

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

INDIA: FLOODS

4 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. 16/2004; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 28 July to 4 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 27 July 2004 for CHF 2,982,000(USD 2,293,846 or EUR 1,988,000) for 10 months to assist 250,000 beneficiaries.**

Outstanding needs: CHF 2,682,417 (USD 2,144,304 or EUR 1,739,802)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: [Annual Appeal 01.57/2004](#)

Operational Summary: Initial emergency relief activities (including those predating the request for assistance) have been sustained from disaster preparedness stocks and Indian Red Cross human resources including a large, trained volunteer base. In the first week since the launch of the request for assistance, there has been a focus on logistics, finalisation of distribution plans and beneficiary identification, etc.

There has been a moderately encouraging response to the request for assistance but partners are urged to contribute to this request for assistance so the state objectives can proceed according to plan to assist the quarter of a million of the most vulnerable affected by the floods.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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- **In (India): Delegation contact (Azmat Ulla, Head of Delegation, India Delegation, New Delhi), email: ifrcin65@ifrc.org, phone: 91 11 23324203, fax 91 11 2332 4235**
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- **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 two states most severely affected states are Assam and Bihar which have endured flooding for the past month. A total of over 33 million people have been affected and the death toll has risen above 850 in the two states.

Twenty of Bihar's 38 districts have been flooded, affecting 21 million people. Over half a million families have been made homeless while more than 1.2 million people are sheltering in 949 relief camps.



Aid distribution in Bihar

Over 900 villages are still marooned with two-thirds of these in East Champaran and the rest are in the district of Kisanj. Railway lines and the road network have been severely damaged, including main national highways. The worst affected districts are Darbhanga, Madhubani, Sitamarhi, East Champaran, Samastipur and Muzaffarpur.

Some districts are still cut off, meaning transportation of essential commodities is not even possible. People in these districts either have to rely on the relief camps run by the district administration or have taken refuge on higher ground such as roads and railway lines, surviving as well as they can.

All 27 districts of Assam have been affected. The state was hammered by heavy rains beginning in late June and also inundated by the swollen Brahmaputra River and its tributaries.

This situation was further aggravated by breaches along river and dam embankments, the release of water from Bhutan, landslides and sudden changes in the course of rivers. Millions of people are homeless. The flood has caused widespread loss of life and damage to property, standing crops, flood control embankments, tea estates and basic infrastructure of the state.

Over 12 million people have been affected in Assam. According to a preliminary assessment conducted by UNDP, about 60 percent of the crops have been destroyed affecting 1.2 million farming families. The total crop area affected so far is 1.15 million hectares. Nearly 600,000 dwellings have been damaged or destroyed.

Whilst Assam and Bihar have been affected by floods for the past month, there is new flooding in the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Punjab and the union territories of Daman and Diu. There are varying reports of deaths with figures of up to 150. The states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal have been given a flood alert by the State Meteorological Department of India.

Operational developments

The request for assistance was launched on 27 July. All levels of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement have swung into action to implement the objectives of the operation. The Federation Secretariat in Geneva has been mobilising international resources for assistance. The India Delegation is supporting the Indian National Society in finalising details of the operation and working out distribution strategies. The national headquarters is liaising with state branches regarding all issues related to the operation. State branches are mobilising local human resources along with generating local resources in cash and kind.

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

Operation Goal: to meet the urgent needs of the 50,000 worst affected families in Assam and Bihar with food, shelter, family packs and medical services, to ensure improved quality of water over a period of four months and prepare to meet longer-term needs through necessary capacity building and disaster mitigation initiatives over a further period of six months after the emergency phase.

Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)

Shelter: Objective: 50,000 flood affected families to receive shelter materials within one and a half months.

The Indian Red Cross and the Federation intend to distribute general purpose plastic sheets (5 x 4 m each) as temporary shelter material for 50,000 families (approximately 250,000 persons) in the 12 most affected districts of Assam and the nine most affected districts in Bihar.

Progress/Achievements

A total of 20,000 tarpaulins had already been dispatched to Assam and Bihar on 22 July. These were part of the disaster preparedness stock maintained by the Indian National Society at its regional warehouses in Bahadurgarh and Salt Lake – Kolkata. These items form part of the current ‘request for assistance’ to enable the Indian Red Cross to maintain disaster preparedness stocks. The procurement process for the remaining 30,000 tarpaulins has been initiated through calls for tenders from prospective suppliers. In consultation with the Indian Red Cross, the comparative bid analysis took place on 4 August. Potential suppliers have sent in tenders along with samples of non-food items. A joint committee from the Indian Red Cross and the Federation opened the quotations and signed the received samples in order to complete the procurement process.

