



TIMOR-LESTE: FLOODING & LANDSLIDES

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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 185 countries.

In Brief

This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below.

CHF 145,211 (USD 118,000 or EUR 86,000) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs of people affected by flooding and landslides in Timor-Leste.

This operation is expected to be implemented over five months. A Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda Goal 1: Reduced deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

Background and current situation

Timor-Leste, a relatively new nation established since 2000, has faced an uphill struggle on many accounts in its young life. The government and humanitarian organizations including the Red Cross have been faced with the daunting task of managing about 100,000 internally displaced persons (IDP) in camps since the civil unrest in early 2006. The country has also faced drought in February-March this year and food scarcity throughout the country. Despite these difficulties, Timor-Leste successfully completed its presidential election and parliamentary election in June and July respectively. The process of instituting a new government is underway.

Timor-Leste experiences its heaviest rains during June and July each year. However, this year, the downpours have been more severe than usual, leading to flooding and land slides. This has led to at least one death, destroyed infrastructure, damaged livelihoods and made many people homeless. Overall, 243 families in six districts have been badly affected.



The road to recovery is a challenging one in Timor-Leste.

Disaster assessment

An assessment team of government and humanitarian organizations was set up in Manatutu and Covalima. On the team's request, the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) set up a meeting with government counterparts, UN agencies, the Red Cross, and NGOs to gather information and provide a coordinated response. Priority was given to supplies of drugs, oral re-hydration salts (ORS), purification tablets and some water and sanitation equipment. NDMO coordinated another team, also including Cruz Vermelha Timor-Leste (CVTL) field staff, in Covalima for follow-up.

The assessment teams looked at different areas:

- Food security (crop damage, food stocks, livestock, market survey)
- Public health and livelihoods (hospital and health care capacity, drugs availability, water and sanitation, housing and population movement)
- Access and infrastructure (roads, bridges, engineering, logistics, and risks)
- Coordination between local authorities/humanitarian organisations, information flow, contingency plan, and emergency preparedness
- Shelter

Synopsis of the damage:

- **Covalima district:** 65 families lost homes, water wells, livelihoods and farms with maize and rice ready to harvest. An additional 71 families are at risk of flooding. In total, they lost 3100ha (90%) of rice and 7950ha (10-20%) of maize.
- **Manatuto district:** about 22 hectares of land washed away affecting 42 families.
- **Ermera district:** a landslide destroyed 30 houses.
- **Manufahi district:** 16 houses destroyed by flooding.
- **Bacau district:** 18 families lost their farm land (with crops ready- to- harvest)
- **Viqueque district:** one person died and their family lost their house and properties.

Needs analysis

(i) Food

The Ministry of Labour and Solidarity sent one month's ration of food to the affected villages in Covalima and Manatuto district. The government has enough supplies for the immediate food needs. The National Disaster Management Office has been coordinating with WFP, FAO and other organizations in the food security sector to look at the longer term effects of the destroyed crops.

(ii) Shelter

Some families are willing to move from the mudslide risk areas to a safe location. The Ministry of Public Welfare has been coordinating with the Ministry of Public Works to supply building material by next week to families who have lost their homes. The Government also requested CVTL/ Federation to support shelter. The government has tents in stock if needed. However, priority has been given to construct permanent houses so that families can return to normality as soon as possible. Most of the affected families are with host families and a few in schools.

CVTL collected information from different sources including its own branches which outline that there is a need for 201 shelters in different districts as follows:

Manatutu	18
Viqueque	01
Ermera	30
Manufahi	16
Covalima	136 ¹
Total	201

(iii) Health

¹ 65 houses destroyed, 71houses at risk

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The Covalima District Health Office has requested mosquito nets, chlorine and de-worming tablets. The MoH together with WHO have discussed the request. The items are available; the MoH needs clear recipient numbers to process it. The MoH malaria team has been in Covalima for a two-week assessment on vector borne diseases.

(iv) Water and Sanitation

The Department of Water and Sanitation, CVTL and Oxfam are currently cleaning (pumping) 96 contaminated wells. The use of household chlorine tablets is being investigated as currently tablets for wells are being used. CVTL volunteers are involved in this.

(v) Access

WFP reports that a 6-tonne truck can safely reach Covalima from Dili, though a bridge is collapsed en route. But heavier trucks may not be able to pass. Other routes and a beach landing are difficult and time consuming.

Coordination

The National Disaster Management Office has been coordinating the response. The Ministry of Public Works has been removing debris and renovating roads and bridges. The Ministry of Health has been providing basic services through its community level network. The Ministry of Labour and Solidarity has provided food items. UNOCHA has been helping coordinate the response between NDMO and UN agencies (WHO, WFP, FAO and UNICEF). Oxfam, through its office in Covalima, has been involved from the beginning, providing water purification tablets and coordinating local assessments. CVTL volunteers are engaged in the purification of contaminated wells.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The government and humanitarian agencies have addressed food, health, water and sanitation, access and other sectors. Shelter is the only exception. The interagency coordination meeting highlighted the need to engage Red Cross in the shelter sector to bridge the gap. CVTL will be the only organization involved in shelter and 201 households have been identified for repair or rebuilding.

The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), under the Ministry of Interior, has been coordinating the inter-agency meetings including government departments, the Red Cross, NGOs and UN agencies. This has centred on relief support in terms of food, water and sanitation, medicine, mosquito nets, jerry cans etc. However, there needs to be more clarity about longer term commitment in all sectors. The NDMO requested CVTL to provide shelter support as this is the most pressing need at the moment. The other food and non-food items are being distributed in those areas.

Capacity and skills:

CVTL was engaged in 2006 in the rebuilding of about 500 shelters in six different districts; CVTL contracted a construction company and trained some volunteers and staff on construction of shelters. This experience will facilitate the community-led shelter component of this operation. Furthermore, ICRC has in the past trained CVTL WatSan technicians.

