

Tuesday 15 August

## **Sierra Leone Mudslides Kill Dozens Including Children**

Dozens of children are likely to be among the hundreds of casualties in a devastating mudslide in Sierra Leone that buried houses and trapped families in their homes, Save the Children has warned.

The government of Sierra Leone is currently leading a search and rescue effort in the wake of the tragedy that struck near the capital Freetown early on Monday morning. Save the Children is assessing the situation and preparing to respond if required.

Sasha Ekanayake, Save the Children's Sierra Leone Country Director, said: "The mudslide swept down from the hills on the outskirts of Freetown early this morning and spared nothing in its path. Houses are buried and entire families are missing, including children.

"Save the Children is deeply concerned about the safety of children in the affected area. We are assessing and preparing to support the government in its response. A major concern right now is that children may have become separated during the mudslide and flood. Any response should prioritise reuniting children with families where possible, or ensuring access to appropriate care."

In addition to the mudslide, low-lying areas of Freetown have been affected by torrential flooding that destroyed buildings and left homes underwater, the aid organisation says.

"As the flood water recedes we need to ensure that children are given safe shelter and are protected from the spread of deadly waterborne diseases," Sasha Ekanayake added.

"We are still in the rainy season and must be prepared to respond in the event of further emergencies to come."

**ENDS**

**For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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