



Ordem dos **E**nfermeiros
Portugal

Madeira/Portugal Nurses' Response when faced with a calamity situation

Autor(es)

Merícia Bettencourt

Vera Pestana



Madeira/Portugal Island

**32°-33° Latitude North /
978 km southeast Lisbon**

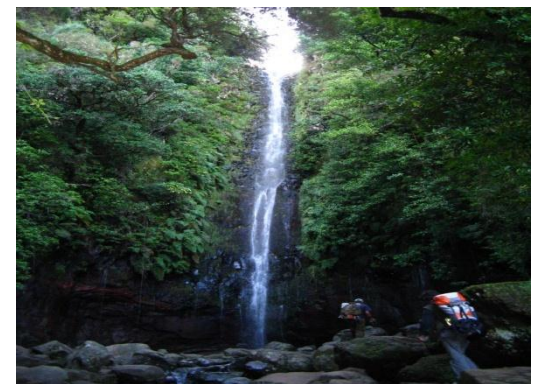
660 km African Continent

250.000 Inhabitants





Madeira/ Portuguese Island





20th February...



**900
Homeless**

**120
Wounded**



42 Dead

6 Missing



**How was the nurses
response?**





REGULATION FROM THE PROFESSIONAL NURSES EXERCISE

✓ Law n°161 /06

**Portuguese
nurses**

STATUS FROM ORDEM DOS ENFERMEIROS

✓ Law n° 104/98 renewed by Law n°111/2009 of December





Duties



General Principals



Values

Guides of the
professional exercise
principals of nursing





Ethics from the Professional Promise



Responsability to fulfill this Promise



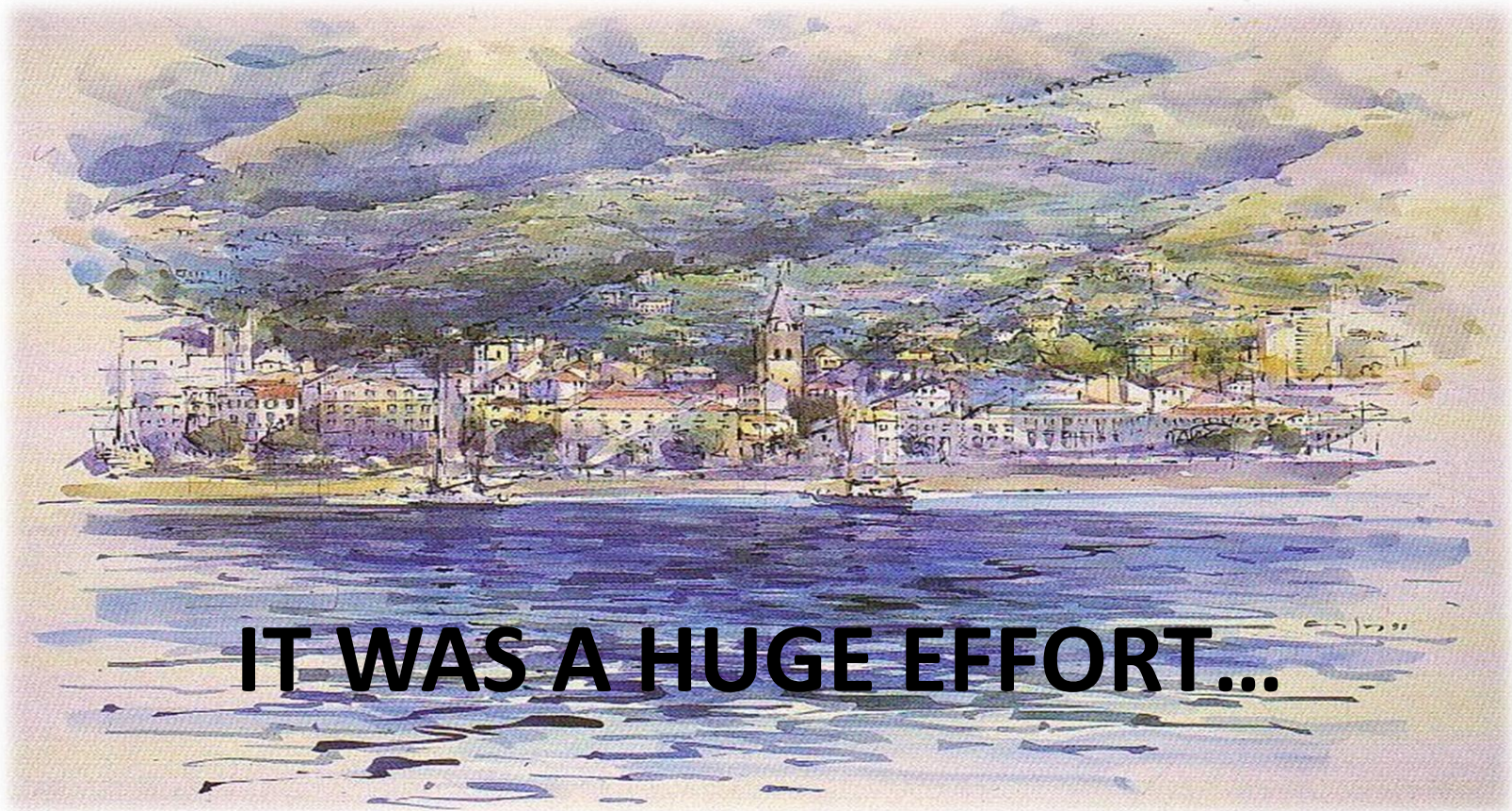
Hospital

Local for
sheltering

Other
Institutions

Helth
Centeres







TESTIMONY

“I was at home and a colleague called me telling that she couldn't go to work because she had water up to her knees... it was weird so much rain... and so I decided to go to the Urgency Unit and see for myself if everything was ok...”





“I arrived, and 8 victims were already inside... Despite not being on duty, I felt I had to help my colleagues... there was no communications... it was impossible to contact anybody.... It was necessary to prepare all nurses to continue working... until 10.30 pm we didn't know anything about our families”





“We started doing what was possible... meanwhile nurses were arriving to the Urgency Unit... we felt a big wish to collaborate... everybody put their family in second place.... There was a huge silence and because of that silence we felt that something severe had happened... Not knowing how many people were victims, it was very worrying....”



“There was an enormous commitment by every professional... Nurses from other hospital units came to us asking in what they could help... not only nurses but, Doctors, hospital auxiliary”

“All professionals near the hospitals came to ask what they could do to help”





“We had students... We couldn't speak with the families. I started worrying for their safety... feeding them... they helped giving food to patients and giving blankets... important things... the main concern with the victims was listening to them, taking care of them... lives were at stake but we also needed to pay attention to the emotional distress... There was a huge silence... It was a shocking day with sadness everywhere”



“I went home at 1 am and the next day I entered at 8 am and finished at midnight... I experienced the solidarity from my colleagues, it was my professional duty... the

empathy

frustration

uncertainty

the situation



to

TESTIMONY

“It was panic, anguish ... I was not accustomed seeing these images... I said that we were available to shelter anybody... In these circumstances nobody could turn a blind eye... in time of suffering no doors are closed...”



We suffered but we were thankful for being able to help the ones in need... People arrived at the entrance escorted... They only brought a plastic bag in their hand... Our hearts skipped seeing them with absolutely nothing”



I started crying like a baby by seeing such sadness... People arrived
sad for
having this
the is
take d to





