INFORMATION BULLETIN

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

INDONESIA: NORTH SUMATRA FLASH FLOOD

17 November 2003

Information Bulletin N° 01/2003

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: N/A

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 180 countries.
For more information: www.ifrc.org

This Bulletin is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

In early November adevastating flash flood, triggered by heavy rains and deforestation, hit Bahorok in the sub-district of Langkat, about 100 km north of the Sumatran capital of Medan. The situation persisted from 2200 hrs on 2 November to 0100 hrs on 3 November and killed or buried alive 245 people. As of 16 November, 150 bodies had been retrieved (including five foreign tourists from the USA, Singapore, Germany, Australia, and the Netherlands) from the mud and debris. Another 95 bodies are still unaccounted for. Based on the Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia/PMI) assessment report, 25 bodies have yet to be identified. Some 30 injured patients are still in the local hospital. Further reports indicate that approximately 1,300 people have been displaced, nearly all from the three most affected villages of Bukit Lawang (132 families/507 persons), Timbang Lawan (106 families/414 persons), and Sampe Raya (87 families/365 persons).

Overall, the flash flood washed away 402 houses and heavily damaged one hotel, six cottages, 280 kiosks, 20 community houses (with paying guest facility for tourists), eight bridges, two buses, five cars, one primary health centre, and electricity and communications systems. Some 120 displaced families with no other option for accommodation are currently sheltered in a local mosque; the rest of the population is living with relatives and neighbours.

The governor of north Sumatra visited the affected areas in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. Since 3 November, a coordination mechanism has been established by the provincial government which involves all related institutions including the police, TNI (Indonesian Army), and *satkorlak/satlak* (provincial/district disaster management and coordination committee. As of today, the central government has granted IDR 1 billion to support disaster victims as well as carrying out rescue, relocation and recovery operations. The Department of Social Affairs committed financial assistance in the amount of IDR 300 million. This assistance will be granted to the families of the dead victims (IDR 2 million for each dead body). In addition to providing cash to the victims, the Department of Social Affairs, through provincial

government, provided 2,000 food packages, 250 packages of non-food items, 30 tents for temporary shelter and 50 MT of rice. The local government has also supplied 16.2 MT of rice and other food assistance (instant noodles, cooking oil, eggs, sugar, canned food) and allocated IDR 114 million as immediate funds to respond to this disaster. Furthermore, the government has established an emergency post (POSKO) in front of the mosque sheltering some 120 families who have lost their houses. One public kitchen and a media information centre have also been set up. Limited water trucking is ongoing, supported by the local government while the TNI is providing emergency health assistance from their health posts.

Two respective locations were identified for temporary and permanent relocation of those people affected by the floods. The local government is working to prepare a comprehensive proposal on respective actions, as instructed by the PMI national office. The search and evacuation operation of missing bodies continued until 16 November, after which the affected area was temporarily closed and secured to avoid any repetition of unplanned settlement.

An inter-agency coordination meeting between PMI, OCHA and INGOs (International Medical Crops (IMC), OXFAM, and Mercy Corps) took place on 6 November in Medan, with the objective of establishing a coordination mechanism in all aspects of operation. Discussion also centred on identifying immediate and medium/long term needs. In response to the emergency situation, IMC provided hygiene kits and utensils for 250 families; planning is ongoing to provide additional water trucking and building emergency toilets for the emergency phase. Mercy Corps has also distributed 1MT of supplementary food. Additional dry food, plastic mats, tarpaulin and other non-food items have been provided by the local communities, NGOS, political parties, religious groups, and women and youth associations.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Some 30 volunteers of the Medan team *SATGANA* (rapid response), using two ambulances, have been engaged since the first day of the operation on search/rescue and evacuation activities, together with the local government team. One mobile emergency vehicle (MEUV) was deployed with emergency equipment for the field response action team. A senior response officer from PMI national headquarters arrived on 4 November to lead the immediate response operation, initiate the assessment process, and ensure coordination and communication at different levels. An additional 20 *SATGANA* volunteers joined two days later to strengthen the response team capacity and expedite action. The PMI chairman and secretary general, together with Federation disaster management delegate, visited the disaster and emphasised PMI's commitment in humanitarian activities as well as the need for close coordination between stakeholders. To address immediate needs (until 14 November) approximately 150 body bags were provided to the operation. Identifying the most vulnerable is an ongoing exercise, taking place simultaneously with the distribution of 350 family kits, medicine (for 1,000 people) and providing assistance to local government in food and other non-food item distribution.

On 11 November, the first coordination meeting between *satlak* and other agencies was initiated by PMI, during which PMI, the Federation, OCHA and IMC discussed the government's comprehensive plan at different phases (including timeframe), and agreed on identified needs, needs versus available assistance, possible support from other agencies and regular coordination also emphasised at different level to avoid any overlapping and duplication. The next coordination meeting has been scheduled for 19 November, chaired by the *bupati* (head of districts).

PMI's recent performance and activities were discussed in UN and other agencies coordination meetings with appreciation and included in the minutes, and situation reports (OCHA and WFP). This image of PMI provides enormous donor support to meet the further need of beneficiaries, for this particular operation.

Until today, with the support of USAID, OCHA, the Danish and Chinese governments, local business communities, and Federation, plans are ongoing to provide platoon tents for storage, cooking utensils and mosquito nets for displaced families, and trauma counseling/psychological support to the affected population, as requested by the local government and further needs identified in emergency phase. In the short term (for temporary relocation), the plan is also ongoing to provide water sanitation support and minimal shelter materials - again as requested by the local government and as further needs are identified.

Status of Donor Contributions and Commitments, as of 15 November 2003

Name of the Donors	Amount	Status
Chinese Embassy	20,000 US$	Cheque received by PMI
Local Business Community	35,000 US$ (approximate)	Cheque received by PMI
Danish Embassy	24,000 US$ (approximate)	Agreement signed and embassy obtaining approval from Copenhagen for cheque handover
OCHA	50,000 US$	Committed and waiting for PMI proposal
USAID	50,000 US$	Agreement signed and cheque handover ceremony on 17 November 2003
Total:	**179,000 US$**	

For further details please contact

- *Palang Merah Indonesia in Jakarta; Tel: +6221 799 2325; Fax: +6221 799 5188; email: sgpmi@palangmerah.org*
- *International Federation Indonesia Delegation; Tel:+6221 7919 1841, Fax: +6221 7918 0905, email: ifrcid01@ifrc.org*
- *Pepe Salmela (Regional Disaster Response Coordinator) in Bangkok: Tel: +662 661 6933; mobile: 669 204 6088; email: ifrcth21@ifrc.org*
- *Ian Logan (Operations Manager) in Geneva: +41 22 730 4281; Fax: +41 22 733 0395; mobile: +41 79 217 3381; email:logan@ifrc.org*
- *Charles Evans/Sandra Rosner, Southeast Asia desk. Phone +41 22 730 4320/4456, Fax +41 22 733 0395, e-mail: Charles.Evans@ifrc.org/Sandra.Rosner@ifrc.org*

.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at http://www.ifrc.org.