

MINOR EMERGENCY



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

VENEZUELA: FLOODS

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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

CHF 100,000 HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FOR THIS OPERATION FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF)

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>

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

The situation

Floods and mudslides brought on by heavy rains in the northern and central coast of Venezuela have already caused 14 deaths, according to the country's Civil Protection Agency. Torrential rains have been battering the coastline since Monday, 7 February. This severe weather pattern is known as the "vaguada" and is characterized by extreme cloudiness and heavy and constant rains. According to the authorities, 18,000 persons have been affected, while 2,840 houses have been damaged and a further 363 have been destroyed. The government has declared a state of emergency in seven States in the country: Aragua, Carabobo, Falcon, Miranda, Vargas, Yaracuy and Capital Federal.

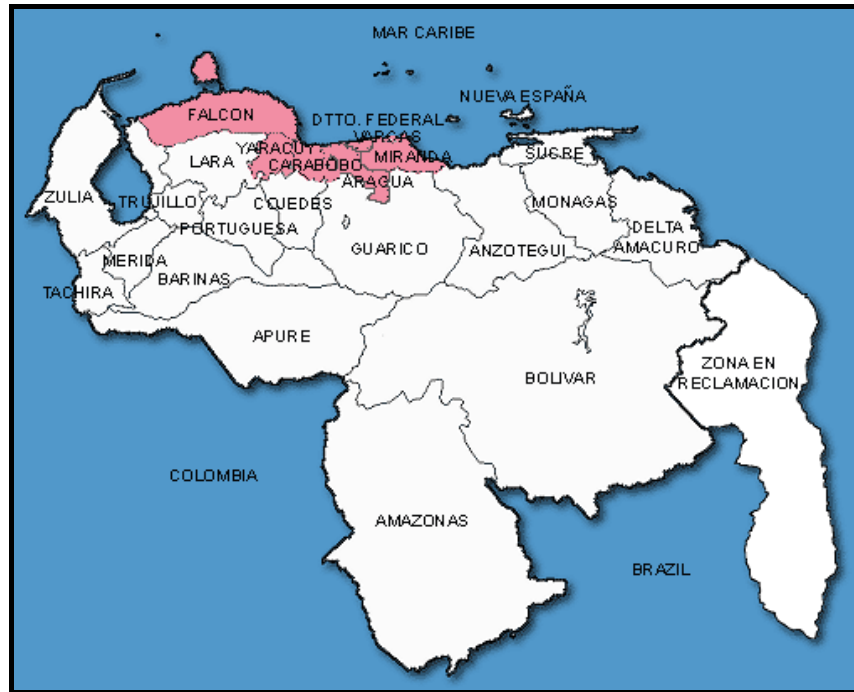
Many roads have been cut off, isolating whole towns and obliging the government to deploy Navy Coast Guard boats and helicopters to evacuate hundreds of families trapped by the landslides. Rescue efforts have been hampered by strong winds. Civil Protection rescue officials declared that as many as 6,000 vacationers and residents were trapped along the coast near Caracas in the area where residents flocked from the capital to private vacation clubs and public beaches along the Caribbean, during the recent carnival holidays.

Authorities are already clearing roads and bridges into Caracas and in other affected states. The oil company Petroleos de Venezuela has provided assistance for the operation by offering its machinery for road clearance. The government has also established shelters for residents whose homes have been swept away and has set up focal

Venezuela: Floods ; Minor Emergency no. 01/05

points to collect humanitarian aid from the population. The government has made available financial resources of some VEB 10,000 million (approximately USD 52 million) to respond to the emergency. These funds will be administered by local and regional authorities. The government is also studying the work which needs to be carried out in order to avoid an outbreak of epidemics in the affected region.

Map showing the States in which an emergency has been declared by the government



Map developed by the International Federation

In the State of Miranda the overflowing of several rivers affected 30 companies in the industrial area on Thursday. Furthermore, in the State of Carabobo rains caused the overflowing of the main Moron river on Wednesday, killing nine people. Local media reported that some 120 corpses were exposed when floodwaters devastated one of the main cemeteries in Caracas as muddy waters came down from the hillsides surrounding the capital. The international airport remains operational, but there are some restrictions as regards local flights.

This region of Venezuela has a tragic history of this type of weather phenomena; five years ago tens of thousands of people were killed when major mudslides destroyed towns and villages in the state of Vargas, currently also one of the most affected States.