Approach to shelter:

The approach to shelter will incorporate local solutions to build permanent housing rather than deliver a fully-fledged readymade house. CVTL will organise community committees to manage shelter construction, which will use local materials; the national society will also provide technical support through a demonstration house in the community and as well as facilitate the construction of the shelters by the community themselves.

Land and tenure:

In terms of land and tenure and the issue of relocation, there are different scenarios in different districts. For example, in Suai district the community has decided to relocate. The local authority has agreed for land title. The area where they will relocate is in fact not a new area, but a previous settlement; over the last few years the community has moved to new agricultural areas and built shelters. These new areas have been flooded with the loss of their shelters/homes, and the community now wishes to move back to their previous land. In Manatutu district, people want to repair the shelters. For Ermera district, the land issue is yet to be sorted out. But it is notable that more than 50% people in Timor-Leste do not have land and property titles. CVTL will therefore discuss with the

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local authority and community about the land issue in a town hall meeting and will provide shelter materials after the issue is sorted out.

Infrastructure and other services

The DREF funding will support the distribution of shelter materials and monitor the community-led shelter construction process. Regarding other infrastructure such as access to resources and facilities (ie schools), communities will rely on existing infrastructure. CVTL will raise the issue with NDMO of the need for the provision of low cost toilets to be included in the community reconstruction effort.

Operational experience:

CVTL has significant experience of working on emergencies in the past years. An emergency operation in 2006 after severe storms is a good example. CVTL has 13 functional branches, about 12,000 volunteers and skilled staff and volunteers to support disaster operations. The Federation's Timor-Leste delegation has an experienced team able to help the NS as its experience grows in this regard.

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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 is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The Federation's Global Agenda

The International Federation's activities are aligned with under a Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

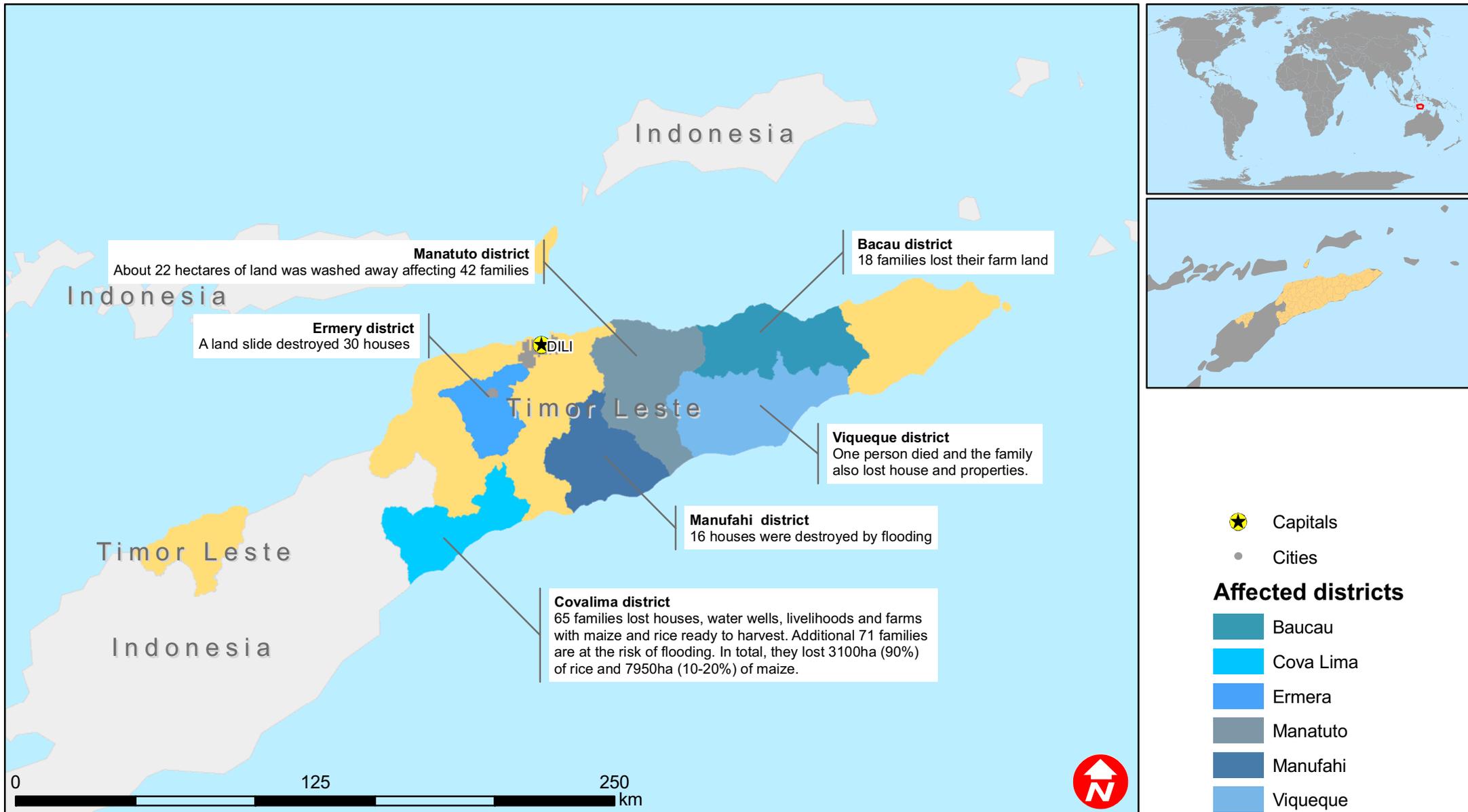
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Map data sources: ESRI, GIST, Federation