

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

NAMIBIA: CAPRIVI FLOODS

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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 February to 15 March 2007.

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

- CHF 112,877 allocated from the Federations DREF on 26 February 2007 to respond to the needs of this operation. (Refer to the [DREF Bulletin](#) for more information).
- This operation is expected to be implemented for 6 months, and will be completed by August 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



A house under floods in Caprivi Region

Due to heavy rains in Angola, the Zambezi River burst its banks causing flooding into the Namibian Caprivi flood plains. Flooding has been a regular occurrence in the Caprivi Strip, with the most devastating floods experienced in 2004. The current floods are expected to be the most severe, following the rainfall trend for this season. On 13 March 2007, the Zambezi water level was 7.05 meters as compared to 4.71 meters on March 2004. Communities in the flooded plains are still at high risk as the flood waters are at dangerous levels. More rains are expected and this could worsen the flooding situation.

The floods have affected Kabbe, Katima Rural, Linyanti and Kongola constituencies. The areas identified as the most affected are Muzii, Mpukano, Ikaba, Ivilivinzi, Malindi, Masikili, Nsundwa, Ioma, Mahundu and Nankutwe, where people had to be evacuated as a matter of urgency. Several people living close to the river banks and the nearby flood plains have

Namibia: Caprivi Floods; DREF Bulletin no. MDRNA003; Update no. 1

moved to higher grounds, some with their herds of cattle. A total of seven people were reported to have died since the beginning of the floods. Other people have moved temporarily to safer areas in the same vicinity, with the hope of returning to their homes when the flooding recedes. Many houses, fields, cattle and boreholes have been submerged and people are living in harsh conditions as there is no shelter or safe drinking water. The roads in all the flood plains are no longer passable.

Government officials are looking at the flooding as a man-made disaster as many people ignored the government's early warning to move to higher grounds. The local government has identified four temporary relocation sites at Lusese, Schuckmansburg, Kabbe and Impalila, which are being cleared. The Ministry of Defence provided helicopters for an assessment that was conducted on 6 and 7 March in the affected areas. The government of Namibia has liaised with the local business people and boat associations to assist with evacuation of the affected people through Mwandji (in Zambia), Ngoma and Itomba (in Namibia) exit points. The evacuations, which started on 8 March, are being done with the help of canoes, boats and helicopters to safe points, where trucks are ferrying people to the relocation sites.

Due to inaccessibility in the flooded areas, there is a gap in the statistical information on the number of affected people as the assessments have not been completed. Estimates from areas visited by road, water (boats) and air (helicopters) indicate that 4,500 households are likely to be relocated. To get exact figures of relocated people, Namibian Red Cross (NRC) volunteers will register all those people arriving at the relocation sites, while search and rescue operations will be conducted by the police river patrols.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The International Federation allocated CHF 112,877 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to assist the Namibia Red Cross in conducting an assessment, developing a plan of action and registering beneficiaries. The Federation regional delegation in Harare deployed two regional disaster response team (RDRT) members namely, the regional disaster response senior officer and a water and sanitation (WatSan) technician to assist the national society with an initial assessment and development of a plan of action for a period of 14 days. The plan of action and budget have since been developed and submitted to the Namibia Red Cross headquarters and Federation regional delegation for comments.

The Red Cross branch in Caprivi was involved in assessments as well as training of Red Cross staff and volunteers on social mobilization. The national society also deployed relief items from Windhoek to the Katima Mulilo warehouse. The relief items, which included 23 tents, 211 tarpaulins, 30,500 water purification sachets, 125 jerry cans, 158 insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), 49 bars of soap and 360 blankets, were distributed to 1,228 households. The floods-affected households are also being provided with tents, tarpaulins and plastic sheeting for temporary shelter by the Namibia Red Cross. The WatSan team is preparing a clean water supply system and sanitation facilities at the relocation sites as well as distributing water purification sachets.

Red Cross volunteers have been trained in health and hygiene education as well as prevention of disease outbreaks. The volunteers continue to promote good hygiene practices through sensitization campaigns in the relocation sites. The national society's information officer also visited the affected areas and gathered information for press releases, operations updates and situation reports.

Coordination

Since the onset of the disaster, the Namibia Red Cross has been participating in the national Emergency Management Unit (EMU) meetings on coordination and planning for the relief operation. The local branch has also been attending coordination meetings and assisting in planning of the food response in collaboration with the Regional Emergency Management Unit (REMU).

On 7 and 8 March 2007, the Namibian President visited the Caprivi Region and toured the flooded areas as well as the relocation sites. The government allocated NGN 10 million (CHF 1.7 million) to be used for transport and food distributions during the floods operation.

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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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