

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

SAHELIAN COUNTRIES – Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal: Heavy rains and floods

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Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 100,000

This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Emergency Appeal.

The Situation

Exceptionally heavy rains and severe floods in the Sahel region have caused the loss of life of several dozen people, the destruction of homes and the loss of food crops of several tens of thousands people in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. The water levels of the major rivers and streams are still rising, and more cities and villages along its banks risk being severely flooded over the next days and weeks. As usual in such situations, there is a risk of a cholera outbreak and an increased incidence of malaria in the entire flood affected areas.

Other countries of the sub-region (not mentioned in this Information Bulletin) might be affected as well as the situation evolves over the coming days and weeks. The rainy season in western Africa lasts until the end of September or early October. If the rains do continue at their present intensity, which is forecast, it is expected that the flooding will worsen, with the resulting impact.

Burkina Faso

Heavy rainfalls have flooded 10 major towns of the country and created an emergency situation for over 3,00 families. Some 900 families have lost their homes and belongings, local food stocks are destroyed, and many crops are inundated, jeopardizing the next harvest.

Mali

According to IRIN the volume of water flowing in the Niger River in July and Niger was already eight times higher than usual for the time of the year, and has caused exceptional flooding affecting a much vaster area than usual during the rainy season.. Additional heavy rainfalls at the end of August and the beginning of September are causing widespread flooding of numerous villages, towns and crops in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao, Mopti, Segou and Koulikoro. On the evening of 3 September the capital city of Bamako was facing extensive floods in at least 6 densely populated residential areas. Approximately 10,000 inhabitants have lost their houses and belongings, and many food stocks have been washed away.

Mauritania

Most areas of the country have suffered from extraordinarily heavy rainfalls between 7 and 20 August, and the rains continue. The most affected regions are along the Senegal river and in the central locations of Assaba, Gorgol, Brakna and Adrar where some 3,600 mud houses have been destroyed, leaving 21,000 victims homeless.

Niger

Seven persons have died, and approximately 5,400 families (30,000 people) in the regions of Dosso, Tahouna, Tillabéri and Zinder are affected by rains and floods; at least 1,100 houses and local food stocks for several thousand people are completely destroyed.

Senegal

Heavy rains and floods occurred during the early part of August, and have affected various parts of Senegal, mainly Kaolack, Matam, Tambacounda and Kolda. 8 persons have died, while some 5,300 people are homeless, and at least 887 families have partly or entirely lost their household equipment. The water levels of the Senegal River are still rising and submerging crops that are about to germinate; parts of the city of St. Louis and many other towns and villages along the river banks are expected to be threatened by more floods in the coming weeks. Roads have been cut by mudflows and access to many regions in the northern part of the country is slow and difficult.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

The respective national societies in each of the concerned countries have activated their disaster response teams and have started some initial emergency relief operations within the range of their capacities

Burkina Faso

The Burkinabé Red Cross has initiated a quick response in assisting 1,800 most vulnerable victims of the floods with mattresses, blankets, rice and millet out of its own emergency relief stocks. The national society has now exhausted all its preparedness stocks. Field assessments are presently being carried out to find the detailed needs of the affected population.

Mali

Most of the affected families have received provisional shelter by the local authorities in school buildings or community centres. Thanks to some limited existing stocks and recent donations of food and non-food items by the Iranian Red Crescent Society, the Mali Red Cross (MRC) was able to distribute dried peas, sugar, oil, blankets, javel water and impregnated mosquito nets to some of the worst affected families in the city of Bamako and in the regions of Mopti, Segou and Timbuktu. The MRC is presently carrying out detailed needs assessments in all the affected regions.

Mauritania

Homeless families have found spontaneously offered provisional shelter with less affected neighbours and relatives. WFP and its implementing partners have initiated limited food distributions in some central parts of Mauritania. The Mauritanian Red Crescent Society was able to start assessment work in those affected areas where there is a presence of an active local committee. The national society intends to support the effort with international assistance, including 2,700 most vulnerable persons with emergency health care, hygiene measures, blankets, mosquito nets, household equipment and new shelter.

Niger

The national society has purchased from its own disaster relief fund 5 MT of maize for immediate distribution among most vulnerable families in the 4 affected regions. The national society was also able to assist some homeless families with used cloths from its own relief stock. Joint assessments to the affected areas are planned in close collaboration with the concerned local authorities.

Senegal

Thanks to a network of approximately 1,500 volunteers in the branches, the national society immediately started its own response activities to affected families by assisting in emergency evacuations and equipment of provisional shelter facilities, and by distributing basic food and non-food items.

The national society intends to strengthen its contingency planning and disaster preparedness in case of further heavy rains and floods:

- Disaster response teams remain on high alert and quick refresher trainings will be organized.
- Increasing the national society relief stocks with 6,500 blankets, 6,500 mattresses, 6,500 impregnated mosquito nets, 400 tents, medical kits, tools for cleaning and protection work.

General

The most urgent needs in the affected countries are food items, blankets, mattresses, household equipment, mosquito nets and javel water. An appeal for support will be launched shortly, as soon as the national societies have completed their preliminary assessments.

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

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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.