

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

NICARAGUA: MUDSLIDES 15 July 2004

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 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 02/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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The Situation

A series of tropical waves have swept across Nicaragua in the last four weeks, bringing heavy rains and causing serious damage in some areas of the country. The Nicaraguan President has declared a state of disaster in the Department of Matagalpa and the Autonomous Regions of the North and South Atlantic (RAAN and RAAS). In the Department of Matagalpa, several landslides have occurred in the area around Cerro Musun, a hill located northeast of Managua, which buried eight communities. In RAAN and RAAS, the rain has caused river levels to rise, affecting several communities and causing serious damage to farmland in the area.

The death toll currently stands at 25, with some 18,350 people affected in 54 communities. According to a World Food Programme (WFP) report, around 18,000 people in the Rio Blanco area of Matagalpa are without shelter, drinking water and food.

On 6 July, the National Emergency Committee (CEN) held a meeting with the participation of the Nicaraguan Vice President and representatives of the international community, at which time the CEN called for international assistance to provide relief to those affected by the flooding and mudslides. The CEN also provided official figures of the damage to date and the immediate and mid-term needs. The following chart outlines the damage reported by the CEN:

Affected Communities	54
Affected families	3,294 (18,350 persons)
Deaths	25
Damaged houses	88
Damaged schools	29
Damaged roads	88 km
Damaged crops	2,075 acres
Affected forests	340 acres

The needs include food rations for 18,350 persons for four months, medicines and medical supplies, vector control and water supply, psychosocial care and logistics support, early warning radio communications systems, agricultural supplies and rehabilitation/construction of emergency shelters.

UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have conducted assessments in the affected areas, and are working closely with the Ministries of Health, Education, Agriculture and Family. UNICEF has planned a three-month emergency operation that will focus on child protection and education. WFP is planning to provide food assistance to 5,500 persons for three months.



Map produced by ReliefWeb, 8 July 2004, Source: OCHA Situation Report No. 1

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the relief effort began on 25 June, the Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) has carried out activities in search and rescue, distribution of relief goods and family reunification. There are currently 40 members of the NRC’s Emergency and Disaster Response Unit (URED) working in Río Blanco. These members are working with communities and Red Cross volunteers from the branches of Boaco, Matagalpa and Río Blanco in the areas of search and rescue, evacuation, water treatment, damage and needs assessments, radio communications and shelter. The branches of Matagalpa and Boaco have also organized local collections of clothes, food, bottled water and other emergency items.

The following relief items have been sent from the National Society to the municipality of Río Blanco:

ITEM	Amount
Blankets	346 units
Water containers	116 units
Plastic sheeting	4 rolls
Hygiene kits	393 units
Kitchen utensils	127 sets
Toothpaste	432 units
Deodorant	200 units
Clothing	92 bundles
Shoes	272 pairs
Food items	1,600 lbs
Oil	232 litres
Medicines	1 kit

The Nicaraguan Red Cross has drawn up a plan of action for the relief efforts that will be carried out to assist 500 families who were affected by the mudslides. The plan of action includes the provision of relief goods for four months, and the distribution of kitchen kits, hygiene kits and basic materials for temporary shelters. The NRC will also carry out water and sanitation activities, including supplying two five-gallon water tanks and distributing safe drinking water. At the request of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health and the government's National Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Response System (SINAPRED), the NRC has already sent four water treatment plants to the municipality of Río Blanco.

Family food kits will be distributed that contain the following:

ITEM	Amount
Rice	30 lbs
Beans	30 lbs
Corn	30 lbs
Sugar	30 lbs
Salt	5 lbs
Cereal or oatmeal	20 lbs
Oil	1 gallon

Kitchen kits will be distributed that contain the following:

ITEM	Amount
Plates	6 units
Soup bowl	6 units
Glasses	6 units
Metal spoons	6 units
Large pot	1 unit
Large pot with lid	1 unit
Large clay pot	2 units
Medium clay pot	1 unit
Rice bowl	1 unit
Kitchen knives	2 units
Spoons	1 unit

Hygiene kits will be distributed that contain the following:

ITEM	Amount
Bath soap	6 units

Soap	24 units
Toothpaste	2 units
Dental floss	6 units
Comb	1 unit

The following basic materials for shelters will be distributed:

ITEM	Amount
Plastic sheeting	5 metres ²
Zinc sheeting (10 ft)	10 units
Wood	12 units (2x4)
Ruler	8 units (2x4)
Nails for zinc	2 lbs
3 inch nails	1 lbs
4 inch nails	3 lbs

The activities and distributions included in the plan of action will be carried out between August and November, and goods will be distributed directly to beneficiaries, using personnel and resources from the NRC. Beneficiaries will be identified through surveys.

The NRC is working closely with the Federation's office in Nicaragua, the Panama Regional Delegation, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the National Societies of Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, as well as the Nicaraguan government and NGOs working in the country.

The United States' foreign development office, USAID/OFDA, is providing USD 50,000 to the Nicaraguan Red Cross, which will be used for the provision of plastic sheeting for temporary shelters, potable water containers, blankets, hygiene kits and cooking kits.

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.

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