

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CHINA:FLASH FLOODS

27 June 2002

Focus on Shaanxi Province

This Ops Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals.

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 16/02

Launched on 25 June 2002 for CHF 5,044,000 (USD 3.34m/EUR 3.43m) for three months for 100,000 beneficiaries. Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 200,000 Operations Update No. 1 ; Period covered: 25-27 June.

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: A number of National Societies immediately released core funds to support the commencement of the operation and have approached their governments for support. Some National Societies are launching public appeals. Other donors have expressed interest in supporting this appeal and discussions are underway. Hard pledges have yet to materialise and the updated contributions list will be included in the next Operations Update.

Related Appeals: 01.37/2002; East Asia Regional Programmes

Outstanding needs: CHF 5,044,000 (USD 3.34m/EUR 3.43m)

Summary: This Operations Update focuses on Red Cross/Red Crescent activities in the affected province of Shaanxi.

Operational Developments •

Nineteen provinces in China have been affected by extensive flooding brought on by exceptionally heavy rains during June. The massive amount of rain, which has caused the worst flooding in recent memory, was particularly unusual as it fell with extraordinary speed. As the rain continues more flooding appears to be inevitable. During the first week of June, rainfall in Shaanxi province, situated in north central China, was particularly intense. On 8 June, the banks of what is ordinarily a small stream overflowed, taking with it houses and inundating bridges, roads, fields and vehicles. Local people reported having to rush up the mountainside to escape the deluge. There was also considerable destruction caused by landslides triggered by the rush of water. It is estimated that it will take years for farmers to recover from loss of farm land due to the floods. Headlines in the *China Daily News* continue to caution the population to 'prepare for the worst.'

Approximately, 3,000 persons (700 families) in Shaanxi Province are reported to have lost their homes to the floods. According to the latest available information, some 132 people are reported dead and 200 are missing.

The unexpected onslaught of the disaster is causing the same kind of Psychological trauma seen in earthquake victims. Symptoms of psychological trauma such as despair and disbelief are prevalent throughout members of flood affected communities.

Coordination •

Representatives of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC), the Federation and eight provinces will meet June 28 to plan flood relief operation modalities, actions to distribute assistance, cooperation and division of tasks.

The UN Disaster Management Team, in which the Federation is a member, will meet Friday 28 June to share information about the floods. The Ministry of Civil Affairs will attend the session and provide an update on the latest activities.

Local Authorities are concentrating on rebuilding roads to allow trucks transporting relief supplies in; reconnecting electricity lines; and, cleaning up mud and rocks that litter the area.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action •

The RCSC has dispatched 56 people in four medical teams in the Shaanxi area. The four teams have been visiting households in the area, and have set up medical stations. The biggest health problem has been skin diseases.

The Chinese Red Cross branch in Shaanxi has already dispatched 18 truck loads of relief goods to the area but it has not yet been possible to take most of the items to Foping county in Shaanxi because of road conditions. Foping consists of nine villages that are situated one after the other along a small stream flowing down a valley in the Qin Ling mountains in southern Shaanxi. As the RCSC/Federation team was leaving the area it started to rain and the road, already dangerous, had to be closed. Limited available disaster preparedness stocks (DP), however, have been a constraint to RCSC relief activities.

A Federation information delegate travelled to Foping county on 26 June to support the RCSC with media coverage of the situation. After the launch of the Flashfloods appeal media interest from both Chinese and international media has been very high. Federation representatives have spoken with, among others, the BBC, BBC World Service, AFP, Reuters.

Outstanding needs •

Continued support is required in order to support RCSC activities outlined in the Appeal.

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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