“We tried to individualize nursing cares... We provided mattresses and our physical presence... we received about 30 people...and we were not going to send them away, obviously...one of them had to identify relatives...”





“Afterwards one of them said that would never forget such images: a sister, a daughter and her granddaughter... we had the impression that the grandmother had her arms surrounding the granddaughter protecting her”



“We also went to funerals of the relatives of a nun... it was a very sad ceremony. We cried a lot. We were speechless...There were children; nurses went several times to the quarters to see how they were doing... A climate of huge trust and solidarity set in... we talked a lot with them...”





“Days passed and a man came by looking for a child who was missing... He came with hope thinking that the child was with us... unfortunately he wasn't it was heartbreaking...Nobody could stay without help... We gave a tiny contribution to the community... we did our best... We had to do it: help the ones in need”





TESTIMONY

Without knowing what was going on... I looked towards the entrance and saw a man who was most nude... We sheltered under the car... there was a lot of blood... they didn't know about it... renewed all the time... The city hall said...



At the afternoon we had 48 people, then all of a sudden the



y



The problem was when the babies started to arrive... we had no way to feed them... What was burocratic was punctured... A once in a lifetime ex only woke up to y, because if to take care of e tried to maintai



There was no need to arrange schedules... People offered to work in shifts with no reward... Feelings of solidarity came above all... In

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TESTIMONY

“The patients started to alarm us; they were hearing the news... We tried to start contacting families; some were able to, and others not so lucky... I managed to contact my wife but not my





“An older colleague started to organize work distribution and select who would go on with the night shift.... Patients were very anxious... Families were impossible to contact... At night, bells were always ringing... Information was bad... Concentration was above all cold blood to stay calm at home because roads were the situation.”





“Conditions were made so that the AO would stay... We had to distribute food and clothes very well... Staff went to the bar and clean it up...the worst was managing the emotional part... A colleague took a chance and came... That way a nurse whose mother was evacuated could rest at night... We were lucky; Thankfully 2 experienced nurses were there to help us... We made it.”



“We are humans but we had the capability to run things in order that patients benefited to maximum. always with quality nursing

can
know





“The colleague whose family had not been contacted yet, had no responsibilities with patients... We changed completely our method of work... A lesson... We could see the solidarity of everyone, with no exception... Patients didn’t feel abandoned and acknowledged the fact that we were 24 hours working nonstop ... They said exactly that”





**Nurses are people that take
care of people**

**We feel treated when we take
care of**



Thank you

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when faced with a calamity situation**

peessoal@ordemenfermeiros.pt
gri@ordemenfermeiros.pt