

# 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

## **SRI LANKA: FLOODING AND LANDSLIDES**

30 May, 2003

**Appeal No. 13/03; Operations Update no. 2; Period covered: 23-26 May, 2003**

**Appeal launched on 20 May 2003 for CHF 1,212,000 (USD 934,598 or EUR 801,424) for three months for 125,000 beneficiaries. This operation will be revised and scaled up based on the results of the ongoing FACT/RDRT assessment.**

**Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 50,000**

*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 180 countries.*

*For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

### ***In Brief***

**Appeal coverage: 54.9 %; See the Contributions List on the Federation's website for details.**

**Outstanding needs: CHF 546,515**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: 2003 Annual Appeal for Sri Lanka (no. 01.57/2003)**

**Operational Summary:** Water and sanitation is the most critical issue. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) together with the International Federation is taking a lead in this area, where action to prevent disease and death among the affected can be carried out cost effectively and with great impact. A task force has been operational since 23 May, consisting of members from the SLRCS, the Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) and Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT). Distributions, cleaning of wells, and other activities are ongoing. Donors reacted promptly and positively to the preliminary appeal. A revised appeal is in the process of being drawn up, as further funds are needed for immediate and medium term assistance to those affected by the devastating floods and landslides.



*Six out of 25 districts in the country are affected of the flooding and landslides.*

## **Operational developments**

The floodwaters are receding from the affected areas around the five rivers flowing from Sri Lanka's Adam's Peak. The soil however, is so saturated with water that just a little bit of new rains could cause more landslides. Out of the country's 25 districts, the six affected ones are Kalutara, Galle, Hambantota, Nuwara Eliya, Matara and Ratnapura, with the worst affected being the latter two.

The full scale of the disaster is not clear yet. According to the latest government figures, the most severe floods and landslides on Sri Lanka in more than 50 years have affected more than 165,000 families, or approximately 660,000 people. A large proportion of them are displaced, with at least 26,000 still living in rudimentary camps in schools, temples, factories, and railway stations etc., where the water and sanitation situation is difficult.

250 people have been killed, and the death toll is rising as more corpses are being recovered. There are no sure estimates of the number of missing people, but it is being indicated that the initial estimates of several hundred were too high.

Many of the survivors have lost everything, as more than 25,000 houses are destroyed and another 25,000 houses partially destroyed. These people, who have to start their lives anew, are highly vulnerable. 100 schools have been destroyed and 200 damaged, according to statements from the ministry of education. Some of the schools have been completely washed away. Some areas are still not possible to reach by road. The long term damage to infrastructure, crops, economic activities and social life, is enormous.

Rehabilitation needs will be great. The government has promised financial assistance for rehabilitation of destroyed houses. Thus, at this stage it does not appear that rehabilitation of houses will be a major component of the Red Cross operation. In connection with the ongoing revising and scaling-up of the appeal, the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) together with the International Federation are looking into the needs for school cleaning/disinfection and temporary shelter. Some activity has already been started up in these areas.

A scaling-up of the funds needed for activities within water and sanitation is certainly required, as this is clearly the most critical issue. The SLRCS has so far been the only active party in cleaning of wells. Together with the International Federation the Society is making preparations to take a lead in water and sanitation, where action to prevent disease and death among those affected by the floods and landslides can be carried out cost effectively and with great impact. Practically all wells in the affected areas are flooded. An upcoming sectoral coordination meeting will hopefully determine the various actors' areas of responsibility.

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The SLRCS has established a Management Committee and a Task Force for the floods and landslides operation. The latter is reinforced with members from the Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) and Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT). The Task Force has been operational since 23 May, and is giving the SLRCS efforts new impetus and direction after its most immediate emergency response. Full reports on the emergency response of the Society's branches in the first chaotic days have not been possible to obtain, but the branches in all areas have been carrying out relief distributions. Boats have been employed to reach marooned people. Branches have also been taking part in search and rescue, bowsering water, transporting people and carrying out first aid and health advocacy as well as psychosocial support. These volunteers have made a real difference in their communities.

The government is fairly satisfied with relief efforts, but have admitted that coordination should be better. Media reports have focused on slow response. The floods have exposed limitations in disaster preparedness in the country, including the SLRCS. Sri Lanka's vulnerability to serious flooding must be recognised, and more resources channelled into disaster preparedness and mitigation.

