

# Information bulletin



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Colombia: Floods

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) is, at present, accepting direct assistance to provide support to the affected population. The Federation and the National Society are observing the development of the situation to determine the possible launch of an emergency appeal.

The effects of the weather phenomenon of La Niña have produced rains across Colombia which exceed previous historical records. There are landslides

and ongoing floods in 28 of the 32 departments, affecting some 1,200,000 people. On 18 November, the Colombian government declared a state of public calamity, as the country's capacities are saturated and new resources are needed.

The Colombian Red Cross Society is currently supporting the National System for Disaster Prevention and Response (Sistema Nacional para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres – SNPAD), conducting damage and needs assessments, carrying out search and rescue activities, providing first aid, and collecting and distributing relief items. There is also ongoing collaborative work with different agencies and Partner National Societies (PNS) to develop new relief projects.



More than 1,200,000 people and vast extensions of farmland have been affected during the rainy season of 2010. Source: Reuters.

## The Situation

Since its development from mid year 2010, the weather phenomenon La Niña has had a significant effect across Colombia. With the start of the first rainy season in March 2010, rains which exceed historical records have caused landslides, flash floods, breakage of flood barriers, and therefore ongoing floods in 28 departments and 561 municipalities around the country. Thus far, there are an estimated 257,849 affected families (1,211,146 persons), 208 injured, 139 deaths, 23 missing people, and 204,794 damaged homes according to the CRCS. The worst affected departments are Bolivar, with 264,000 affected people, followed by Magdalena with 161,000, Córdoba with 151,000 and Sucre with 107,000.

Furthermore, the Colombian Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies forecasts that the La Niña phenomenon and its strong rains will continue until the first quarter of 2011. This could mean the overlapping of the rainy seasons of 2010 with the first rainy season of 2011 (March-April-May).

On 18 November, the Minister of Justice declared a state of public calamity in 28 of the 32 departments in the country. The government will facilitate the mobilization of additional resources, as the country's capacities are exceeded. This declaration also hastens the processes to receive international aid.

The most urgent humanitarian needs identified are food, kitchen kits, hygiene kits, mattresses, blankets and bed sheets, hammocks and tarpaulins. There is also need for emergency shelter, health care and water and sanitation activities, as well as logistics and management support. In the longer term, early recovery programmes will be needed to support agricultural activities and the relocation of families living in flood-prone areas.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action



From the onset of the rainy season in March, the Colombian Red Cross Society, through its branches, has supported and coordinated with the local and regional disaster risk management committees. Through collaborative work they carried out damage and needs assessments and provided first aid care, as well as designed plans to improve the efficiency of further actions.

**Source:** Andres Carranza/American Red Cross

Overall, the Colombian Red Cross Society has carried out the following actions to date:

- Search and rescue, as well as first aid activities and transportation of injured people.
- Provision of support to the National System for Disaster Prevention and Response with damage and needs assessments.
- Constant coordination at local, regional and national level with SNPAD.
- Provision of support for the early warning system through evacuation of families at risk.
- Activation and mobilization of various response teams, including the National Intervention Teams: approximately 200 staff and 1,500 volunteers have been active.
- Collection of donations through a national campaign "Colecta Nacional de Ayuda" carried out in collaboration with Radio Caracol.
- Distribution of food and non-food items gathered through CRCS resources and through donations from private business and joint projects with NGOs.
- Request and allocation of 68,288 Swiss francs from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 16 August to deliver immediate assistance to 500 families.
- Development of a communication campaign, delivering several press releases, DMIS reports, and situational bulletins.
- Developing projects with several organizations such as Conexión Colombia, Oxfam, the Swiss Cooperation Office (COSUDE), U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

The Colombian Red Cross Society has developed a new Plan of Action extending its assistance to 100,000 families, and has shared it with several partners.

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit and the Regional Representation for the Andean region are in constant communication with the CRCS, monitoring the situation and determining the potential need for the launch of a Preliminary Emergency Appeal in the next few days.

Thus far, the Colombian Red Cross Society has assisted some 60,685 families (311,232 people). The following table details the number of beneficiaries reached as of 18 November:

	Families	Persons	Value (CHF)*
Humanitarian emergency relief	42,792	218,484	1,413,010
Water and Sanitation	16,521	82,288	423,216
Collective Centres	1,372	6,860	696,488
Health	-	3,600	31,175
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60,685</b>	<b>311,232</b>	<b>2,563,889</b>

\*This value is a conversion from Colombian pesos (to date) and does not include in-kind donations received in the country.

## How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The International Federation's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

## Contact information

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