

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

ALGERIA 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

This Information Bulletin (no. 002/2006) 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



Heavy rains which battered the southern region of Algeria almost incessantly between last Thursday and Saturday (9-11 February) led to major flooding, and resulted in the destruction of more than 50 per cent of the mainly mud brick dwellings of the Saharwi refugees, who live in the Tindouf camp; leaving approximately 12,000 families homeless. According to information which was received from the Tindouf committee of the Algerian Red Crescent, several homes in the villages of Kindar and Mouggar city were also damaged by the rains, leading to 1,000 persons in need of emergency assistance. The rains have been judged to be the most severe to have affected this region for the past twelve years; leaving in their wake, damage to hospitals, schools and other government buildings.

More than 170 houses in the old town of Illizi were also affected by the floods, with three completely destroyed. The occupants of these structures were however rescued. The Civil Protection authorities from the Wilaya pointed out that the heavy precipitation led to the unprecedented swelling of the Illizi River (Oued) that rapidly rose by over a metre, overflowing its banks, causing material damage, and disrupting basic services and infrastructure. Several villages in the area around Illizi were also isolated by the heavy rains, including those of Ghadouane, Tin Korha, Sidi Bouselah, and Ain Kourss. The RN3 road linking Illizi to Djanet was blocked, and disruptions to the power and telephone services were reported. No deaths have been reported so far. The largely nomadic population has lost much of their livestock herd (sheep, goats and camels) that drowned in the flood waters.

Based on recent reports from the Algerian Red Crescent, the following assistance has stabilized the situation in Tindouf:

- relief supplies sent to Tindouf by the Spanish Red Cross;
- relief supplies provided by the government and transported by 8 planes;
- various assistance from neighbouring wilayas,(including a convoy of 37 trucks that left Béchar for the affected area today (17 February);
- assistance provided by the local committee of the Red Crescent and other organizations.

The area was also visited by the Government Minister of Solidarity earlier today. The national society reported that food assistance was provided by the SONATRACH petroleum company operating in the area, and the affected persons were receiving assistance from the government through the Ministry of Solidarity. The area continues to receive intermittent rain, with more rain forecasted for the week-end.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Volunteers from the Tindouf committee of the Algerian Red Crescent continue to provide support to the refugees in the Tindouf camps, as well as the local population. Beginning tomorrow (18 February) the volunteers will carry out a distribution of 400 food packages to affected families, and will be supporting the distribution of the supplies which will arrive with the convoy. A third plane with relief supplies from the Spanish Red Cross was sent to the area today (delayed from its original delivery).

Despite the challenges posed by the difficult terrain and the number of villages which are scattered over a large geographic, the team of volunteers (managed by the experienced disaster officer who was deployed to the area by the national society headquarters) continued to carry out distributions in Illizi and the surrounding areas. So far, some 540 families have been provided with assistance. The team is coordinating closely with the local authorities, and is examining possible activities to support the affected population in the post-emergency phase of the operation, particularly to help them to re-start their economic activity.

The Tunis Regional Office and the Geneva Secretariat also received offers of possible support from donor Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

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