

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

SUDAN: FLOODS IN KASSALA STATE

8 August 2003

Appeal No. 19/2003; Operations Update no. 1

Appeal launched on 5 August 2003 for CHF 1,917,000 (USD 1,412,563 EUR 1,250,535) to assist 140,000 beneficiaries on a preliminary basis for 3 months.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 200,000

Period covered: August 5 –7 2003

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

In Brief

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,917,000; the updated list of contributions will be provided with the next Operations Update.

Appeal coverage: contributions are currently being recorded; a Water Sanitation Emergency Response Unit (ERU) comprising three modules, is being deployed by the German Red Cross in collaboration with the Austrian Red Cross.

National Societies in Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, and Qatar, as well as ECHO have expressed interest in supporting the operation. Formal pledges are expected shortly.

The Sudanese Red Crescent (SRC) has initiated emergency response activities, and has conducted an assessment using CHF 200,000 allocated to the Society from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: 2003 Annual Appeal of Sudan (no. 01.10/2003)

Operational Summary: in view of the deteriorating situation in other parts of the country, the UN deployment of an UNDAC team, and the advanced stage of Federation and SRC planning, the Federation is deploying all three ERU modules. To summarize action to date, the SRC's Kassala branch mobilized 1,000 volunteers and 263 staff members who have been evacuating people to higher ground, distributing locally donated food, and conducting health awareness campaigns. A core group of SRC volunteers are conducting house to house campaigns while the SRC is providing both preventive and curative health services from six emergency clinics using its health staff and medical supplies from the Refugee/IDP programmes (which will need to be replenished); SRC also intends to open up five others. The SRC Kassala branch office sustained heavy damage due to the flooding and will need to be rehabilitated. As the building is unsafe, the branch is currently operating out of one of the SRC branch clinics.

A joint assessment was conducted by the SRC, WFP, Accord and Goal was made to determine needs and acquire more precise data and statistics regarding the flood damage. Initial reports indicate some 40,000-50,000 persons in need of shelter, water, and food.

A German Red Cross (GRC)/Austrian Red Cross (ARC) Water Sanitation Emergency Response Unit (ERU), with the capacity of assisting up to 100,000 people, is being deployed under the co-ordination of the SRC, and with support from the Federation.

Since 1999 the Federation has worked with the SRC to successfully respond to two flood emergencies. As a result the Federation and the SRC have accumulated considerable experience in implementing emergency flood relief and response operations in Sudan. In addition to the immediate need for the delivery of relief to those affected, the Federation intends to focus on reinforcing the capacity of the SRC formed during these recent operations, and to supplement the existing experience with well targeted support.

Operational developments

Additional flash flooding was reported in six areas outside of Kassala. Since yesterday (7 August) the Gash River has risen to two meters, broken one embankment, and reached the bridge. Flooding, affecting an additional 2,000 families, is also being reported in Gedaref and Sennar, which neighbours Kassala. The concern is that with more rain forecasted in the Ethiopian and Eritrean highlands, additional flooding in Gedaref and Sennar may trigger additional flooding affecting as far as Khartoum.

There has been extensive damage to dwellings and institutions especially schools. Initial reports following a joint assessment conducted by SRC, WFP, ACCORD, and Goal indicate some 40,000-50,000 flood-affected individuals (with 15,000 houses destroyed or damaged) urgently requiring shelter, safe water, sanitation and food.

The SRC's Kassala branch mobilized 1,000 volunteers and 263 staff members who have been evacuating people to higher ground, distributing locally donated food, and conducting health awareness campaigns. A core group of SRC volunteers are conducting house to house campaigns while the SRC is providing both preventive and curative health services from six emergency clinics using its health staff and medical supplies from the Refugee/IDP programmes (which will need to be replenished); SRC also intends to open up five others. The SRC Kassala branch office sustained heavy damage due to the flooding and will need to be rehabilitated. As the building is unsafe, the branch is currently operating out of one of the SRC branch clinics.

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

Health

Objective: To prevent the outbreak of water borne diseases through the provision of appropriate drugs.

Progress

Kassala's main hospital has been abandoned. Several committees were formed to address its reopening, but the hospital will most likely be unable to function for at least one month (and probably longer). The SRC has six emergency health clinics operating with SRC health staff from the Refugee/IDP programmes, and intend to open another five clinics. The clinics are using medical supplies from the refugee programme that will have to be replaced.

Acute diarrhea is proving to be a major problem. Although to date, there have been no reports of bloody diarrhea, following the flooding in 1988 there was a cholera outbreak. To this end the Federation is sending a cholera kit as a preventive measure.

The main health threat will be from vector diseases - malaria and diarrhea diseases. No spraying of stagnant water has been carried out, increasing the potential threat of cholera.

Spraying, environmental clean-up, latrine construction and the provision of safe water are critical in addressing present health problems. The government has undertaken some clean up and fogging to reduce flies and mosquitoes, and has requested assistance from SRC volunteers who have previous experience with the use of spraying equipment.

Some 300 Red Crescent volunteers are conducting house to house campaigns while the SRC is providing both preventive and curative health services from six emergency clinics using its health staff and medical supplies from the refugee/IDP programmes (which will need to be replenished); the SRC also intends to open up five other clinics.

The government has initiated work on the rehabilitation and re-opening of the main hospital which was damaged in the floods. In the meantime, the Ministry of Health has flown in 12 health professionals operating from a military hospital in the outskirts of Kassala town.

Water and sanitation

Objective: To provide potable water and sanitation services for a period of three months.

