



TIMOR LESTE : FLOODING AND LAND SLIDES

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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 July 2007 to 31 August ,2007

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

- CHF 145,211.93 (USD 118,000 or EUR 86,000) allocated from the Federations DREF on 27 July 2007 to respond to the needs of people affected by flooding and land slides in East Timor.
- This operation is expected to be implemented over five months, and will be completed by November 2007; a DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by February, 2008).

Background

Timor-Leste, a relatively new nation established in 2000, has faced an uphill struggle on many accounts in its young life. The government and humanitarian organizations including the Red Cross have been faced with the daunting task of managing about 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) in camps since the civil unrest in early 2006.

Government/United Nations Development Program (UNDP) assessments show that a total of 3,119 houses were destroyed, 2,242 damaged and many more undamaged but illegally occupied¹. So far, 584 transitional shelters have been constructed in the capital city of Dili by the government and a non governmental organization. (Source: *GoTL 'Levantamento de dados' data assessment with support and analysis provided by UNDP, March 2007*).



A house destroyed by the flooding and landslides, Suai.

¹ An internal conflict in 2006 caused many people to abandon their homes and seeking shelter in IDP camps or with distant relatives. After some time, new people came and occupied these houses which were abandoned.

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Timor Leste completed its presidential and parliamentary elections in June and July respectively in a peaceful way. However, the announcement of the new government on 6 August 2007 led to escalating civil unrest in the country. About, 323 houses have been reported burnt, 53 damaged in Viqueque and Baucau districts plus 300 houses in Vinilale sub-district of Baucau district. About 4,000 persons are reportedly displaced in these districts. The unrest is reported in the western part of the country- Bobonaro and Covalima districts as well. (Source: UNOCHA site rep).

In the past, Timor-Leste experiences its heaviest rains during June and July each year. However, this year, the downpours have been more severe than usual, leading to flooding and land slides. Floods and landslides have caused at least one death, destroyed infrastructure, damaged livelihoods and led to many being displaced as a result of losing their homes.

Overall, 243 families in six districts have been badly affected. Immediately after the disaster, the government of Timor Leste organized inter-agency coordination meetings and provided relief support to the affected population with support from UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Red Cross.

Current situation

Cruz Vermelha de Timor Leste (CVTL), with support from the Federation, have been providing much needed support to the affected families in the construction of 201 houses in five districts of Suai, Same, Ermera, Viqueque and Manatuto. The planned operation is due to complete by the end of November, 2007.

The details of shelter needs are as follows:

- Manatutu district: 18 houses
- Viqueque district: one house
- Ermera district : 30 houses
- Manufahi district: 16 houses
- Covalima districts : 136 houses (65 houses damaged and 71 at risk of flooding)

Government, UN agencies and other NGOs have been providing the communities with water and sanitation and health care facilities.

Red Cross Red Crescent Action

The CVTL and the Federation jointly carried out the following activities in this reporting period:

Emergency response

Cruz Vermelha de Timor Leste volunteers provided preliminary support to the community by collecting preliminary information, cleaning contaminated water wells with Oxfam and supported other organizations to distribute relief materials to the affected population. In the rehabilitation process, their role will be instrumental in educating the community in better construction techniques through the building of a demonstration house in each community. The community-based method of constructing houses means that communities themselves are responsible for organizing and building the houses. The CVTL/ Federation will provide core shelter materials to the affected families and help communities with construction techniques.

Land ownership

The CVTL team organized consultation meetings with the local government, sub-district heads and village heads in the districts of Covalima, Ermera. The meeting reiterated the need to relocate affected communities in the new area. The local government and village heads issued a declaration for allocation of land to the affected families. Thus, land titles to the affected families in question have been clear.

However, for the 71 houses that are at risk of flooding, the land ownership issue has not been sorted out yet. The second round of discussion with the local community and local government is being planned. The proposed sites

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for relocation of the community are safe from land slides and flooding. Access to minimum physical infrastructures like road, school for children and drinking water exist in those areas.

In the districts of Same and Manatuto, the land issue is under discussion. However, it is expected that it would be sorted out shortly.

Due to ongoing civil unrest in Viqueque district, travel to the district has been restricted according to the UN travel advisory. However, the CVTL team have already been to the affected area.

Procurement of construction materials

The tendering process has already been completed. Documents have been sent to the regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur for technical assessment of the bids and recommendations. Altogether 15 companies participated in the bid.

