

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

BANGLADESH: FLOODS

9 August 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 15/2004; Operations Update no. 2; Period covered: 3- 9 August 2004; Appeal coverage: 10% ;
[Click here to go directly to the contributions list on the website \(the list is updated weekly\).](#)

Appeal history:

- **Launched on 26 July 2004 for CHF 4,350,000 (USD 3,440,095 or EUR 2,844,997) for six months to assist one million beneficiaries.**

Outstanding needs: CHF 3, 896, 362 (USD 3, 103, 236 or EUR 2,531, 237)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Annual Appeal 01.56/2004

Operational Summary: The flood waters are slowly receding in most affected areas of the country. However the situation for many people remains dire and relief efforts continue to be critical to combat the lack of access to food and clean water and control the outbreak of waterborne diseases. There remains the strong possibility of a rapid rise in floodwaters if the monsoon brings further rains in the coming weeks as predicted by the long-range weather forecast. Diarrhoea cases have skyrocketed in the affected areas and as of 7 August more than 100,000 people had been struck by the illness, with 8,000-10,000 new cases a day. There are 1,000 reported cases a day in the capital Dhaka alone. The official death toll from diarrhoea to date is 58.

The total death toll has risen to 691. Government figures show that more than 1.6 million people are still living in makeshift shelters. Food scarcity, no employment opportunities and fear of losing current food and medical assistance is discouraging many people from returning home.

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has provided emergency assistance to more than 9,000 families with its limited resources. The initial response to the Appeal is very encouraging and but it is essential that it is fully funded to provide emergency aid to 200,000 of the worst affected families as planned.

- *Bangladesh Red Crescent Society: A.F.M. Obaidur Rahman, Secretary General, email: bdrcs@bangla.net, phone: +88 02 933 7314*
- *Federation Delegation in Bangladesh: Tony Maryon, Head of Delegation, email: ifrcbd03@ifrc.org; phone: +88 02 831 5401-2, Mobile: + 88 0171 521 615, fax: +88 02 934 1631*
- *For regional overview, contact Bob McKerrow, Head of Regional Delegation, South Asia, New Delhi. Phone +91 11 2685 8671, mobile +91 98 1000 1534, email - ifrcin02@ifrc.org*
- *In Geneva: Suzana Jekic, Asia-Pacific Department; email: suzana.jekic@ifrc.org; phone: +41 22 730 4353 and Jagan Chapagain, email jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org, phone +41 22 730 4316.*

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>

Background

The monsoon arrived early and heavy rain lashed Bangladesh from late June. Persistent and exceptionally heavy rainfall augmented by torrential river flows (coming in from Nepal, India and Bhutan) and accelerated snow and ice melts from the Himalayas, contributed to severe flooding.

To date, 40 of Bangladesh's 64 districts have been affected. The current flooding has exceeded the levels of the 1998 disaster. A total of 34 million people (almost a quarter of the population) have been affected by the disaster. As of 7 August, the official death toll stood at 691.



Washed away school building in Sirajganj

The floods are receding in most affected areas but the situation for many people remains dire. It is imperative that relief efforts are continued to deal with lack of access to food and clean water and to combat the outbreak of disease. There remains the possibility of a rise in floodwaters if the monsoon brings further rains in the coming weeks as predicted.

Official figures show that more than 1.6 million people are still living in makeshift shelters. Many people are unwilling to return home for fear of losing food and medical assistance currently being provided while employment opportunities are scarce in their own areas.

The capital Dhaka was deluged by monsoon rains, with much of the city under water for two weeks. Flood waters have been receding for the last three days.

Diarrhoea is a major health problem as a result of the floods. The number of people struck down by the illness since 12 July is over 100,000 with 8000-10,000 new cases reported a day. The official death toll from diarrhoea is 58. The problem is particularly severe in Dhaka.

The Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) reported on 7 August an improved flood situation for most of the country, including Dhaka. Of 69 monitoring points supplying data, nine observed a rise in water levels, 58 recorded falls and two noted no change. At 15 monitoring points, water levels are still flowing about the danger levels. The FFWC warns that recession rates are likely to remain slow. *The Meteorological Department cautions that Bangladesh remains highly vulnerable to future severe flooding if there are more heavy rainfalls.*

Operational developments

The BDRCS and the Federation Delegation have continued to maintain daily contact with all BDRCS District Branches in the flood-affected districts, particularly those targeted under this Appeal. The Branches were instructed to mobilise members and volunteers to prepare for the current relief operation. The Emergency Flood Relief Control Room is operational and is coordinating and sharing information with district units and other stakeholders.

