

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

CHINA: FLOODS

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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

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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The Situation

The Red Cross Society of China has received reports of some 46 flood related deaths and over 4,000 people injured, following heavy storms across China during the month of May. Forty two thousand people have been left homeless in Chongqing following intense rains that pounded the area during the period 26-30 May and destroyed some ten thousand homes throughout 319 towns. Chongqing's neighbouring province, Sichuan has also suffered from the intense storms that damaged around six thousand homes and destroyed extensive amounts of crops. The farmers who have lost their crops and homes to the flooding will have to endure a long summer without a source of income until their next opportunity for a harvest comes at the end of September. Thousands of farmers in Yunnan and Guizhou provinces have also lost their homes and their crops to floods and dangerous hailstorms that have been ongoing in the two provinces since April. Over the past month reports of flood related deaths and destruction have also been received out of Guangxi and Guangzhou Provinces, as well as Hubei where on 27 and 28 May rainstorms in the upper reaches of the Qingjiang River brought torrents into the reservoir, breaking the cofferdam on 28 May following a flash rainfall of 28 mm within an hour.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Provincial branches of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) in Chongqing, Sichuan and Yunnan have responded quickly to the disasters distributing urgently needed items such as rice, quilts, tents and clothing to those people who have been left homeless following the sudden onset of the floods. RCSC headquarters in Beijing has transferred RMB 50,000 to the society's Yunnan branch to buy food for immediate distribution. The headquarters also released 500 quilts and 500 jackets from the society's disaster preparedness centre. Following floods items such as quilts, warm clothing and rice are critical for meeting the immediate need for food and for

protecting flood victims from the damp conditions that are common in shelters or outdoors on the dikes where flood victims often seek refuge.

To date the Chongqing branch has distributed 15 MT of rice to 1,000 families and 60 tents to shelter 325 people; the Sichuan branch has distributed 36 quilts to 52 families; and the Yunnan branch has distributed: 1,000 quilts; 1,260 pieces clothing; 15 MT rice; and 3 tents.

Since March the RCSC headquarters has also supported response activities to a severe earthquake that struck in Qinghai, located in Inner Mongolia.

The past two months alone are evidence of the threat natural disasters pose to China. Following the completion of the joint RCSC and Federation 2003 flood relief operation, a participatory review was carried out bringing together the experience of the nine operating branches, representatives from several divisions of the RCSC's headquarters and the International Federation to agree on an approach to future disaster response that builds upon the momentum and experience obtained during 2003 while at the same time ensuring that the assistance being delivered has a significant impact.

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