The Army's Cagigal observatory has forecasted rains until today, Friday 11 February. The Ministry of Education has cancelled school classes until Monday, 14 February, even in those States that are not affected by the rains. Authorities state that rains are not expected to cause a shortage of food in the affected States.

The needs

The Venezuelan Red Cross (VRC) is working with its volunteers in ten branches: the seven States declared in emergency, together with the branches of Zulia and Tachira, where a degree of affectation has also been reported, and the Anzoategui branch which is supporting the activities of the Distrito Federal branch:

State	Persons affected	Houses affected	Houses destroyed
Aragua	2,101	---	---
Carabobo	1,505	372	---
Distrito Federal	3,316	773	322
Falcon	797	139	5

Venezuela: Floods ; Minor Emergency no. 01/05

Miranda	3,308	660	28
Tachira	34	1	35
Vargas	968	165	3
Yaracuy	1,500	320	---
Zulia	2,050	410	---
TOTAL	15,579	2,840	363

Source: VRC report of 10 February 2005

Each VRC branch involved has set up a collection centre to receive humanitarian aid from the population. 310 VRC volunteers have participated in search and rescue work, transportation of evacuees, collection of humanitarian goods and provision of first aid services. The National Society has carried out a damage and needs assessment and each VRC branch involved is, at present, conducting a survey to determine the beneficiaries of the proposed plan of action. The search and rescue system continues to be active in coordination with those responsible for the data bases in the temporary shelters in order to reunite separated families.

The management staff from the headquarters are holding meetings with potential donors such as Embassies and private companies in order to seek funding for the operation.

Immediate needs:

Humanitarian aid in the form of food and non-food items: hygiene kits, cleaning kits, kitchen kits, mattresses, sheets and mosquito nets is required for 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) who are housed in temporary shelters in the following States: Carabobo, Distrito Federal, Miranda, Vargas and Yaracuy. An increase in illnesses is envisaged as a result of poor water and sanitation conditions; therefore, work in primary health care will need to be carried out. Criteria for beneficiary selection, in accordance with the branch surveys, will be: degree of affectation, community context, aid received to date, vulnerability. Selection will take place in coordination with the Civil Protection.

Longer-term needs:

Given the tragedy in Vargas in 1999, which killed more than 10,000 people, citizens are still afraid when such heavy rains batter the region. A psychosocial support programme is therefore a necessary component of the VRC plan of action to assist beneficiary families.

Coordination

The operation will be coordinated by the National Society's Relief Directorate, in conjunction with the Civil Protection, the Fire Brigade and the public health system at national and State levels.

The proposed operation**Objectives and activities planned****Emergency relief (food and non-food)**

Objective 1: 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) have benefited from the provision of food items for a one month period, in two deliveries.

Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Identification and selection of beneficiaries in close coordination with the Civil Protection.
- Distribution of 2,000 food packages to 1,000 families (5,000 persons). Contents of the food packages are in accordance with the SPHERE standards:

Product	Quantity
Flour	6 kg
Rice	4 kg

Venezuela: Floods ; Minor Emergency no. 01/05

Pasta	2 kg
Grains	4 kg
Salt	250 gr
Sugar	1.8 kg
Tuna	1.7 kg
Oil	2 lt

- Provision of logistical support to volunteers and members of the local relief systems.
- Reporting on deliveries of humanitarian aid.
- Evaluation of aid distributions and reporting on lessons learned.

Objective 2: 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) have benefited from the provision of non-food items for a period of one month.

Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Identification and selection of beneficiaries in close coordination with the Civil Protection.
- Distribution of non-food relief items to 1,000 families:
 - One cleaning kit per family: 1,000 kits

Product	Units	Quantity
Garbage bag	30	For 60 lt
Clothes soap	4	200 gr
Chlorine	3	1 lt
Disinfectant	1	1 lt
Detergent	1	1 kg
Broom	1	
Bucket	1	For 4lt
Feather duster	1	
Mop	3	

- Two general hygiene kits per family: 2,000 kits

Product	Units
Toilet paper	16
Deodorant	2
Razor	2
Shampoo	1
Soap	2
Sanitary Pads	18
Tooth paste	2
Condoms	6

- One specific hygiene kit per family: 1,000 kits

Product	Units
Tooth brush	5
Towel	5

One vector control kit

Product	Units
Anti- louse shampoo	3
Insecticide	2

Anti-mosquito spirals boxes (12 units per box)	9
Anti-rat tubes	2

- One kitchen set per family: 1,000 sets.

