

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

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 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This information bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the situation at this time. The Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS) is responding to the disaster with a one-month operation assisting some 12,000 people with non-food items. The NRCS, with support provided by the Federation, is seeking a total of USD 347,000 to carry out the operation. The United States and the Netherlands embassies in Windhoek have donated some USD 37,000, and the NRCS has submitted a funding application to ECHO. The NRCS requires USD 190,000 to complete the planned activities (see attached budget). Donors interested in supporting the NRCS should contact the NRCS directly (see contact details on page 3).

The Situation

Some 12,000 people in the Caprivi region in northeastern Namibia have been marooned for three weeks now after the Zambezi River overflowed its banks and submerged 22 villages in Kabbe and Katima districts. Several people are reported to have drowned, but as the area affected is marshland prone to flooding, most structures are built on hilltops and this set-up of housing has indeed saved the lives of the population at risk. People are reluctant to be relocated to safer areas for fear that their properties would be looted.

The flooded areas are inaccessible by road and can only be reached by boats, canoes or helicopters which makes relief efforts very challenging. The government is providing limited food relief to the flood victims, but there is a high risk of outbreak of waterborne diseases. According to local media, people are using the contaminated water for consumption, and there has already been an increase in cases of diarrhoea, respiratory infections and skin rashes. It is expected that the floodwater may take months to recede, leaving behind pools of stagnant water, which provides an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes. Malaria is endemic in the Caprivi region, and there is a serious concern of malaria and cholera outbreaks.

The situation of the affected population remains precarious, and they are in urgent need for assistance. The immediate needs are food, blankets, tents, mosquito nets, water purification tablets, water containers and kitchen sets. Caprivi has suffered droughts in recent years, and there is chronic food insecurity in the region. The livelihood of these people has been further compromised as crops are under water and houses are flooded. Livestock are trapped on higher ground, which in fact are like small islands surrounded by floodwater, with little if any grazing and are being attacked and eaten by crocodiles. The Caprivi Strip, which comprises of Namibia, Zambia and Botswana, has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the world, with up to 50 per cent of the population affected in some areas.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

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Within 10 hours of notification, the NRCS and the Federation's Regional Delegation in Harare sent a joint regional disaster response team (RDRT) to the affected areas to carry out a rapid needs assessment from 3-10 May. The team produced an assessment report, which was shared with all relevant stakeholders, and is used as the basis for governmental response to the disaster. Because of the prompt Red Cross response and its capacity regionally and internationally, the Namibian government has requested the NRCS to be at the forefront of the relief efforts. The Red Cross has taken on the responsibility of providing the flood victims with essential non-food items such as tents, blankets, water purification tablets, mosquito nets and kitchen sets, while the government will undertake food relief and distribution of other urgent items.

The regional disaster management delegate was deployed on 16 May to support the NRCS in setting up the relief operation. After meetings with government representatives and embassies over the weekend, the EU ambassador called together the diplomatic community to brief them on the situation, and call for a coordination of relief efforts. The Red Cross, which has earned great respect of the government and the diplomatic society for its actions, was asked to support the government in coordinating information on the relief efforts through its global reporting mechanism.

The NRCS, with the support of the regional delegation in Harare, is seeking funding for its operation regionally. The immediate response is promising. The United States embassy in Windhoek has donated the equivalence of USD 25,000 in kind. It has procured non-food items locally under the supervision of the Red Cross and according to the SPHERE standards, for the immediate assistance of some 400 families. The Netherlands embassy has donated USD 12,000 and the Red Cross has submitted a preliminary application to ECHO, with the support of the EU office in Windhoek, seeking USD 120,000.

The NRCS is already present in Caprivi through its cross-border HIV/AIDS home based care programme. Volunteers on the ground warned the Red Cross headquarters ahead of time of the rising water levels in the Zambezi and the possibility of serious flooding, which made the swift response possible. The National Society has three full-time staff members, 20 trained home-based care facilitators and 15 tracing volunteers in the area. A Regional Disaster Response team will be operational in Caprivi as of 25 May to carry out the relief operation. The team consists of 23 people – 8 RDRT members (4 from Namibia RC and 4 from sister Societies in the region) as well as 15 Namibian RC volunteers. The team will be split in three, each sub-team covering 4 distribution points already identified.

