

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

COLOMBIA: FLOODS

21 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 03/2004 is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 50,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation may consider international support through an Emergency Appeal.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

The rainy season, which begins in March in Colombia, has been particularly severe this year, and has caused flooding and mudslides in several regions of the country. The latest report from the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS), which includes information from the beginning of the year until 28 June, indicates that since 1 January 37,064 families (186,048 persons) have been affected by the heavy rains and storms. This figure is very high, particularly considering that each year for the past four years an average of 152,279 persons have been affected by the rainy season's extreme weather. Furthermore, the government's Institute of Water, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM), is predicting that the second rainy season (September-November) will have even worse consequences.

The following table illustrates the damages to date from the heavy rains that have flooded the country:

Persons dead	21
Persons injured	48
Persons missing	58
Houses destroyed	255
Houses damaged	10,559
Houses flooded	930
Crop affected (hectares)	10,829

Bridges destroyed	6
Schools damaged	8
Childcare facilities damaged	4
Community houses damaged	4
Churches damaged	1

Seventy percent of the affected people have received assistance. The other 30 percent that have not been attended to includes some of those persons affected by the latest wave of heavy rain that lashed the region in the last two weeks of June (15 to 28 June), as well as many flood victims who are living in areas of armed conflict or areas that are difficult to access. The following chart shows the number of persons and families affected by the latest rains:

Emergency	Date	Department	Families affected	Persons affected
Floods	15 June	Putumayo	3,500	18,320
Floods	15 June	Guaviare	777	4,072
Floods	15 June	Choco	1,123	7,414
Storm	21 June	Bolivar	160	903
Floods	21 June	Vichada	15	81
Mudslide	28 June	Arauca	0	0
Floods	28 June	Casanare	807	3,832
TOTAL			6,382	34,622

Map showing the areas affected by the latest wave of severe weather



The government, through the National Disaster Preparedness and Response System (SNPAD), authorized the release of money from the National Disaster Fund, to be managed by local committees in the affected departments. In total, COP 1,049,088,365 (490,295 CHF) were distributed, to be used during the period January to May. However, during the latest wave of heavy rain, the government released an additional COP 52,000 to provide humanitarian assistance to the departments of Arauca and Putumayo.

The IDEAM expects the number of affected people in the region to increase during July and is continuing to monitor the behaviour of the Arauca, Casanare, Guaviare, Meta, Orinoco, Putumayo and Amazonas rivers.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Colombian Red Cross Society has been supporting the programmes of the SNPAD since the beginning of the emergency situation through its Red Cross branches in the most vulnerable departments, acting according to the local emergency contingency plans.

Actions carried out by the CRCS:

- Verification of security conditions in emergency areas prior to conducting operations in conflict areas.
- Delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid to families.
- Provision of first aid to affected persons.
- Evacuation of families from high risk areas to temporary shelters.
- Search and rescue of missing persons.
- Damage assessments in affected areas.
- Coordination with local authorities to carry out surveys.
- Logistics support for the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid.
- Monitoring of illnesses related to the rainy season in order to keep the government's health sector informed.

Actions of the CRCS by department January-June 2004

Department	Emergencies Attended	Search & Rescue	Evacuation	Damage Assessments	Food Dist.	Non-Food Dist.	CRCS Funds	DREF Funds	Gov. Funds
Antioquia	Floods Mudslides		,	,					
Arauca	Floods Mudslides	,		,	,	,	,	,	,
Atlantico	Floods			,	,				
Bolivar	Storms Floods			,		,	,		,
Boyaca	Floods			,	,		,		
Caldas	Floods Mudslides		,	,			,		
Caqueta	Floods			,			,		
Casanare	Floods			,	,	,	,	,	
Cauca	Floods			,			,		
Cordoba	Floods			,	,	,	,	,	
Choco	Floods Storms			,	,	,	,	(*)	
Guaviare	Floods			,			,		
Magdalena	Floods		,	,			,		
Meta	Floods Mudslides		,	,			,		
Nariño	Floods			,			,		
Norte de Santander	Floods	,		,	,	,	,	,	,
Putumayo	Floods			,					
Quindio	Mudslides	,		,					
Risaralda	Floods			,	,	,	,		,
Tolima	Floods			,					
Valle del Cauca	Floods Storms			,					
Vichada	Floods			,					

