



Mission Overview : Italy Floods 2000

On October 15, 2000, torrential rain fell on the Aosta Valley in Italy, causing devastating floods and mudslides. Twenty five were killed and the material damage was considerable. Télécoms Sans Frontières immediately joined the Aosta crisis management centre.

With 16 satellite telephone lines, the TSF team arrived at the scene of the incident 14 hours after the official announcement of the request for international assistance.

Torrents of mud and stones swept over the Valley, destroying villages and cutting all means communication.

Télécoms Sans Frontières immediately went to the crisis centre at Aosta airport. The different valleys being isolated from one another, the helicopter remained the only one means of transport and supply.

The first aim of TSF was to install priority lines at the crisis centre. Rescue teams on the ground could no longer reach the centre and their radio equipment was partially destroyed and saturated.

For fire-fighters, the need for priority lines appeared forty-eight hours later. Fire-fighters from neighbouring valleys could no longer reach affected populations in the city. Télécoms Sans Frontières then created a dedicated emergency number for different fire brigades.

Télécoms Sans Frontières then provided satellite lines to several hundred victims having found refuge in the barracks of the city of Aosta, and also in the reception centre of the city of Fénis, thus allowing them to contact their families.

Given the extent of the damage, the Italian authorities then asked TSF to install satellite phones in the isolated valleys. These were urgently required to communicate the inventory and the vital needs of the communities - drinking water, equipment, food, fuel, etc.

The Italian Government made available a helicopter to TSF to assist deployment from one valley to another.

Sixteen satellite lines operated permanently in the municipalities of Aosta, Nuz, Fénis, Gressoney-Saint-Jean, Gressoney-la-Trinité, in the fire-fighters command centre and at the Red Cross offices.

The majority of telephone services were restored on October 21, 2000. Télécoms Sans Frontières withdrew from the Valle d'Aosta the following day.