Operational developments

The RDRT volunteer team has been identified and briefed, and will be in the affected area by Sunday 25 May to assist with the relief operation. The Federation Regional Delegation DM department with the support of the logistics department are shipping 1,000 tents, 1500 blankets, 1,600 kitchen set, 1,600 water containers and one Landcruiser that will arrive on Monday. The donated items from the USAID, which were procured locally within days, will arrive on Saturday ready for immediate distribution. This is only made possible because of the swift response of the USAID in procuring and delivering the goods to the Red Cross. The consignment - 1,200 blankets, 400 kitchen sets, 400 water containers, 1,600 batteries and various tools – will make up the balance of essential requirements

Four thousands mosquito nets and five rural health centre kits for the five affected health clinics have been ordered and will be dispatched as soon as they arrive at the regional delegation in Harare. The NRCS, with the support from the two regional Federation delegates (DP/DR and information) are continuing their intense fundraising efforts.

An operations room has been established at the NRCS headquarters, with the NRCS DR officer in charge. Communication has been established with the Red Cross operational base in Katima Mulilo by telephone and HF.

The Federation DP/DR delegate is continuing to advise the government Emergency Management Unit (EMU) on SPHERE minimum standards, coordination, and code of conduct in disaster relief.

Federation coordination

An emergency reporting and advising network – field, NRCS HQ, regional delegation DM department and Secretariat's DMC department - has been established. Counterpart relationships with government and the EMU have been put in place at all levels, in Windhoek and in the field.

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The Namibia Red Cross Secretary General and the Federation regional DP/DR delegate met with:

- Principle Secretary to the Prime Minister.
- Deputy Director of EMU.
- The Ambassador of the EU.
- USAID.

The meeting with the EU ambassador over the weekend resulted in a donors meeting where representatives from 19 embassies, the UNDP, USAID and DFID were briefed on the situation and intended Red Cross operation. The coordination role of the relief efforts remains with the Namibian government, but the Red Cross was asked to provide vital support through its global coordination and information network.

National Society Capacity Building

The Red Cross response to the disaster has been solely undertaken by the Namibia Red Cross and with support of RDRT members from sister Societies in the region – starting with the RDRT assessment to the intervention underway where NRCS staff and volunteers have been reinforced with Red Cross disaster response experts from Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This indicates the high level of disaster response capacity of the Southern Africa Red Cross Societies now available.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The regional information delegate has worked closely with the NRCS information officer, who will take on all information and reporting duties. The NRCS has earned high respect from the government, diplomatic missions, and media, as well as with the general public due to its immediate response to the disaster. The NRCS Secretary General continues to provide vital information to the local media and has been interviewed daily by all major newspapers and broadcasters in relation to the disaster. The NRCS has weekly radio slots with the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation where the DR officer, the information officer and the regional information delegate have disseminated Red Cross action to the public. The NRCS will also send radio messages to the flood victims on regular basis to provide health education and information on relief distributions.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact (field to provide/complete relevant contact details):

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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>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

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BUDGET LINES	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE USD	TOTAL USD
PERSONNEL			19632
Expatriated staff, RDRT members	8	55USD/Day x 30 days	13200
Driver	1	55USD/Day x 30 days	1650
Local personnel, Volunteers	16	11USD/Day x 30 days	4782
FOODSTUFFS			
AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND IMPLEMENTS			
MEDICAL			10250
Emergency Health Kits	5	2050	10250
ESSENTIAL RELIEF ITEMS			89500
Blankets	6000	4	24000
Mosquito nets	4000	3	12000
Water containers	2000	5	10000
Kitchen sets	2000	20	40000
Village tools	Lumpsum		3500
TEMPORARY SHELTER			155000
Tents	1000	155	155000
WATER AND SANITATION			3500
Water purification tablets	270000		3500
EMERGENCY REHABILITATION			
DISTRIBUTION COSTS			
TRANSPORT			23300
International transport			18100
Transport tents Maputo – Katima Mulilo			11000
Transport Relief items – Harare – Katima Mulilo			7100
Local transport			5200
Vehicle lease, Landcruiser for 3 months	1	1400	4200
Fuel			1000
EVALUATION			
FEASIBILITY STUDIES			4900
Initial Assessment	RDRT		4900
TRAINING			
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION			8000
Batteries			8000
OTHER SERVICES			2070
Drinking water for RDRT/Volunteers			2070
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS			31615
Miscellaneous/PSR/Admin etc.	Lumpsum		31615
TOTAL BUDGET			347,767

