

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

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN IRAN: WATER SHORTAGE

8 August 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. 05EA007; Operations Update No. 1; Period covered: April to July 2005; Appeal coverage: 27 % ;
(Please click here to go directly to the Contributions List available on the website).

Appeal history:

- The Appeal (05EA007) was launched on 14 April 2005 for CHF 495,000 (USD 382,170 or EUR 316,535) to assist 43,315 beneficiaries for 12 months.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: N/A

Outstanding needs : CHF 360,000

Operational Summary:

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the Federation) issued a new appeal (No. 05EA007) on 14 April 2005 to meet the needs of Afghan refugees and vulnerable Iranians living in Sistan-Baluchestan Province of Iran and provide for full implementation of the exit strategy and the final phase out of the project for supporting these beneficiaries. The appeal pursues the following specific objectives:

- To meet the basic water needs of 43,315 beneficiaries by using both the water trucking system and the completion of the permanent water supply network for refugees in Zahedan,
- To increase the capacity of Afghan refugees to deal with health issues in their own communities and help them carry their health capacity back home,
- To disseminate the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values among Afghan refugees,
- To promote the cross-border cooperation between the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) and Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) in the fields of refugee reintegration and gender issues.

The project under the previous appeal (No.19/2002) was completed by the end of March 2005 and the final report has been posted on the Federation website. Due to the limited funding (contributions have been received only from the Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies of Japan, Sweden and United Arab Emirates) and the uncertainty of future funding the Federation and IRCS could not start the activities planned in the new appeal. As a result, the supply of drinking water, a cornerstone of the project, has been suspended for more than three months.

Therefore, the Federation is urgently seeking for additional funding in order to meet the water and other needs of the beneficiaries and make a final phase out of the project.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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

At the end of June 2005, the Iranian and Afghan governments and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed a tripartite agreement on completing the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees by 31 March 2006. However, it is not clear whether this new deadline will be kept this time.

With the completion of the project under the previous appeal (No. 19/2002) at the end of March 2005 and as the hot summer reaches its height, water supply has again become a serious issue for Afghan refugees and vulnerable Iranian people living in Zahedan and Zabol, Sistan-Baluchestan Province of Iran. Although 24,210 beneficiaries in Zahedan get drinking water from the 4 public water distribution stations constructed within the framework of the previous appeal, the remaining 19,105 beneficiaries in Zahedan and Zabol neither have access to such a public water station nor the capacity to buy the water sold by private companies.

Although the prevailing situation needs some urgent actions to contain it, the Federation and IRCS have not been in a position to start the planned activities because the funds received so far have been limited and the prospect for future funding has not been clear. With the contributions of the Japanese and Swedish Red Cross societies, limited distribution of water through trucking could continue.

At the end of July, the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent announced a contribution of USD 50,000 in support of the establishment of the fifth permanent water supply station in Zahedan. This has been a breakthrough after a period of considerable uncertainty in relation to the complete implementation of the exit strategy designed by the IRCS and the International Federation in the middle of 2004.

Good prospects have also been noted in the process of discussions with ECHO which is considering to support the appeal budget related to the completion of the establishment of the permanent water supply network in the outskirts of Zahedan.

These recent positive developments on the funding front allow us to believe that the works on the establishment of the last four water distribution stations can be resumed at the beginning of September 2005.

Outstanding needs

In order to achieve the objectives of the appeal and carry out the exit strategy as planned, the Federation urgently needs CHF 360,000.

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