

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

VANUATU: CYCLONE IVY

1 March 2004

Information Bulletin N° 3

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

In Brief

The Vanuatu Red Cross relief operation is now well underway, with the main focus on providing basic relief including tarpaulins, blankets, kitchen sets, water containers, purification tablets and other items to affected families.

The Situation

Tropical Cyclone Ivy struck Vanuatu on 26 February, moving southwards from the northern islands and affecting all six provinces. Vanuatu's northern and central islands were hit by winds of 130-150 km/h with gusts of up to 200km/h, accompanied by torrential rain and surging seas as the cyclone moved slowly through the island-nation.

The small island of Paama is among the worst affected, while Ambryn, Epi, NW Maevo, NW Ambae and the east coast of Malakula have also sustained significant damage. Based on an aerial survey by Orion aircraft on Saturday and limited reports from the various islands, it is estimated that over 2,500 families are seriously affected, with many houses totally destroyed or severely damaged. One fatality has been reported so far, while some people suffered fractures, cuts and minor injuries from flying debris. There is concern about access to safe water in the disaster area, while there have also been substantial crop losses.

Telephone and radio communications with outlying islands which were severely disrupted have mostly been restored, and in Port Vila evacuated residents from coastal and low lying areas have returned home.

The two fishing boats which sank in Port Vila's main wharf have been towed away, clearing access to container ships. The international airport is fully operational.

An UNDAC team has been mobilised to support assessment and coordination efforts in close cooperation with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), with the first two members scheduled to arrive tomorrow.



Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Vanuatu Red Cross Society has been active on Efate since Thursday, when over 1,000 people were evacuated to temporary shelters in Port Vila as a precaution. All evacuees have now returned home, and general cleaning up efforts are underway in the capital. The main focus of the operation has now shifted to providing immediate relief items to those most affected on the outer islands.

A total of up to 3,000 family kits will be distributed, each containing one tarpaulin, two blankets, one hygiene kit, kitchen utensils, one water container (20 litre) and water purification tablets, rope, candles, matches and seeds. The first consignment of around 1,000 packs will be dispatched to the affected areas tonight. The MV Brisk leaves Port Vila on Monday evening, calling at Paama, Ambrae, Malekula and Epi.

More than fifty volunteers are currently assembling and packing the relief supplies, using temporary warehouse space and two vehicles made available by a local supermarket chain. The Red Cross operation is supported by the governments of Australia, France and New Zealand, who have provided both financial and in-kind contributions.

The Federation's regional delegation mobilised its Papua New Guinea head of delegation to support the operation, and to help determine any future needs. The regional finance officer will join the team in Vanuatu on Thursday, as well as an experienced relief delegate made available by the New Zealand Red Cross.

The International Federation is not seeking any funding or in-kind contributions at this stage. Further needs for support will be determined once detailed assessments have been completed.

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

For further details please contact:

- *Vanuatu Red Cross Society; David Neal, (interim CEO); Phone + 678 27148 / 50889. ; Fax/phone + 678 22599; email redcross@vanuatu.com.vu*
- *Pacific Regional Delegation; Mr. Leon Prop (Head of Regional Delegation), Suva, Fiji; Phone +679 331 1855; Fax +679 331 1406; email ifrcfj01@ifrc.org*
- *Federation, Geneva; EunHee Cho (Regional Officer), Phone +41 22 7304392; Fax +41 22 733 0395; email eunhee.cho@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>

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