The SLRCS and Task Force assessments of affected areas are ongoing. A good picture of the situation has been established. Matara is the district where the water has been receding the slowest. As of 26 May it was reported to be 1.4 m and receding with 20 cm per day. In other places the water is now just on top of the rice paddies.

So far the assessments indicate that food is no longer a priority, but that clean water and shelter are in great demand, together with clothes, school books, kitchen sets etc. The Task Force is planning reinforced support to camps of displaced people, with disinfection, latrines, clean water, cooking facilities etc. Health services seem to be well taken care of by other actors in Hambantota and Matara. There have been no reports of serious outbreaks of water borne disease so far. The situation could however change quickly under the current circumstances.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

### Emergency relief

**Objective 1: To ensure the affected population to be assisted by the Red Cross is provided with essential food, non-food, clothing, water and health needs to survive the immediate weeks.**

### Progress

#### RELIEF



*Ratnapura Red Cross branch volunteers distributing food by boat.*

- All the five involved Red Cross branches have been carrying out distributions to affected people. The table below summarizes the information that it has been possible to collect so far on items distributed from 19 May up to and including 25 May. All items have been taken from buffer stocks or donated locally. Around 200 Red Cross volunteers were mobilized to collect local donations that started to stream in different quantities from various sources. Both cash and in-kind donations were collected at relief collecting centers opened at each Red

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Cross branch in all the districts. Volunteers were assembled at major relief points, where packaging of relief items and distribution to the beneficiaries were done. Individual and group donations within the first few days after the disaster amounted to more than 2 million rupees (CHF 26,500). All donations received were listed and distributed to Red Cross branches to meet the needs of the affected people.

Relief item	Ratnapura district	Galle District	Matara district	Kalutara district	Hambantota district
<b>Cooked foods</b>					
Bread (loaves)	12,275	3,096	2800	3,000	5,000
Seeni Sambal	12,000	2,000			
Lunch packets				4,212	
Buns	300				
<b>Water</b>					
20 ltr. cans	695	278	698	95	
1 and 1.5 ltr. bottles		150	100	766	
<b>Dry rations</b>					
Sugar (kgs)	40	622	150	50	
Rice (kgs)	300	1,275		200	
Dhal (kgs)	25	248	100	17.5	
Milk powder (pkts)	50	550	100	20	
Coconut	10				
Noodles (pkts)	100	517		40	
Tea leaves (pkts)	25	150		55	
Biscuits (pkts)	35	300	250	300	
Soya meat (pkts)			75	40	
Salmon tins		137		50	
<b>Clothes</b>					
Children's clothes		150	150		160
Used clothes (bags)				100	
Bed sheets/blankets					39
Sundry clothes					413
<b>Medicines</b>					
Paracetamol	5,700	18,000	14,000	13,000	
<b>Other</b>					
Soap (pcs)	150	400	100	135	
Candles	500	1,552	400	722	
Match boxes	2,100	3,100	200	2,240	
Cooking utensil sets		100	100		
Plastic basins			100		
Plastic buckets			100		

### SHELTER

- A total of 120 tents previously donated by Iranian Red Crescent Society have been distributed in the affected districts, with assistance for erecting them. The SLRCS branches are asking for more tents for homeless people. Procurement of additional suitable tents has been started.

### HEALTH

- In Matara Red Cross branch 12 volunteers have been involved in disseminating knowledge of prevention and care of malaria, diarrhoea and other water borne diseases.
- A total number of 10,502 affected persons benefited from the First Aid service organized by the volunteers of the Matara Red Cross branch.
- Over 14,000 persons were treated at the mobile medical clinics organized by the Galle Red Cross branch.

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- In Ratnapura around 20,000 affected people received medicines and First Aid from the Red Cross mobile Health and First Aid teams who visited house-to-house from 18 to 25 May.
- ICRCs health coordinator is assisting the Task Force in the area of health.



Carrying out first aid in Palawela school in Ratnapura, where 250 displaced people had taken refuge.

