This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Korean Red Cross, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

A passenger ship with 476 people aboard, mostly high school students, sank in waters off South Korea’s southwest coast on the morning of 16 April, leaving 64 dead and 238 others missing.

The Korean Red Cross has been closely working with the government to provide effective assistance following the accident. As of 21 April, the Korean Red Cross had provided 3,100 blankets, 16,830 hot meals, 1,000 towels, 14,300 snacks and bottled water, 2,000 relief kits2 and 277 body bags to assist the victims, family members and rescue workers. A total of 677 volunteers, 40 psychosocial support (PSS) instructors, and 117 staff members from Gwangju-Jeonnam province chapter and Gyeonggi chapter have been deployed to Jindo County Gymnasium, Paengmok port, and Danwon High School in Ansan.

The situation

A passenger ship with 476 people aboard, including 325 students and 15 teachers from the Danwon High School in Ansan, sank in waters off South Korea’s southwest coast on the morning of 16 April, leaving 64 dead, and 238 others missing. A total of 174 people were confirmed rescued as of 2 p.m. of 21 April.

1 Authorities issued several different figures for the numbers of passengers on board but these are latest totals.

2 The relief kits distributed by Korean Red Cross were donated from various sources and include items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, etc.
The 6,325-ton passenger ship "SEWOL" capsized and sank in waters near Jindo Island, just off the southwest corner of the Korean Peninsula, at around 11:30 a.m. local time on 16 April as it was travelling from Incheon to the holiday island of Jeju.

A total of 560 divers, 204 coast guards, navy and private vessels and 34 aircrafts are undertaking search and rescue operations as of 20 April. Divers have begun entering the ferry, resulting in the discovery and retrieval of increasing numbers of bodies trapped inside the ferry. Unmanned submersibles have also been deployed to search for possible survivors.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Relief
Desperate families have been braving the cold and wet weather in Jindo, waiting for news of their children at the harbor or inside the indoor gymnasium. In response, Korean Red Cross immediately distributed 3,100 blankets, 1,000 towels and 2,000 relief kits to the families and support personnel such as maritime police and divers at Jindo indoor gymnasium and Jindo Paengmok. In addition, Korean Red Cross volunteers also participated in setting up 10 temporary shelters there for waiting relatives.

The Korean maritime police and the Central Medical Response Team have set up a situation room at the Jindo Paengmok port. The nurses and medical personnel are taking care of the students’ family members. As part of its cooperation with the Central Medical Team, the Korean Red Cross has provided 277 body bags to the team at Paengmok port.

Meal service
Three mobile kitchen vehicles were deployed to the Jindo County Gymnasium and the Danwon High School respectively to provide meal services. As of 21 April, 16,830 meals have been served at the Jindo County Gymnasium, Danwon High School in Ansan and at Paengmok port. At the same time, 14,300 snacks and bottled water have been distributed.

Psychosocial Support (PSS)
A total of 40 PSS instructors have been deployed to the gymnasium in Jindo and the high school in Ansan city respectively to provide psychological support to the family members. The family members of the missing passengers have waited for five days. Some of the families have become emotionally and physically exhausted by the long wait. Korean Red Cross staff members and volunteers are delivering hot meals to family members who have difficulty waiting in line for food outside in the rainy weather. PSS is also being provided to them by the volunteers at the same time.
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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC’s vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC’s work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.