

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Ecuador: Volcano Eruption

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time.

On 28 May 2010 Ecuador's National Geophysics Institute reported hot explosive volcanic material blasted down the slopes of the Tungurahua Volcano as ash plumes ascended 10 km above sea level. Currently there are 2,500 displaced persons that have taken refuge in 7 collective centres located in the surrounding areas. In a 2006 eruption Tungurahua buried entire towns, taking 4 lives and leaving 1,000 homeless.



The volcano is situated 150 km southeast of Quito and 185 km southwest of Guayaquil.

The volcano known as Tungurahua spews ash and rock during an eruption in Banos, some 170km southwest from Quito, 28 May 2010. Credit: REUTERS/Carlos Campana

The Ecuadorian Red Cross with the support of the Federation, has determined that external assistance is currently not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

A map will be made available in the upcoming week.

[< Click here for detailed contact information >](#)

The Situation

In the afternoon of 28 May 2010 the Tungurahua Volcano, also known as the "Throat of Fire", one of the eight volcanoes in Ecuador, shot ash into the air and blasted pyroclastic material down its slopes, causing the evacuation of the Cusa and Juive Grande towns. Winds blew volcanic ash in a south-western direction over 185 km within hours to Ecuador's capital and largest city, Guayaquil, causing the temporary closure of the Jose Joaquin de Olmedo International Airport; flights were cancelled or rerouted to avoid encountering the cloud.

Currently the volcano remains highly active, but it is emitting less volcanic material. It is foreseen that ash will not pass the Los Andes mountain range, but rivers could be affected. Banana crops will also be affected; it estimated that 20-40 per cent of the general banana production could be lost. Bananas are one of Ecuador's main exports.

The majority of the ash is anticipated to fall in the less populous Chimborazo zone.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) has been actively engaged since the onset of the emergency. Representatives attended an Emergency Operations Centre (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia - COE) meeting where the ERC was designated to provide psychosocial support to the displaced in the affected areas. The ERC works in close coordination with the local and provincial COEs and with the National Secretariat of Risk Reduction in order to prevent duplication of efforts.

The ERC has mobilized 720 masks, 80 protective glasses and 1,000 scarves for the provincial council which will distribute these items. Moreover, the National Society has been assisting with the evacuations and providing psychosocial support in the collective centres.

The ERC has been actively monitoring the affected zones, carrying out 8 hour rounds of monitoring for 24 hours. For this emergency 204 volunteers with specializations in rescue, hospital attention and psychosocial support, along with 13 technical staff have been activated to assist in 6 provinces: Tungurahua, Chimborazo, Bolivar, Pastaza, Los Rios and Guayas.

Currently the ERC is collecting information from its branches and more information is expected in the coming days as assessments are ongoing.

At the moment, International Federation support has not been requested. Nonetheless, the International Federation, through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit and the Regional Representation for the Andean Region (based in Lima), are in constant communication with the Ecuadorian Red Cross to monitor the situation as it evolves.

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

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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