

9 January 1997

MALAYSIA: FLOODS

Information Bulletin no. 02

The context

On 25 December, tropical storm 'Greg' hit East Malaysia and caused the worst flooding in history in the State of Sabah, on the island of Borneo. As of 7 January, 198 people had been confirmed dead and more than 100 people were still missing. The majority of the dead were identified as Filipino and Indonesian migrant sawmill workers living in quarters built for them along four rivers in Keningau, approximately 80 miles from the state capital of Kota Kinabalu.

The storm affected 2,000 people in 63 villages and damaged 1,327 homes, of which 230 were completely destroyed. The worst hit areas are Keningau, Sulaman, Tamparuli and Kiulu. The capital Kota Kinabalu also experienced major damage.

Latest events

Malaysia's SMART-team (Special Malaysia Assistance and Rescue Team) was deployed to search for survivors and retrieve dead bodies. Rescue work has been complicated by the destruction of bridges and roads. Civil servants and volunteers in Sabah have been working around the clock to assist victims and try to re-establish water, electricity, telecommunications and road links.

The Government has received large donations and has set up a programme promising financial aid (between RM 350 and RM 5,950) to victims whose homes have been damaged.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Sixty volunteers from MRCS Sabah branch were deployed to assist the search operations. Other volunteers have been assigned to packing food items for the victims. More than 2,000 people were given temporary shelter in three centres, where MRCS was responsible for mass cooking.

MRCS launched a nation-wide appeal on 30 December. Donations in kind will be flown to Sabah by the airforce.

On 7 January, three cheques were handed over to MRCS by the diplomatic missions of USA, the United Kingdom and China. The amount from the three donors is app. CHF 65,000 (RM 135,000).

On 9 January, the Johoro Bharu RC branch handed over more than RM 200,000, collected from companies and individuals after an annual parade and dinner which co-incided with the launching of the appeal. Other Branches are also collecting funds.

Conclusion

No request for external assistance is foreseen by the MRCS at this stage. The Federation will report to National Societies if further information becomes available.

Xusheng Yang
Desk Officer
Asia & Pacific Department

Simon Missiri
Acting Director
Asia & Pacific Department