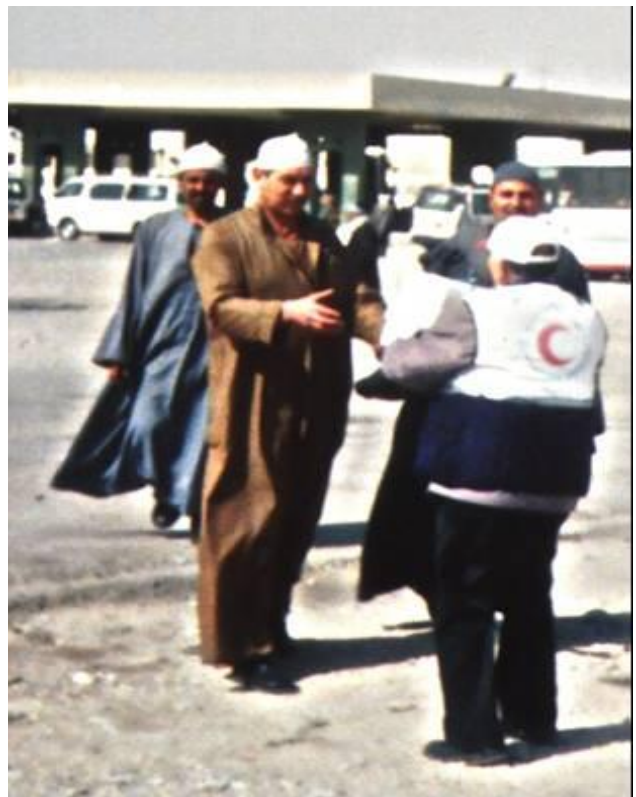
On 3 February 2006, the Al Salaam Boccaccio 98, an Egyptian-registered ferry ship carrying some 1,414 passengers, sank in the Red Sea, 40 miles off the Egyptian port of Safaga (see map at left). Based on the updated figures provided by Egyptian government spokespersons, 388 people were rescued, 319 bodies were recovered, and 708 people remain missing. Some 1,200 Egyptians, 99 Saudis, 3 Syrians, 2 Sudanese, and a Canadian were reported to have been on the vessel. The cause of the disaster remains unclear and under investigation, and there are still conflicting reports as to whether a call for help (SOS) was raised by the captain of the ill-fated vessel, and what exactly the response was to the distress call. According to media

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reports, the maritime authorities were only informed of the incident five or six hours later, which significantly delayed the search and rescue efforts, and reduced the chances of survival of the majority of the passengers. Unofficial reports indicate the cause of the disaster was due to the prevailing weather conditions together with a fire that broke out in the ship’s car deck. Attempts to extinguish the blaze led to unintentional flooding of the vessel.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action taken so far

Photo at right: ERC volunteers distributing food parcels to relatives of the victims.



Eight volunteers from the national headquarters, and 30 from the Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS) Hurgada branch, and its sub-branches in Quseir and Safaga, as well as the ERCS Red Sea Committee, continue to provide shelter, psychological support, tracing services, meals and other needed items to the families of the persons who remain missing. Some family members continue to congregate on a daily basis, hoping to get some news, or at worst, to recover the body (bodies) in order to bring the grieving process to a closure. The national society continues to provide assistance and services as needed, and to date Red Crescent personnel have provided support to 2,518 individuals.

In addition, the national society has collaborated with the Ministry of Endowments to establish a special fund for the families of those persons who perished in the tragic event. So far, the response to the appeal has been positive. A



Photo above: Some of the ERC team assisting relatives of the victims.

hotline number has also been established by the ERCS to provide information to affected families, and to collect pledges. Staff and volunteers of the Red Crescent are also conducting a survey among the families who lost their income-earners (bread-winners) in order to formulate an income-generating project. The plan of action for the post-emergency phase is also being developed by the national society, in coordination with the Federation’s Tunis Regional Office.

Coordination

In implementing the response to this tragedy, the staff and volunteers of the Egyptian Red Crescent are working in close cooperation with the authorities (the Army, the Ministries of Interior and Health, etc) at both national and local levels. This will be continued during the entire operation, as the national society is a valued and respected member of the disaster management structure in the country, and continues to demonstrate its added value to efforts in this area.

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