The Delegation initiated the request for deployment of a relief coordinator, two relief delegates and a logistics delegate. A logistics delegate from the New Zealand Red Cross arrived on 5 August, and it has now been confirmed that all requested relief delegates will arrive this week (to be provided by the British Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross and Korean Red Cross).

Delegates will be briefed by headquarters and will then go to the field to assist Branches in identifying beneficiaries among the most vulnerable flood-affected population. They will also supervise relief goods distribution to help ensure this process is fast and efficient.

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

The unforeseen rapid deterioration in the flood situation in Dhaka led to the BDRCS commencing distribution of food and non-food items on 27 July among severely affected city slum dwellers living in the low-lying areas. Over 100,000 slum dwellers are still in overcrowded shelters or makeshift accommodation on city streets and roads.

Since the beginning of the flood season the BDRCS has distributed the following relief goods from its limited resources and buffer stocks to more than 9,000 families. Distribution has been made to vulnerable people severely affected by the floods.

Family Kits	BP-5 Biscuits	Food Packets ¹	Used Clothing	Oral Rehydration Solution (saline)	Water Purification Tablets
5000 family kits	1,548 cartons	2,550	600 pieces	58,990 packets	250,000



House damaged by floods in Sirajganj

An Emergency Grant application for EUR 1,350,340 has been approved by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and the contract signed. The Government of Japan has contributed CHF 238,563 to the Federation Bangladesh Floods Emergency Appeal through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Bangladesh office. An Agreement between the International Federation of Red Cross Societies (IFRC) and JICA was signed on 8 August. The Governments of Switzerland, Ireland, Belgium, Canada, New Zealand and United Arab Emirates have also pledged much needed support to the floods operation. In addition to the rapid response from sister National Societies, local fundraising brought contributions from two major banks in Dhaka – the HSBC and

Citicorp. There have also been contributions from the commercial sector, members of the public and Bangladesh expatriates.

All Bangladesh Red Crescent Branches in flood-affected districts are providing limited emergency relief through local fundraising for immediate distribution among the affected population.

Operation Objective: To meet the urgent needs of some one million unassisted and displaced beneficiaries severely affected by the ongoing monsoon season who are currently living in their flooded homes, river embankments, roadways and chars through the provision of basic food items, family kits, medical services and small-scale agricultural support during the rehabilitation phase.

Emergency Relief Phase

Objective 1: 135,000 displaced and unassisted families to receive emergency complementary food ration for one month within the coming weeks.

Through this appeal, the BDRCS and the Federation intends to assist 135,000 of the most vulnerable displaced families by distributing emergency food supplies of 2,700 MT of rice (including the 700MT allocated by WFP/GOB), 675 MT of dhal (lentils) and 270 MT of cooking oil for an initial period of one month. Each affected family will receive a food ration consisting of: 20 kg of rice, 5kg of dal (lentils) and 2 litres of cooking oil.

Progress/Achievements

¹ Food packet consisting 5 kg rice, 1 kg dal (lentils), and 2 kg potatoes.

The government delivery order for the release of 700 MT of rice allocated by the WFP/GOB was received on 2 August, and partial distribution commenced on 8 August. Preparation of a detailed distribution plan is underway. The plan for procurement of food items (funded by ECHO) will be finalised this week.

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

The prices of food and non-food items have increased alarmingly in the local market due high demand and increase in transportation cost and closed factories as a result of flooding. These price hikes may be transitory, so it is difficult to say if this will impact on the ability to purchase the required food within the appeal budget.

Objective 2: 50,000 flood-affected families to receive family kits and emergency BDRCS buffer stock replenished over a period of four months.

50,000 family kits will be distributed among the most affected vulnerable families (many of these beneficiaries are also expected to benefit from the food and non-food programmes). Family kits have multiple impacts on the affected families – they provide the most necessary non-food items to help restore life to normality after the disaster, and they also provide valuable psychological support to families who have lost all their possessions.



There has been heavy damage to infrastructure and roads throughout much of Bangladesh.

Progress/Achievements

The Geneva logistic department approved the purchase of 30,000 family kits (24,000 earmarked for EHCO programme). Suppliers have the capacity to produce 5,000 to 7,000 kits per week. The suppliers were identified through the standard tendering process.

Impact:

N/A

Constraint

While the suppliers have the capacity to produce 5,000 to 7,000 family kits per week, this is dependent on no major electricity failures in Dhaka city. Whilst this is a 'risk' rather than a constraint at this stage, it is important to note.