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Relief: distribution of basic food and non-food items

Objective 1: 30,000 flood affected families to receive supplementary food items and family packs in Bihar over a period of one and a half months.

Basic food to each family: 20 kg of beaten rice, 5 kg pulses, 2 kg jaggery (sugar cane product) and family kits each consisting of a kitchen set (20 pieces), 1 bucket, 1 dhoti (men’s clothing), 1 saree (women’s clothing), 1 cotton blanket, 1 towel, 1 bed sheet, 2 mosquito nets (single bed), 6 candles, 2 match boxes, 2 HDPE (high density polythene bag for packing).

Progress/Achievements

A consignment of 10,000 family packs was dispatched to Bihar on 22 July by rail. These family packs had been mobilized from the pre-positioned disaster preparedness stock at Salt Lake - Kolkata and Bahadurgarh regional warehouses. Each family kit consisted of the following items:-

1. 1 kitchen set consisting of 20 pieces of utensils
2. 1 plastic bucket
3. 2 bed sheets
4. 1 towel
5. 1 cotton blanket
6. 2 sarees (female clothing)
7. 1 dhoti (male clothing)



The Indian Red Cross is gearing up for major distributions of relief materials

State branches are in the process of identifying beneficiaries according to the criteria specified in the request for assistance. The non-food family kit will be distributed along with the food basket to the identified beneficiaries.

The national headquarters has issued guidelines to the Bihar State Branch covering; procurement of high density polythene bags; transportation, storage, packing and handling of relief items; distribution of relief items; budgeting guidelines; reporting guidelines; and methods of financial accounting.

In addition to the guidelines, the communication included the following :

1. A plan of action on the proposed operation giving details about the objectives of the operation, areas of operations, and items to be distributed in a family package.
2. Identifying monitoring and evaluation methodology.
3. Measures to be taken up for advocacy and public information.

The procurement process for the 30,000 food items has also commenced at the Bihar State Branch in consultation with the national headquarters. A conscious decision was taken by national headquarters to procure food items in Bihar for three reasons:

1. Food items being perishable it is best to procure locally.
2. The required food items would be available locally and the content of the food package is based on local traditions/diet.
3. Prices would definitely be lower, and there would be significant savings in transportation costs.

The list of suppliers has been decided by the Bihar State Branch on the basis of past flood operation experience. The procurement was initiated centrally at the national headquarters and the order was then awarded to Bihar-based suppliers for the reasons outlined above. The request for quotations has been forwarded to the agreed vendors. These suppliers will be submitting their quotes along with the samples of food items as per the list to be forwarded to them on 9 August.

The procurement process for the other non-food items (excluding tarpaulins) has also been initiated and is detailed under the shelter objective as the process for shelter material and other non-food items is same.

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Objective 2: 20,000 flood affected families to receive family kits in Assam over a period of one and a half months.

The family kit to be distributed consists of a kitchen set (20 pieces), one bucket, one dhoti (men's clothing), one saree (women's clothing), one cotton blanket, one towel, one bed sheet, and two mosquito nets (single bed).

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

A consignment of 10,000 family packs (contents outlined under objective 1) was dispatched to Assam on 22 July. As with the Bihar consignment, these packs came from disaster preparedness stock pre-positioned in the regional warehouses of Bahadurgarh and Salt Lake - Kolkata.

The distribution of the family kits will commence once the whole consignment of 20,000 packs has been assembled. The State Branch is in the process of identifying beneficiaries in accordance with selection criteria mentioned in the request for assistance. The State Branch will organise logistics and administrative issues such as printing of distribution cards and identification of distribution points with the help of District Branches.

The national headquarters has issued guidelines to the Assam State Branch covering; procurement of high density polythene bags; transportation, storage, packing and handling of relief items; distribution of relief items; budgeting guidelines; reporting guidelines; and methods of financial accounting.

In addition to the guidelines, the communication included the following :

1. A plan of action on the proposed operation giving details about the objectives of the operation, areas of operations, and items to be distributed in a family package.
2. Identifying monitoring and evaluation methodology.
3. Measures to be taken up for advocacy and public information.

The procurement process for the remaining non-food items (excluding tarpaulins) has been initiated and details are provided under the shelter objective, as the process for the procurement of shelter material and other non-food items is the same.

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Health, Hygiene and Water Sanitation

Objective: 50,000 flood affected families to receive preventive and curative health services through mobile and stationary health clinics for a period of four months.

It is proposed to run six Medical Mobile Units in Assam for a period of four months in the worst affected districts. In Bihar, the existing Red Cross clinics/maternal and child health care centre capacity will be strengthened through emergency medical supplies.