Activities planned for the next reporting period

- Purchase of construction materials
- Continue to organize community groups for the construction of shelters
- Construction of demonstration shelters
- Supply of construction materials to the community
- Technical support to the community for construction of shelters
- Follow up of construction

Constraints

- The civil unrest in the country affected the operation schedule due to security threats,
- The provision of land to relocate affected communities is a sensitive issue, therefore, it will take some time to discuss and decide.

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How we work

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.

The Federation's Global Agenda

The International Federation's activities are aligned with under a 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.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

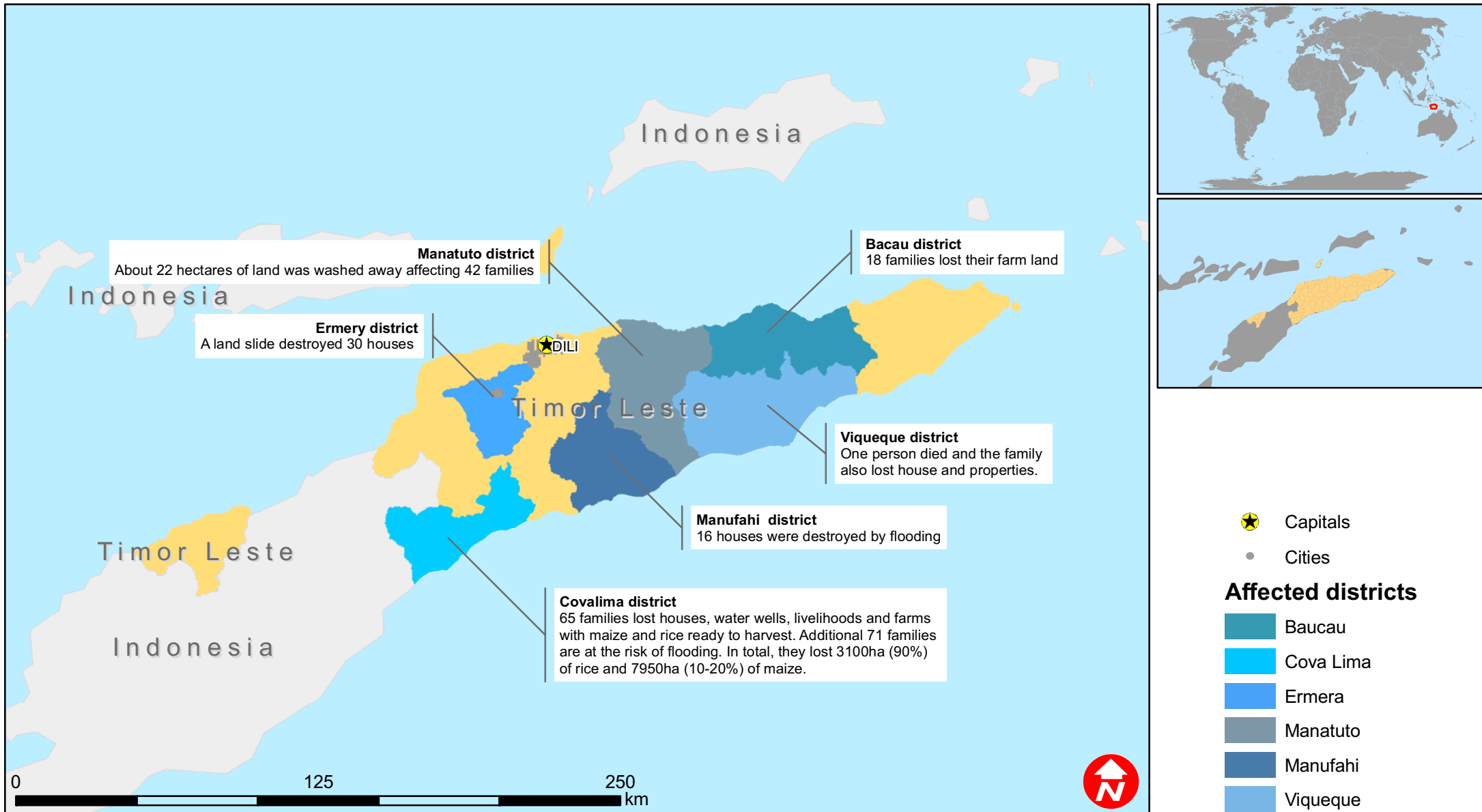
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East Timor: Floods



The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

Map data sources: ESRI, GIST, Federation