Progress

A German Red Cross (GRC)/Austrian Red Cross (ARC) Water Sanitation Emergency Response Unit (ERU) will be deployed under the co-ordination of the SRC, and with support from the Federation following a meeting between the Federation's Regional Water and Sanitation delegate and technical staff from the Ministries of Health and Water Supply. A seven person joint GRC and ARC ERU team was mobilized with the first of two teams scheduled to arrive on Friday 8 August. A second GRC/ARC team will follow shortly thereafter. The Water Sanitation ERU is designed to be self-sufficient so as not to strain limited local resources, and the modular approach allows it to become rapidly operational during emergencies.

The German Red Cross/Austrian Red Cross Water sanitation ERU, has the capacity to assist up to 100,000 people, and comprises three modules: Mass Sanitation Module, Distribution Module (without trucks), and Treatment and Supply Module. The ERU possesses the facilities for treating contaminated water with the Treatment and supply Module; distributing clean water to the affected population with the Distribution Module; while the Mass Sanitation Module provides latrines and vector control reducing the risk of water-borne disease and minimising the risk of further contamination of existing water supplies. The ERU being deployed to Sudan has been specially equipped with additional laboratory equipment that will be used for testing existing water sources after they have been rehabilitated. This is the first operation to use the distribution module containing storage tanks and tap stands that will be strategically placed among communities that have been severed from the water system. Contaminated water will be purified by the Treatment and Supply module, and then transported by trucks to the distribution points. The Treatment and Supply module will be based by the river, and will take water from the river to be purified for drinking. The module has the capacity to process up to 500,000 litres of water per day.

The deployment of the GRC/ARC ERU will also provide an opportunity to work closely with counterparts from the Sudanese Red Crescent to further develop technical skills in the sector of water sanitation.

The Kassala water supply system is currently under two meters of flood water, and is only producing at 20% of its capacity (2,000 cu meters). Even after one month of repair work, and providing that there is no further flood-related damage, the water supply system will only be functioning at 60-70% capacity. Plans are also underway for the government and other agencies to begin constructing of latrines, with as many as 10,000 units required. Existing water sources that have been damaged or contaminated due to the floods will also need to be rehabilitated, i.e. drained, repaired, decontaminated etc. once the floods have subsided.

Distribution of Emergency Relief Items

Objective: to provide shelter, hygiene, and sanitation to those affected, and to avoid the outbreak of disease.

Progress

WFP, in cooperation with the SRC, completed a needs assessment in Kassala identifying some 30,000 priority beneficiaries. A shipment of relief items from the United Arabs Emirates was flown to Sudan.

The Federation's Amman Regional Delegation is preparing to dispatch 101,997 kgs of relief goods valued at CHF 350,465 accompanied by a logistician to Kassala. The items include:

Item	Quantity
Plastic sheeting (60x4meters)	800 rolls
Blankets	32,000
Laundry soap	2,475 kg
Collapsible 10ltrs Jerry cans	700 pieces
Collapsible 20ltrs Jerry cans	900 pieces

Tents and plastic sheeting will offer temporary shelter measures, but reconstruction/rehabilitation planning should start soon. Schools are closed for a period of fifteen days, but could stay closed longer. The extensive damage to schools is a major concern, as well as the damage to the main hospital and local health clinics.

Federation coordination

Coordination meetings are taking place on a regular basis between the SRC, Federation representatives, the Netherlands and Spanish Red Cross, the Government, other operational agencies (the International Rescue Committee, ACCORD, GOAL, the Humanitarian Coordination Committee in Sudan), and the UN (OCHA, WFP, and UNICEF).

There is also good coordination with ICRC, which has praised the high level of efficiency of the SRC's Kassala branch. The ICRC will provide logistical support and is ready to release two trucks and two light vehicles upon request.

The Federation's Disaster Management Division (DMC) is coordinating the operation from the Federation Secretariat in Geneva. The Federation's delegation in Kassala will be strengthened with an experienced programme coordinator (due to arrive on Saturday, 9 August) and deployment of staff from the regional delegation as required. A Regional Watsan Delegate is already in Khartoum preparing for the arrival of the ERU team. The Nairobi Regional Delegation will continue to provide support to the operation as required, and will take over the coordination of operation from DMC within the standard ninety-day period. It is envisaged that except for the technical specialists provided by the ERU team and the programme coordinator no additional delegates will be required as the society in general and the Kassala branch in particular has experienced technical staff that will be managing this operation.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The regional information unit together with the media service of the Secretariat issued three news releases and two feature articles on the current disaster and the response provided by the SRC and sister national societies through the International Federation. A set of photographs was also made available thanks to the Spanish Red Cross delegate in the Sudan. The Reuters Alert Net web site is hosting one of these articles while the United Nations Relief Web quoted excerpts from the Federation's Information Bulletin. A briefing by a media service press officer is scheduled for 8 August at the United Nations' press-room in Geneva. A special page has been set up on the Federation's Disaster Management and Information System (DMIS) at <https://www-secure.ifrc.org/dmis/index.htm>

So far media interest in covering the Sudan floods remains rather limited. However, several interviews and phone briefings were given to a number of correspondents based in the region with calls also coming in from places such as Cairo and Paris. Interviews were given to Agence France Presse (AFP), Associated Press, CNN, BBC (English and French), Reuters, the Financial Times, and UN IRIN.

A media information strategy to increase the visibility of this Red Cross Red Crescent operation is currently being developed and efforts are under way to dispatch an information resource person to the affected area. Contacts with the main media outlets in both Nairobi and Geneva will be maintained and increased.

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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.

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