

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

IRAN DROUGHT: SUPPORT TO AFGHAN REFUGEES

21 February 2005

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 over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 19/02; Operations Update No. 6; Period covered: November 2004 to February 2005; Revised Appeal coverage: 93.8 %; ([Please click here to go directly to the Contributions List](#))

Appeal history:

- A first Appeal (21/2000) was launched on 22 August 2000 for CHF 2,268,146 for 12 months for 100,000 beneficiaries. The final report was issued on 31 December 2002.
- A second – related but separate Appeal (19/2002) – was launched on 15 July 2002 for CHF 899,000 for initially 12 months (later extended) for 65,000 beneficiaries
- A revised Plan of Action was presented in August 2004 to continue the programme until March 2005, supporting 45,335 beneficiaries
- A new revised Appeal budget from July 2002 to March 2005 is CHF 2,249,198.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: N/A

Outstanding needs : CHF 139,331

Operational Summary:

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and the Federation are implementing the project in accordance with the revised plan of action, which is aimed at providing more sustainable solutions to the problems faced by Afghan refugees (For the revised plan of action, please see the Operations Update No.4 at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?02/190204.pdf). Due to the limited funds available, the project focused till November 2004, on meeting the basic water needs of beneficiaries by continuing the water trucking operation with the American Red Cross funding.

The new funding from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) and the Swedish Red Cross in November and December 2004 made it possible for the IRCS and the Federation to carry out other planned activities of the project, such as the construction of public water distribution stations and health training and education for Afghan refugees.

In the meantime, a new situation has been created in the process of repatriation of Afghan refugees in Iran to Afghanistan. This process which began in 2002, with the conclusion of a tripartite agreement between the governments of Iran, Afghanistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has come to a temporary halt, due to some internal problems in Afghanistan. Faced with insurmountable challenges in the country and with a view to providing a smooth transition in the country, the Afghan authorities requested the Iranian counterparts in November 2004 to postpone the voluntary repatriation process of Afghan refugees living in Iran. The temporary halt to the repatriation process, which was supposed to be completed by the spring of 2005, obliges the Afghan refugees to stay in Iran for at least one more year. Their prolonged stay represents a number of problems, as the Federation-IRCS humanitarian assistance project is coming to an end in March 2005. The Federation and IRCS are closely monitoring the situation and working to prepare and launch a new 12-month appeal (from April 2005 to March 2006).

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *Dr. Seyed Hadi Samaei, Director General of International Affairs Department, Iranian Red Crescent Society, Tehran; email: intdep@rcs.ir; mobile: 98. 21 884 9077/8808155; fax: 98.21.884 9079*
- *Mohammed Mukheir, Head of Delegation, Tehran; email: ifrcir05@ifrc.org ; mobile: 98 .912 314 4250; tel: 98.21.8890567/8911 271; fax: 98.21.889 5346*
- *Evgeni Parfenov, Regional Desk Officer, Geneva; email: evgeni.parfenov@ifrc.org; phone: 41.22.730 4325; fax: 41.22.733 0395*

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The IRCS maintains a website (www.rcs.ir) both in English and Farsi which also provides the latest information, operational updates, reports, interviews and news on the Bam operation to the public.

Operational Developments & Coordination

The implementation of the revised plan of action of the current project was partly affected by the lack of funds at the initial phase. The IRCS and the Federation were able to continue only the water trucking operation, with the available funds, till November 2004.

The new funding received from ECHO and Swedish Red Cross in November and December 2004 enabled the IRCS and the Federation to start other planned activities of the project. A construction company was chosen through a comparative bid analysis, in order to build 4 public water distribution stations. Intensive courses started in January 2005 to train 20 traditional birth attendants (TBA) and 60 community health workers (CHW).

The IRCS and the Federation are continuing to implement this project in close coordination with the local authorities concerned in Zahedan and Zabul. Coordination meetings are being held in Zahedan and Tehran between the IRCS, the Federation, Bureau for Alien and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) of the Iranian Government, United Nations (UN) agencies and other international non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society

The Sistan-Baluchestan provincial branch is in charge of the implementation of the project in Zahedan and Zabul. In the course of implementation of the project over the past several years, the staff and volunteers who have been engaged in it have increased their project management capacity. This is quite visible in reporting, internal monitoring system, clear responsibilities and duties of the staff involved in the project, and financial reporting.

Objectives, activities and results**1. Beneficiaries have better access to water through the improvement of the water trucking system and construction of a permanent water supply system.**

There has been outgoing and incoming movement of Afghan refugees in the target areas. While some refugees are returning home, new refugees are coming to Zahedan and Zabul for various reasons. Although the number of beneficiaries remains more or less the same in Zahedan, it has drastically decreased in Zabul, where there are only 45 families or 350 refugees living in two villages.



Beneficiaries fetch clean drinking water in jerry cans from the water tanks filled by the trucks that go around Zabul and Zahedan on a routine basis

In the light of the changing situation, the IRC is using 10 trucks (previously 11) and 22 fixed tanks in Zahedan (for their locations, please see the Operations Update No. 5 at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?02/190205.pdf) and 1 truck and two water tanks in Zabul (previously 3 trucks and 6 tanks) to ensure smooth water delivery to beneficiaries. Water delivery has become routine, guaranteeing the water supply six days a week. Water trucks go around the target villages once or twice a day in Zabul and thrice a day in Zahedan, filling the water tanks with clean drinking water. Then beneficiaries fetch water in jerry cans from the water tanks.