### WATER & SANITATION

- Water bowsering: SLRCS branches are continuing with water bowsering. The Hamantota Red Cross branch reports that they have bowsered 35,000 litres per day since 18 May.
- Well cleaning: the Hamantota Red Cross branch has as of 26 May cleaned 335 wells in its district, and has been asked to continue in the neighbouring district of Matara. It has been the only actor in this field in this first phase. Preparations are being made to considerably expand this activity. The Spanish Red Cross has finished its plan of action for a bilateral project under this International Federation appeal, for which a proposal has been made to ECHO. The plan is to start work in two weeks together with the SLRCS, to clean 8,000 wells and construct 21,000 latrines in the districts of Galle, Kalutera and Ratnapura. 25 teams will be active.
- Water purification: To ensure better success in preventing water borne diseases than with normal chlorine tablets, the water purification chemical Chlor-Floc is in procurement. It disinfects the water, but also flocculates impurities, in order for filtration to be more effective. With the first shipment, which will arrive in the coming days, 20,000 families will be able to get 20 litres of clean, safe water every day for seven days. This first shipment is a donation from the Norwegian government and the Norwegian Red Cross. The Chlor-Floc sachets will be distributed together with 20 l buckets, which are also in procurement. The airline Emirates is transporting the goods at a 50 per cent price reduction.
- The ICRC Sri Lanka: the delegation has donated 400 latrine slabs, which are now being transported to three of the affected districts.

### LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT

- To ensure that all five involved Red Cross branches are able to communicate with the SLRCS headquarters and the Task Force as well as to assist the affected population and monitor the situation, the branches have now been strengthened with a total of four mobile phones and four fax machines (purchased from this appeals budget), two vans and one 4WD pick-up truck (hired) and two land cruisers (made available by the ICRC).

### COORDINATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT

- The Task Force consisting of members from the SLRCS, the Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) and the International Federation's Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT), has been operational since 23 May. The SLRCS headquarters has sent five three-person teams to support each of the Red Cross branches.

### Objective 2: To reinforce the SLRCS's capacity to respond to the immediate needs.

The support given by the regional delegation, members from the RDRT and members from the International Federation's Field Assessment and Coordination Team, is focusing on the drawing up of a well targeted and

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realistic action plan which enables the SLRCS to efficiently help the most vulnerable. These external human resources are in the Task Force working side by side with members from the SLRCS, with a view also to build long term capacity. The SLRCS is viewing this cooperation as an opportunity to reshape also its permanent operations.

### **Impact**

The immediate SLRCS relief efforts have been an important contribution in a situation which has by far overstretched the available resources. The support from the Regional Delegation, the RDRT and the FACT teams are giving important impetus to the capacity of the SLRCS to respond to immediate needs.

### **Constraints**

- The toll on effectiveness, which comes from a lack of vehicles in operating Red Cross branches, is sadly demonstrated in times of crisis.
- Some branches were themselves affected by the disaster, and lost office equipment etc. This has caused communication problems.
- Poor accessibility due to flooded roads hampered relief efforts and made volunteer mobilization difficult.

### **Federation coordination**

SLRCS and the Task Force are exchanging information with other actors at the Prime Minister's Crisis Management Operations Centre. The Sri Lankan government has established a system of sectoral meetings under chairmanship of the national relevant ministries to coordinate information and assistance. So far, the Health, Water and Sanitation sectoral groups have been meeting on a regular basis, and Red Cross is taking part alongside the UN and other actors in this coordination effort. The Task Force is in regular contact with OCHA.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives**

The Federation response will be carried out in a manner governed by the Principles of the Movement, the Principles and Rules of Disaster Response and the Code of Conduct. Wherever possible the SPHERE Guidelines will be respected.

### **Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

The SLRCS information and public relations resources played a significant role in mustering national support for the Society's early response to the disaster. Media announcements requesting public assistance immediately following the disaster, not only made people aware of the dire situation, but also triggered mass public sympathy.

#### ***For further information please contact:***

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*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 (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

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

# Sri Lanka - Floods and Landslides

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 13/2003

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

30.05.2003

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					1'212'000	<b>TOTAL COVERAGE</b> 54.9%	
DANISH - RC		462'500	DKK	94'119	20.05.03		
JAPANESE - RC		46'700	USD	63'489	23.05.03		
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		1'496'667	NOK	279'877	26.05.03		
SWEDISH - GOVT		800'000	SEK	128'000	08.05.03	RELIEF ITEMS, TRANSPORT, STORAGE & DISTRIBUTION	
SWISS - GOVT(SDC)				100'000	23.05.03		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				665'485	CHF		54.9%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	