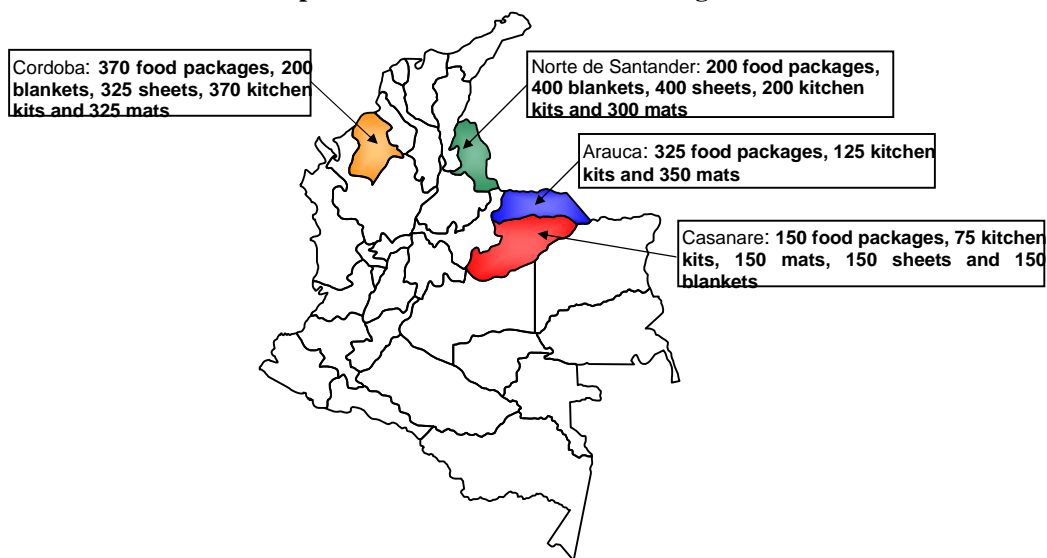
(*) Netherlands Red Cross Funds

In May, the Federation provided CHF 50,000 from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the CRCS relief operation. These funds were used to distribute humanitarian aid in four prioritized departments: Arauca, Casanare, Cordoba and Norte of Santander.

Humanitarian distributions carried out using DREF funds

Department	Municipalities	Food relief packages	Non-food relief items	Beneficiary families	Date of delivery
Arauca	Arauca Fortul Saravena	325	125 kitchen kits 350 mats	182	1 June
Casanare	Pore Villanueva	150	75 kitchen kits 150 mats 150 bed sheets 150 blankets	75	1 June
Cordoba	Tierralta	370	370 kitchen kits 325 mats 325 bed sheets 200 blankets	370	7 July
Norte de Santander	Cucuta Puerto Santander	200	200 kitchen kits 300 mats 400 bed sheets 400 blankets	200	17 May
TOTAL		1,045	770 kitchen kits 1,125 mats 875 bed sheets 750 blankets	827	

Map of distributions carried out using DREF funds



As the American Red Cross is working with the CRCS on humanitarian projects in some of the areas that have been affected by the floods, the ARC has also participated in the relief effort. Between February and June, the ARC attended 16,682 displaced and vulnerable families affected by the rains with the following assistance:

Medical consultations	11,617
Medicine	12,020
Deontology consultations	9,318

Oral hygiene kits	7,701
Vaccines	2,425
Smear tests	1,363
IMCI workshops	220
Group psychological therapy sessions	3,250
Individual psychological therapy sessions	1,047
Food packages	16,600
Kitchen kits	2,075
Hygiene kits	10,375
Dishes	10,375
Tents	8,748
Blankets	8,749

The ARC also provided building material for houses, and to improve the water and sanitation infrastructures.

The same way, other Partner National Societies that work in the country, such as the Spanish, French and Netherlands National Societies, contributed to the relief efforts within the framework of their ongoing projects.

In the department of Casanare, where the Bajo Upia-Disaster Preparedness project of the CRCS and the Federation is under way, it was evident that the community's disaster response capacity had been strengthened, as the communities of Paz de Ariporo and Villanueva were able to apply their emergency plans when the heavy rains hit their municipalities. They rapidly mobilized the people, putting valuables in safe places and gathering in the designated temporary shelter. An emergency kit was already located in the shelter, and was used to communicate with the local Red Cross branch and the local emergency committee so they could be assisted with food items.

For the second rainy season of the year (beginning in late September), the CRCS is planning an operation in the departments of Casanare, Cordoba, Choco and Putumayo.

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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