Product	Units
Frying pan	1
Pot	1
Knife	5
Fork	5
Spoon	5
Plate	5
Glass	5

- Three mattresses per family: 3,000.
 - Three sheets per family: 3,000.
 - Three blankets per family: 3,000.
 - Three mosquito nets per family: 3,000.
 - Two 20 litre water drums per family, per day: 40,000 litres of water per day.
- Provision of logistical support to volunteers and members of the local relief systems.
 - Reporting on deliveries of humanitarian aid.
 - Evaluation of aid distributions and reporting on lessons learned.

Health

Objective 1: Medical needs arising from the flooding of 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) have been attended to.

Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Provision of medical consultation, diagnosis and treatment for illnesses related to floods.
- Establishment of an epidemics surveillance system to avoid the outbreak of illnesses due to poor sanitary conditions.
- Home visits to carry out counseling on common illnesses in emergency situations.
- Referral of patients to public health centres, as appropriate.
- Establishment of vaccination centres.

Objective 2: 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) have benefited from a psychosocial support programme.

Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Individual and group psychological interventions for the affected population.
- Referral of patients to health public centres.
- Emotional support for volunteers working in the operation.

Objective 3: A healthy environment for 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries) has been re-established.

Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Implementation of campaigns to disseminate information on how to treat water for human consumption.
- Implementation of campaigns to explain precautions at home to avoid common illnesses.
- Implementation of a campaign on solid waste disposal.

Venezuela: Floods ; Minor Emergency no. 01/05

- Provision of technical support to re-establish collapsed drainage systems.
- Provision of mosquito nets and water containers to families most exposed to illnesses.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – Principles and priorities

The Federation is working to support the Venezuelan Red Cross to assist the most vulnerable. The planned operation is based upon the principle of humanity; beneficiary selection criteria focus on the level of vulnerability of those affected and ensure gender sensitivity.

Activities planned for this minor emergency operation are based on the SPHERE project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for disaster relief. All objectives put forward in the plan of action are in line with Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement.

Communications – Advocacy and Public information

The provision of accurate information to the public regarding the impact of Red Cross operations is a key activity. From this point of view, relations with the media are particularly important in order to convey the message of the Red Cross Movement. At present, the situation in Venezuela is receiving the coverage of the international media, particularly the Vargas State, since images of the tragedy in 1999 are still alive in the public's memory.

The VRC in coordination with the television network, channel 33, has launched a national solidarity campaign "Baby Food Operation" to collect food for children under ten years old, which is the most affected group. At the time of writing of this report 15,000 units of baby food have been collected.

Capacity of the National Society

The VRC was founded in 1895 and today has 24 branches and seven subcommittees, and is thus present in most areas of the country. The National Society has more than 6,000 members of whom 90% are active volunteers.

The main activity of the National Society centres on health services, with its infrastructure of ten hospitals and 33 health stations making it the largest private hospital network in the country. Since the floods in December 1999, health care activities have been developed through HIV/AIDS, psychological support, recruitment of non-remunerated voluntary blood donors, integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI) and water and sanitation. The National Society also carries out other activities related with disaster management, tracing, recruitment, dissemination and communication. The VRC does not receive financial support from the government and the main funding source of the National Society is the medical assistance system.

Capacity of the Federation

The Federation benefits from the presence of a Regional Delegation in Lima with a staff of delegates and local personnel working in disaster management, health, organizational development, information, reporting and finance. The Sub Regional Office for the Southern Cone and Brazil is located in Buenos Aires, in the premises of the Argentine Red Cross, with staff working in organizational development, gender and humanitarian values, and finance.

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) is based in Panama, with delegates working in the areas of disaster management, logistics, telecommunications, information, reporting and water and sanitation.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring with regard to the implementation of activities outlined in this small-scale emergency operation and the objectives set out in the plan of action will be carried out by the National Society with support from the Federation. Standard Federation narrative and financial reporting will be ensured on a regular basis as a means of monitoring the progress and developments in the area. The Relief Directorate of the VRC will send a weekly report from the field.

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