Objective 3: Provide basic medical services within the first two months of the operation to the flood-affected population, limiting possible outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

A total of 198,000 people, many of them also beneficiaries of the food and non-food programmes, are expected to benefit from this program.

Progress/Achievements

The incidence of diarrhoea and water borne diseases has increased sharply as the flood waters recede. The BDRCS has deployed 10 medical teams on an emergency basis to the most affected areas of Dhaka city and adjoining areas. In the past 12 days, the medical teams have treated 5,251 people (1,815 male, 1,875 female and 1,561 children under five years old) suffering from conditions such as diarrhoea, dysentery, skin infections, etc.

Planning is underway for the deployment of 44 additional medical teams in the flood affected areas. It is expected they will be deployed within the next fortnight. Each medical team will be provided with essential drugs and basic equipment. The purchase of medical team equipment and medicines has been initiated and the purchase order will be issued by 10 August. The procurement is expected to be completed by the end of this week. A total of 35 doctors and 50 paramedics have been recruited to date.

Impact:

The service being provided by the deployed medical teams and the distribution of oral rehydration solution (ORS) and water purification tablets among affected city dwellers is vital in trying to stem the spread of waterborne disease.

Constraints:

N/A

Rehabilitation Phase

Objective 4 To provide four months into the operation, agricultural inputs to the 30,000 affected families who have access to land.

At the end of monsoon season, once water levels recede and the conditions are established, so the affected population can return to their homes, basic agricultural support will be provided. This will involve the provision of two types of seeds (paddy rice and vegetables) to allow the potential beneficiaries to plant crops at the suitable time of year. This component is very important as the floods have destroyed 889,722 acres of crops and seedbeds while a further 1.2 million acres of arable land has been damaged.

Progress/Achievements

Obtaining quotes for seeds in progress.

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Federation Coordination

The BDRCS, Federation Bangladesh Delegation, and Federation Secretariat South Asia Desk continuously liaise with sister National Societies, governmental, local and international organisations, UN agencies, NGOs and Disaster forums.

BDRCS and Federation representatives are regularly attending Disaster Emergency Response (DER) Group meetings in order to coordinate relief interventions among partners and avoid duplication of assistance. BDRCS and Federation Bangladesh Delegation are also working closely with the Federation South Asia Regional Delegation in New Delhi. The Bangladesh Head of Delegation regularly visits donor missions and UN agencies to update them on Federation/BDRCS activities. The EC Ambassador to Bangladesh accompanied by the Head of Delegation, BDRCS Chairman and DIPEHCO Project Manager, visited some of the most affected areas of Sirajganj on 5 August.

National Society Capacity Building

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society has 68 Branches throughout the country and a membership of more than 350,000 people. The National Society has 37,000 well-trained Community Based Disaster Preparedness volunteers in flood-prone areas and 5,863 community volunteers in cyclone-prone areas (approximately one third of which are women).

The BDRCS with its extensive experience in responding to flood emergencies has developed its operational capacity through a number of extensive disaster relief and preparedness programmes over the last few years. Nevertheless, there are no 'quick fix' solutions to community vulnerability. Its reduction requires long-term commitment and strategic planning of development activities focused on key disaster management issues related to prevention, preparedness and mitigation. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society seeks continued support for its long-term strategic development programmes in the field of Disaster Preparedness and Response.

The BDRCS finalised its new Four-year Disaster Management Strategy in March this year. The strategy is a major component of the National Society's Four-year Development Plan. This relief operation will further strengthen the

capacity of the National Society in order to implement the Four-year Disaster Management Strategy particularly with regard to the Community Based Disaster Management (CBDM) Programme for Floods.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

International and national media interest in the floods and associated Red Cross/Red Crescent relief initiatives has tapered off to some degree over the last two days. Prior to that, media interest had been extremely high with frequent interviews on major international broadcasters such as CNN and the BBC. Local media coverage (in Bangla and English) has been sustained on many national TV and radio station and newspapers. JICA issued a press release on 6 August highlighting their contribution to the International Federation.

High visibility for the operation will be maintained through local media, the HSBC Bank website (<http://www.hsbc.com.bd/bd/comm/flood.htm>) and international web links. Media releases on Red Cross/Red Crescent action will be issued. Adequate visibility for donors and the Federation will be ensured, including maintaining a high profile in the international media.

[Click here to return to the title page.](#)