

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

MADAGASCAR: CYCLONE SEASON

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A Preliminary Emergency Appeal is being prepared and will be launched shortly

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: 17 March to 21 March, 2007.

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

- CHF 35,000 was allocated from the Federation's Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) on 7 March 2007 to facilitate an assessment of the situation following four cyclones, by a Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) disaster management specialist and the Malagasy Red Cross Society. Please refer to: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/07/MDRMG002.pdf> dated 16 March 2007 and information Bulletin <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/rpts07/md070316.pdf> dated 16 March 2007.
- An additional CHF 150,000 was released on 21 March 2007 to facilitate the deployment of a Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) to assist in evaluating the situation following the Cyclone Indlala. A preliminary Emergency Appeal is expected to be launched after the assessment is completed.
- This operation is expected to be implemented for 3 months, and will be completed by 7 June 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

On 15 March 2006, intense tropical Cyclone Indlala entered the district of Antalaha off the island of Madagascar with wind speeds of 166 kilometres/hour and gusts of 235 kilometres/hour, making it the fifth cyclone to have hit or affected Madagascar within the past 3 months. Cyclone Bondo struck on 25 December 2005, Clovis on 3 January 2007, Favio on 18 January 2007 and Gamede on 26 February. This is the first time that the island has been struck by

so many cyclones in such a short period. The cyclones have been worsened by the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone moving slightly south, causing continuous rains from the end of December 2006 to the present moment. Cyclone Indlala ravaged the country for three days, causing havoc and devastation throughout the island and leaving considerable damage on the north east coastline.

According to the National Disaster Committee (NDC), up to 70 percent of the vanilla farms and rice paddies in Madagascar are flooded. Helicopter surveillance by a Malagasy Red Cross Society (MRCS) and Federation team has identified Maraontsetra as the worst affected region with almost 100 percent of houses and crops submerged. According to the authorities in Maraontsetra, the trapped population represents 80 percent of the total population of (250,000 inhabitants).

The team which has been on the ground since 18 March 2006 indicated that accessibility within the region has also been hampered. The population has limited food stocks and drinking water is a problem since the wells are polluted. Although the health centres are functioning, some cases of diarrhoea have been reported. The surveillance by helicopter showed that Ambanitelo, Andranofosty, Anfofa, Anlanazana, Antakotako and Mananbolo in the north-west and south-east of Maraontsetra were the most affected zones.

In Antalaha, roofs have been blown away and around 40 percent of property in the town destroyed, while water and electricity supply as well as communications networks have been disrupted. Access to the rural zones remains difficult due to damaged roads, and the bridge which connects rural Antalaha to the town centre has been cut off at Antombawa. Families have been displaced and left without shelter. Some of the affected households have sought temporary refuge in their neighbours' houses. All the health centres in the town are functioning. The two most affected zones in Antalaha district are Sarahandrano and Antombawa.

The needs

The accumulated impact of all these cyclones is damage to infrastructure and crops, flooding, landslides and displacement of communities. The Malagasy Government estimates that 293,000 people have been affected by the previous cyclones. Many have again been devastated by Cyclone Indlala. The level of water is extremely high rendering many remote areas inaccessible. Preliminary evaluations indicate that the most urgent needs are shelter, potable water and food as well as transport (zodiac or helicopter) to the affected areas.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

On 16 March 2007, the National Disaster Committee requested the Malagasy Red Cross Society to mobilize its regional resources for the areas of Antalaha and Maraontsetra. Consequently, and with assistance from the Indian Ocean Intervention Platform (PIROI¹), helicopter surveillance was undertaken by the MRCS to determine the extent of the damage caused by Cyclone Indlala in Antalaha and Maraontsetra. However, lack of human resources and logistical problems are making a proper evaluation by Red Cross teams difficult. The national society has also mobilized the Red Cross for needs assessment and identification of the most vulnerable households in readiness for the distribution of non food items from PIROI in Maraontsetra, scheduled to start on 21 March 2007.

PIROI mobilized 40 tonnes of material such as plastic sheeting, tents, collapsible jerry cans, kitchen sets and a water treatment unit, which were loaded on to the marine helicopter carrier. The ship arrived in the waters of Antalaha on 19 March 2007. Four French Red Cross delegates (telecommunications engineer, WatSan engineer, administrator and logistician) accompanied the shipment. Another airlift of water treatment supplies is scheduled to be carried out from La Réunion on 24 March 2007.

On 20 March 2007, the President of the Malagasy Red Cross requested the Federation to send a field assessment and coordination team (FACT) to assist in evaluating the situation in the north-west of the country. A team has been assembled and deployed. Close coordination is being maintained with the PIROI to ensure that eventual activities of the FACT team will be complimentary to French Red Cross initiatives. A regional disaster response team (RDRT) team is on standby in the event that additional support is required.

¹In French: Plate-forme d'Intervention Regionale pour l'Océan Indien (PIROI).

Coordination

The Malagasy Red Cross Society has been attending the daily meetings of the National Disaster Committee where daily reports of the situation are shared with all partners. The main challenge at the moment is accessibility and concrete information regarding the needs. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) shares its updates with the Federation. Contacts were established with the local district and health authorities in Antalaha and Maraontsetra as well as MEDAIR and CARE. CARE is planning a surveillance of the south-east zone of Antalaha for a quick evaluation of the situation, while MEDAIR has plans for a water treatment intervention. Medecins du monde are also on standby.

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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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