

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

ECUADOR: SOCIAL UNREST

21 April 2005

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. 01/2005) 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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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



Thousands of Ecuadorians demonstrate after President Lucio Gutierrez was fired by the Congress, in Quito, April 20, 2005. Photo by Guillermo Granja/Reuters

The situation of social unrest in Ecuador has been increasing in recent days, culminating on Wednesday when lawmakers removed President Lucio Gutierrez from office following several days of mass demonstrations. Street demonstrations first began several months ago when in December Gutierrez fired most of the Supreme Court judges, replacing them with his own supporters. The protests escalated in March when the new Supreme Court overturned corruption charges that had been laid against another former president. The situation reached a boiling point last week when Gutierrez fired the Supreme Court, which was seen by many as a power grab. As many as 10,000 people began protesting in the capital city of Quito on Thursday 14 April, demanding Gutierrez's resignation. On Saturday 16 April a state of emergency was declared and Gutierrez ordered a crackdown on the demonstrators. To date, at least one person has been killed. Gutierrez was later ousted when Congress voted unanimously to dismiss

him in response to the violent crackdown. Gutierrez has reportedly been offered asylum in Brazil and is currently negotiating safe passage out of the country.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) organized a special operation to address the needs of the population given the recent social unrest and mass demonstrations in the country. The provincial board of directors of the ERC is coordinating the operation, which currently includes 186 Red Cross volunteers. The most serious incidents have occurred in Quito where there are around 63 Red Cross volunteers working to provide assistance to the public. ERC volunteers include first aid personnel, paramedics, and specialists in rescue and telecommunications. As of Wednesday 20 April, the ERC had attended to 50 people suffering from shortness of breath, 27 people injured by tear gas bombs, 2 medical emergencies and 13 missing children. The ERC is monitoring the situation closely, and the National Society's contingency plan will continue until the situation of unrest is resolved.

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