The construction of 3 water collection points early in December 2004 had positive impact on water delivery. Previously, the collection of water by trucks was very time-consuming as they had to use only one collection point rented from the Zahedan Water Department, but now, with the construction of three more collection points near the settlement areas, this process has been shortened, enabling the trucks not only to save time in water-filling but also to increase the amount of water delivered. Now, each beneficiary gets 13 litres of water per day.

To provide beneficiaries with permanent access to drinking water, the Federation started the process of constructing 4 public water distribution stations. The Federation went through the necessary procedures to choose a company that would be involved in the construction. Out of the five local construction companies that were invited to an open tender for a contract, four companies submitted their offers. The Federation selected the Ojabadi Company as the winner of the tender for its best offer and good reputation in the respective field. On the 2nd of February, the Federation Delegation and the Ojabadi Company signed a contract concerning the construction of the water distribution stations. The Water Department of the Zahedan Municipality allocated the sites and approved the blueprints for construction. On the 12th of February, the Ojabadi Company started digging the land for laying pipes. The Water Department will be involved in monitoring the construction in order to ensure its quality.

These public water distribution stations will be built in refugee-concentrated areas, namely, Karimabad (one station), Shirabad (two stations) and Akhare Jadeh Ghadimand (one station). The construction will include extending the city water network and building water distribution stations, which will be connected to the city drinking water network. A public water distribution station is a concrete station fitted with water taps, which is connected with the city water network. The water distribution stations, once constructed, will be able to provide 314,730 liters of drinking water to 24,210 beneficiaries. People living in the areas may come here with buckets to fetch water free of charge and 24 hours a day. With the construction of water stations, water trucking services will no longer be needed in these areas.

2. Afghan refugees have increased their capacity to deal with health-related issues by themselves.



Owing to the trainings on health, the Afghan refugees have increased their knowledge on health related issues

Given the professional nature of health training and education, the Federation chose the Provincial Health Centre (PHC) in Sistan-Baluchestan as an implementing partner of the project. A contract was signed in this regard between the Federation Delegation and PHC in January 2005.

On 24 January 2005, the PHC started the intensive courses at the Urban Health Centre building, in order to train 20 traditional birth attendants (TBA) and 60 community health workers (CHW). The TBA training includes four-month theoretical lessons and two-month practice at PHC hospitals. The CHW training includes three-month theoretical lessons and one-month practice in hospitals and communities. At the end of the courses, the trainees will be given certificates by the PHC on the basis of results of their final examination.

The Federation Delegation and the PHC agreed on the topics to be covered in the health education for 15,000 Afghan refugees. Based on the discussion, the PHC is now working on preparing educational materials which will be used in public health education.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives

The operation mainly targeted Afghan refugees living in non-camp settlements, who do not have access to clean water and sanitation facilities. Many of them are not officially registered in Iran and therefore, can not qualify for any work. The IRCS and the Federation played an important role in advocating the need for assistance to the refugees, together with UNHCR, Accion Contre la Faim (ACF), Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), etc. Both Afghan refugees and vulnerable Iranians living in the same operational areas are included in this operation, thereby, ensuring a balance in the provision of assistance and adherence to the criterion of vulnerability and providing them with an opportunity to build up the capacity of refugee organizations.

Given the central role of female beneficiaries in the maintenance of households, including the use of water and family hygiene, the IRCS and the Federation have tried to involve them as much as possible. Women were consulted in the design of water collection points and public water distribution stations; they have also been recruited to supervise and administer water distribution from fixed water tanks.

National Society Capacity Building

The Sistan-Baluchestan Provincial Branch of the IRCS maintains its technical and human resources which have been strengthened in the course of implementing this project. IRCS staff and volunteers trained within the framework of the project continue to work for its implementation. IRCS project coordinators and field officers perform a high-level of responsibility within the programme. Technical assistance from the Federation Delegation in terms of planning, response and financial reporting according to Federation procedures and standards contributes to building on the capacity of the branch in respective areas.

Federation Delegation

The Federation delegation is assisting the IRCS in the overall operational management, by coordinating donor response, monitoring the implementation and providing technical assistance to the IRCS in capacity building with a focus on planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs, facilitation in the strengthening of human and financial resources and standardization of procedures. A Federation programme officer based in Zahedan is in charge of daily supervision, monitoring, and coordination of activities with the IRCS provincial branch, as well as data collection - including information on weather conditions, health statistics, repatriation process and other information necessary for the evaluation of the impact of the operation on the most vulnerable. Technical backup and coordination at Tehran level is provided by a Tehran-based Senior Programme Officer, a Disaster Preparedness/Disaster Response Coordinator and the Head of Delegation.

Advocacy/Public Information

Continuous efforts are being made to advocate the needs and rights of the target population vis-à-vis embassies, UN agencies, ECHO and international organizations. Issues concerning their assistance were also discussed with local authorities, UNHCR and non-governmental organisations present in the region.

Outstanding needs

The project has been 93.8 % funded. The Federation Delegation and the IRCS are working hard to complete all planned activities within the operation time frame.

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