Progress/Achievements

The communication from national headquarters to the Assam and Bihar State Branches on the current operation also outlines the respective health actions to be undertaken.

National Headquarters has issued guidelines to the Assam State Branch on the proposed mobile medical units. These cover their purpose, usage, sustainability, time frame, selection of beneficiaries, transportation, storage, handling and implementation of the units.

The procurement process has been initiated through contact with the World Health Organisation (WHO). The Federation Secretariat in Geneva is also advising on standard/reputed medical suppliers. Once the validated list of suppliers is received, quotations will be forwarded to them within the week. National headquarters has initiated the procurement process for the medical kits for Bihar.

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Disaster Mitigation and Capacity Building

The process for this activity will only commence once the water has receded and the ground has dried enough for construction to take place.

Objective 1: One flood platform with five raised tube wells and five raised latrines to be constructed at a selected site in a flood-prone area of Assam over a period of six months after the emergency phase.

A flood platform will be constructed on a secure site above the flood water level with overhead shelter for humans and cattle, with five hand tube wells and five toilet blocks.

Progress/Achievements

N/A

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Objective 2: Thirty raised tube wells to be constructed in the most affected districts of Bihar.

Raised tube wells to be constructed on secure sites above the flood water level providing safe drinking water for the community.

Progress/Achievements

N/A

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Objective 3: Disaster response capacity of the Indian Red Cross in flood-prone areas to be further improved through lessons learned and documentation.

The capacity building aspects for the Indian Red Cross Society State Branches of Assam and Bihar are already addressed through the India disaster management programme as two of the targeted states. However, lessons learned exercises and documentation of good practice will be undertaken during post relief operations. The outcome will be widely disseminated and incorporated into future planning.

This exercise and the software component of the mitigation activities will be covered under the on-going disaster management programme for 2004 as planned.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

N/A

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Federation Coordination

The Disaster Management Team at the India Delegation and the National Society has collectively briefed partner national societies.

The Indian Red Cross facilitated a USAID visit to affected areas in Bihar and Assam for an overview of the situation; for observing the Red Cross response and to meet the relevant government authorities.

The Indian Red Cross is attending all UNDP coordinated meetings being held for the current flood situation at the national and state level.

The Federation Disaster Management Delegate and an Indian Red Cross representative met the Resident Commissioner of Bihar along with other organisations such as UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNDP, MSF, CARE and Oxfam.

The task force comprising of representatives from disaster management, health, logistics, information and reporting, and finance from the India Delegation and the National Society meet daily to review the situation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – Principles and initiatives

N/A

National Society Capacity Building

The Indian Red Cross is focused on developing its disaster preparedness and management, organisational training and development, and administrative structures. With more than 654 branches and over 12 million members, it is one of the largest humanitarian organisations in the country.

The Indian Red Cross is now being perceived as a leading humanitarian agency in India by many stakeholders. The National Society has committed leadership, a dedicated DM Department, an established Disaster Management Centre (DMC), Mobile Disaster Units (MDU), a fully equipped National Disaster Response Team, disaster preparedness stock, cyclone shelters and staff and volunteers trained in disaster management.

The Bihar State Branch possesses a strong and committed volunteer force trained in first aid. Volunteers enjoy a good rapport and reputation with the public. This group can be quickly mobilised for relief operations. The main Branch activities are health care, relief, first aid training and Junior Red Cross/Youth Red Cross activities. The

health care is provided by 10 primary health care centers run by voluntary doctors on a regular basis. The State Branch has 35 staff, more than 98,000 members and 5,000 volunteers.

Since 2000, a total of 360 Assam Branch volunteers have been trained under the Federation-assisted Community Based First Aid (CBFA). A DFID-funded disaster reduction programme has been operating in Assam since 2001. This involves the pre-positioning of disaster preparedness stock for 10,000 families, training of volunteers and development of mitigation activities in two districts. This activity has placed the Assam Branch in a much better position of preparedness to respond quickly to any flood situation. The Branch and local NGOs are experienced in responding to floods but are increasingly looking to preparedness and mitigation responses in addition to flood relief.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

International and national media interest in the floods and associated Red Cross/Red Crescent relief initiatives has remained high during the reporting period. Senior Leadership at the National Society has been interviewed by a wide variety of international media. Local and national media have covered Red Cross relief operation including the Indian Express, the Statesman, and other regional newspapers along with coverage by five TV stations.

The Federation's South Asia Regional Delegation has also fielded numerous media calls. The Regional Delegation has also continued to update and provide national and international media with information relating to the flood response in India and the rest of the affected region.

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