

Press Release

Floods in West Africa: the Luxembourg Red Cross is taking action

Luxembourg and Niamey, 15 September 2020 – Following the floods that hit the Sahel region at end of August, many families are homeless. The Luxembourg Red Cross teams are mobilised in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad to set up emergency shelters. But to address the many needs of hundreds of thousands displaced in the region, stronger support is required.

Following floods that have caused hundreds of thousands of people to be displaced in the Sahel region at the end of August, Luxembourg Red Cross teams have mobilised on a large scale in the countries where it regularly intervenes: Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

"Many have lost what few possessions they had. Families took refuge in schools. But with the start of the new school year, the situation can no longer continue," warns Prosper Zombre, Head of Mission for the Luxembourg Red Cross in Niger. The situation is becoming increasingly tense in the country, with more than 432,000 people affected and 36,000 homes destroyed, according to the Niger Ministry of Humanitarian Action.

The Luxembourg Red Cross is supporting the Regional Red Cross Committee of Niamey, which has mobilised its volunteers and started distributing 100 emergency shelters this week. *"These stocks enable us to provide shelter for some of the families, but it simply isn't enough to meet needs of such magnitude,"* continues the Head of Mission.

The situation in the neighbouring countries is similar to that in Niger: in Burkina Faso, major damage due to flooding and strong winds were recorded. The scale of the situation led the government of Burkina Faso to declare a state of natural disaster at the Council of Ministers on 8 September 2020. Indeed, the tally so far is 13 people dead, 50 injured and 563 made homeless. The material damage is also significant: more than 3,300 houses were destroyed, 1,600 damaged and nearly 1,800 emergency shelters used by internally displaced persons have been destroyed or damaged.

In N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, more than 6,000 shelters were destroyed, leaving 5,800 people in need of shelter. Here too, families have found refuge in schools or with other families. *"Those displaced need everything: shelter, latrines, hygiene kits. We are organising ourselves to be able to help them as a matter of urgency,"* continues Clara Bretin from the Chad desk at the Luxembourg Red Cross.

Immediate response through long-term commitment

The Luxembourg Red Cross' presence in the countries of the Sahel region have enabled it to quickly mobilise to help the local population following the floods that have hit the region. In Niger, where the Luxembourg Red Cross has been present since 2012, for example, emergency brigades immediately mobilised and warned families.

"As soon as they noticed that the dyke was threatening to collapse, the volunteers of the emergency brigades grabbed their megaphones. They went to the threatened neighbourhoods of Niamey to tell people they had to leave their homes to escape the floods," explains Prosper Zombre, head of mission in Niger for the Luxembourg Red Cross.

Beyond Niger, Luxembourg Red Cross teams have been mobilised in Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad. They are organizing themselves with the other stakeholders present in the field in order to provide the best possible assistance to the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the floods.

As an expert in the field of emergency shelter, the Luxembourg Red Cross intervenes throughout the world to protect people from climate hazards. Its teams contribute to emergency preparedness, amongst other things, and strengthen the resilience of communities in the countries where they intervene.

About the Luxembourg Red Cross

The mission of the Luxembourg Red Cross is to "improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable elements in society". Thousands of volunteers and over 2,400 professionals make it a major player in the areas of health, youth, social work, and humanitarian action. The Luxembourg Red Cross is thus involved in a variety of activities, such as emergency international humanitarian aid, home care, blood donation, rehabilitation, care for elderly or dependent people in day centres or care homes, social work, migrant and refugee reception, individual help to people in difficult situations, transition homes and youth centres, and social and family therapy services.

Media Contact

Caroline Fréchar

Communications Officer
caroline.frechar@croix-rouge.lu

Croix-Rouge luxembourgeoise
www.croix-rouge.lu
44, boulevard Joseph II - L-1840 Luxembourg
Tél. : (+352) 27 55-2127 - Mobile : (+352) 621 820 036