

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

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: FLOODS IN CENTRAL PROVINCE

17 February 2006

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In Brief

This Bulletin (no. 02/2006) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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The Situation

The southern region of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has been experiencing heavy rainfall for the last two weeks, resulting in overflowing rivers that have covered most villages in the Central Province. Local newspapers report that houses are sinking, domestic animals are drowning, gardens are underwater and people are developing skin diseases in the villages of Central Province as a result of the floods. Some villages in the Kairiku-Hiri district, west of the capital Port Moresby, have been under waters one to two metres high. Affected villages include Biotou, Inauabui, Babiko, Mou, Apanapi and Rapa.

Some tensions have been reported, where villages that have fixed damaged portions of roads out of their own initiative have begun charging excessive fees to ferry travellers across broken bridges.

Although floods have subsided in some areas, it will take the local population months to restore the destruction. Official figures of the population affected have yet to be established; nevertheless, unconfirmed reports estimate that the disaster affected more than 12,000 people. Schools have been suspended for two months since the end of January 2006.

Affected Population*				
Village/ward	Households	Men	Women	Total persons
Biotou	130	377	338	715
Rapa	119	251	217	468
Mou	126	443	409	852
Apanaiipi	207	561	528	1,089
Babiko	133	364	350	714
Eboa	196	587	558	1,145
Inauabui	294	748	736	1,484
Total	1,205	3,331	3,136	6,467

* This information is based on the 2000 national census, as per the central census unit register.

The water sources in Biotou and Inauabui villages are flooded and not fit for human consumption. Babiko village has three water sources, two of which have been destroyed by the floods, while those in Eboa village are still safe for drinking. Although water has subsided in some of the villages, there is still a general fear of more flooding in March. People in Inauabui and Biotou villages are pulling down their houses and are erecting temporary shelters on higher grounds in preparation for the coming raining season.

Most food gardens – especially those with food crops, betel nuts and mustards – are underwater, putting constraints on local food supply and the economy. Poor transport access is preventing basic services and aid to affected communities, with sections of the main Hiritano highway at Biotou and Inauabui washed away. Near the Angabanga bridge, local landowners have dug a ditch to close off a section of the highway. Some villages have begun fixing damaged portions of roads out of their own initiative.

Some tensions have been reported, as some people are charging excessive fees to ferry travellers and cargo across broken bridges or flooded road. Transportation cost between the affected areas and to the main health centre is reported to be costly, especially for emergency cases.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

A team made up of two staff members from the PNG Red Cross headquarters in Port Moresby, together with two volunteers from the local branch, have carried out an assessment in four of the seven affected villages in the Kairiku-Hiri district in the Central Province. Based on the recommendations of the assessment, stocks of tarpaulins and 15-litre water containers are being sent for distribution in the villages assessed. A further plan of action is also being formulated to assess the remaining three villages while the distribution is carried out.

A second assessment team is planning to visit the Rigo district, east of Port Moresby, to assess the damage caused by the same floods.

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Map data sources: ESRI, DevInfo