



Algerian Scouts excel at disaster preparedness

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Scouts in Algeria have been incredible in their support of the community in the Ghardaia region recently, as the area was dramatically hit by flash floods. The 'Scouts Musulmans Algériens' have proved the value of developing a disaster preparedness plan - which they activated with great success when the need arose.

On the 1st October 2008, the department of Ghardaia, 600 km south of Algiers, was hit by dangerous floods caused by heavy rains. More than 90 people were killed, 50 injured and more than 600 houses destroyed. According to the Algerian Red Crescent report, the mudslides overran the riverbanks of Oued M?Zab and invaded the villages.

Soon after the catastrophe, the Algerian government alerted emergency and called all sectors to intervene immediately. Under his authority and responding to the government call, Mr Nouredine Benbrahem, the General Commissioner of the Scouts Musulmans Algériens (SMA), established an emergency network, calling upon all departments of SMA at national level to rescue, help and clean up houses.

Around 1,000 Scouts and volunteers left their families, universities and works to contribute to this solidarity campaign, with the first form of action being the installation of the operational headquarters out of Ghardaia to coordinate with partners (governmental and non-governmental sectors) and to monitor the crisis. Six other centres were also set up to support the affected community: the Forest centre, Atef centre, Baba saad centre, Metlili centre, Bab Riyane centre and Ghardaia centre. Mr Nouredine Benbrahem was at the heart of the project, giving instructions to the Scouts and encouraging them to do their best for the victims and for the environment as well.

The objectives of this disaster support network which involved Scouts and other partners were:

- Distribution of supplies (foods and hygiene kits).
- Removing and pumping out the water from the flooded houses.
- Clearing the streets of mud and rubbish.
- Supporting affected people emotionally.

Some statistics were reported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies:

- 731 rescue operations which resulted in the rescue of 1,203 people.
- Release of 80 vehicles.
- 3,050 interventions have been carried out.

Click [to see](#) photos of the flood in Ghardaia.

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