

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 FOCUS ON HUNAN PROVINCE

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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 183 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

In brief: Thousands of families have been evacuated and are currently living in temporary shelters following severe flooding in Hunan Province during the second and third weeks of June. The impact of the floods is devastating for poor subsistence farmers who lack sufficient reserves to cope with the substantial losses sustained due to flash floods. At the same time, natural disasters such as flash floods quickly and violently rob rural families who have put years of work into lifting themselves out of poverty of a lifetime of hopes and dreams.

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The Situation

The past month has witnessed the most serious degree of natural disasters to take place in China in a single month in the past five years. To date some 1.6 million people have been evacuated across the country. Rainstorms, floods and landslides in several provinces in southern China have left 170 people dead since late May.

In Hunan province continuous floods have hit the five cities of Shaoyang, Huaihua, Loudi, Zhangjiajie and Xiangxi, leading to the evacuation of 123,000 people and destroying thousands of homes.

Additionally torrential rains which commenced on 25 June in southwest China's Guizhou



Flash floods in Hunan's Zhongzhou, Chenzhou, and Loudi prefectures destroyed homes in a matter of seconds.

Province caused flooding in 19 townships in Sandu County, leading to the evacuation of about 1,000 primary school students and villagers on Monday 26 June. As of 26 June more than 3,400 people in Rongjiang County were evacuated from the flood affected area.



Five days ago, Mrs. Liu and her husband were preparing to move into a new house they were building in their village in Hunan Province. Flash floods over the past week destroyed their new house and all of their belongings. With their crops and property destroyed, years of hard work have been undone in seconds and the Liu family now find themselves once again wondering how they will survive.

pulling many families out of abject poverty. Perhaps symbolic of their success, the family was using materials from the house they had lived in for years to construct a new house down the road. Nearly finished and about to move in, they had moved their furniture into the new home. What was originally planned to be a week of celebrating their new home, has now turned into a week of mourning the loss of their new home, their crops and what might have been. With crops destroyed and no reserves to fall back on the family finds themselves once again wondering something they hoped to never think about again, namely where will they live and how will they pay for their next meal.

Following this assessment, further flash floods struck in Longhui County on Sunday 24 June, killing 11 people and injuring 16.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Although only in the early part of what is technically regarded as China’s flood season (usually late May - September), as of 23 June, the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) headquarters has had to release emergency relief items to the province in response to floods, hail and severe rainstorms, on close to a weekly basis since the first week of May (indicated in the table below). Relief items provided by the RCSC headquarters to the society’s branches in Hunan and other provinces are in addition to ongoing local fundraising activities and distributions of relief items organised by RCSC branches at the provincial and prefecture levels.

On 23 June the Deputy Head and Relief Officer of the Red Cross Society of China’s (RCSC) Relief Division, headed to Hunan to visit and oversee relief distributions in Zhuzhou, Hengyang, Chenzhou, and Loudi prefectures. While visiting the affected area they listened to the stories of those people who had lost their homes, their crops and their property in seconds to flash floods. While interventions from the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) have effectively contributed to decreasing the numbers of lives lost, sadly once flash floods and landslides strike there is relatively little that can be done to protect homes and crops. Although the waters can disappear nearly as quickly as they arrived, their impact on poor communities may last for a very long time. The RCSC team met with one family who, up until the flash floods, was representative of the progress that has been made in China over the past few years of



Floods have washed away bridges, impeding the daily lives of resident communities and challenging relief efforts.

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Relief items released by RCSC headquarters to Hunan province, 9 May -27 June 2006

Total no. beneficiaries: 20,000

Date	Type of Disaster	Items Distributed	Value in RMB	Value in CHF
9 May	Rainstorms, Hail	quilts,tents and disinfectant	188,732	29,368
15 May	Floods, Hail	quilts, water purification tablets	89,000	13,849
2 June	Rainstorms	family packs, disinfectant,tents	103,239	16,065
19 June	Floods	tents, quilts	194,000	30,187
20 June	Floods	tents, quilts	170,000	26,453
27 June	Floods	disinfectant, water purification tablets; family packs; and quilts	297,000	46,215
		TOTAL	1,041,971	162,136

Mountains constitute 70 per cent of Hunan province's land area, which makes the province particularly vulnerable to flash floods and landslides. In addition to the support it receives from the RCSC's Beijing-based headquarters, the Hunan branch has worked with the Federation and the Hong Kong Red Cross to respond to flood emergencies in the province on a regular basis over the past ten years. Keenly aware of the need to support longer-term disaster reduction activities, the Hunan Red Cross has also introduced longer-term community based disaster mitigation projects with the support of the Federation.

At the same time, the RCSC headquarters is strengthening its role in national disaster relief by participating in initiatives to improve disaster management such as an upcoming capacity building workshop organized by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA). The workshop, which will take the place from 4-6 July in Beijing, will focus on introducing the SPHERE standards and the newly-translated Mandarin version of the handbook to China's main actors in disaster management. In order to support this positive initiative, the RCSC will provide a presentation of their role in disaster relief in China while the Federation's head of regional delegation will facilitate one session at the workshop and the senior health officer in emergencies from Geneva will make a presentation on SPHERE standards in health and water and sanitation.

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The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- *Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.*
- *Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.*
- *Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.*
- *Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.*

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.