

Alert

Tanzania

Assistance to Survivors of passenger-ship disaster in Zanzibar, Tanzania

Geneva, 16 September 2011

1. Brief description of the emergency

A fatal ferry disaster happened last Saturday 10th September when a Pemba destined passenger and cargo ship christened MV Spice Islander capsized. The most recent figure shows that a total number of 203 people were killed during the accident and 619 people survived the tragedy as reported by Disaster Management Department of Prime minister's office. Some of the recovered bodies have been identified after relatives went through a grim task of identifying their loved ones. Most of the dead bodies and rescued survivors were brought ashore on the northern beach of Nungwi on the Zanzibar Island of Unguja. The number of the dead should be much higher, though it is quite unlikely to recover them, especially most of those trapped in the fateful ship which is reported to be on its way into the base of the Indian Ocean, at an estimated depth of 335 kilometres.

2. Impact

About 619 people and their families who have survived the fateful tragedy, lost an undisclosed value of their properties, are mentally traumatized, irritated and need to recover from the shocking encounter.

3. National and international response

The coordination of the response to this disaster is being undertaken by the government, under the Prime Minister's Office, Disaster Management Department and the Office of the Vice President in Zanzibar. A team of divers has been sourced from South Africa and is on location with their Tanzanian counterparts, recovering the dead bodies from the depths of the sea, and near the area where the incident happened. Most of the survivors are hospitalized in Zanzibar Hospital which is overwhelmed as

the medical and related resources are stretched to the limits. The extent of needs, however, is yet to be established, given the uniqueness of the disaster.

Meanwhile, early response assistance is being directed to the survivors, especially those in the hospitals.

4. ACT Alliance response

National members of ACT Forum Tanzania (AFTZ), CCT, ELCT and TCRS have been on location giving the earliest material assistance and participating in the assessment of needs. They are responding with their own resources and will not need involvement from the ACT Alliance members outside the country.

Thank you for your attention.

For further information please contact:

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