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Information bulletin

Bangladesh: Severe local storm

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population or replenish the stock which has been used to assist the vulnerable families under this operation.

[<click here for detailed contact information;](#)
[here for map; or here for photographs>](#)



BDRCS volunteers actively assisting the community people in Brahmanbaria district who were devastated by the tornado. **Photo:** BDRCS.

The situation

A tornado ripped through more than a dozen rural villages in eastern Bangladesh in the district of Brahmanbaria on late Friday, 22 March 2013, killing at least 26 people, as per the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) assessment, battering six unions of three upazilas (sub district) severely injuring 388 and affecting 1,633 families. BDRCS Brahmanbaria Unit reported more than 1,400 houses completely destroyed and more than 100 homes partially damaged.

The tornado wreaked havoc in Brahmanbaria district over a 15-minute period, uprooting thousands of trees and flattened hundreds of tin and mud-built houses in the area, and snapping road and rail communication with affected villages. Most of the affected population has been living without proper shelter since the storm, trying to construct makeshift dwellings on the site of their original shelters. The tarpaulins distributed by BDRCS offer protection to those who lost their shelters during the disaster. At the onset of disaster, the district police chief reported more than 100 people have been hospitalized, of which up to 12 people were in a critical condition. BDRCS district unit office reported on 24 March that about 312 people were admitted in the hospital. Many of the injured were rushed to

Table 1: Summary of damages and losses provided by DMIC, as of 25 March 2013

Area affected (square KM)	17
Number of death	31
Number of injury	388
Severely affected family	1,283
Partially affected family	348
Fully damaged household	1,778
Partially damaged household	744
Crops damaged in acre	173

Source: Disaster Management Information Network,
Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

hospitals in the nearest towns including the capital, Dhaka. The tornado overturned dozens of motor vehicles and large trucks. Vehicles movement on Comilla-Sylhet highway remained inaccessible for about two hours as roadside were blocked by the fallen trees due to the tornado.

Government reports indicated that rescue operations were organised with the help of Police, Boarder Guards of Bangladesh (BGB), Roads and Highway, Public works department (PWD) and local leaders. Two medical teams from Comilla cantonment are providing medical services to the victims. The injured are admitted and recieved treatment from Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital and other neighboring hospitals/ clinics. Those who have lost their shelters have been relocated to a temporary shelter organised by the local administration. As stated on the DMIC report, the government has allocated relief cash grant BDT 20,000 (approximately CHF 240) for each family who lost a family member and BDT 5,000 (approximately CHF 60) for those who are injured.



Fallen trees in Brahmanbaria district caused by the tornado. **Photo:** BDRCS.

Furthermore, the government is providing corrugated galvanised iron (CGI) sheets and cash grant BDT 6,000 (approximately CHF 73) to those with damaged house. Government has distributed 40 million tonnes (mts) of rice from its allocated 100 mts of rice from its gracious relief (GR) fund.

Concern worldwide has started psychosocial support to the affected people using their trained personnel; while Muslim Aid has a medical team in the affected area. Apart from these two organizations, CARE, Islamic Relief are conducting assessment. From the donor community, the European commission humanitarian aid (DG-ECHO) has dispatched a team to the affected area to assess the situation.

The Humanitarian Country Task Team (HCTT) met on 25 March 2013 to take stock of the situation. The meeting concluded that no Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) will be launched. A total of 1,350 families have been provided with emergency shelter by Government and BDRCS. If there are more of shelter needs, the shelter cluster and relevant partners are to review and contribute towards meeting those needs. Government also reported that cooked food has been provided to the affected people. In order to meet the provision of cooked rice for families, more cooking pots need to be provided immediately.

Meanwhile, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) is distributing 7.5 kilogrammes (kgs) of high-energy biscuits to each of the affected families to meet their nutritional need for at least five days. Provision of safe drinking water and household sanitation needs are yet to be sufficiently addressed. The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) cluster is reviewing the situation and mobilizing resources to address these needs. All the development partners would continue to fill up the existing gaps with the resources that are available.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Immediately after the tornado, BDRCS and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) have been closely monitoring the situation. BDRCS Response department and its Unit Office have promptly assessed the situation in Brahmanbaria district. Volunteers of BDRCS Brahmanbaria district unit conducted search and rescue soon after the disaster struck. Within hours after the disaster, BDRCS deployed its National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) to assess the damages on people and their properties. Jointly, BDRCS national headquarters (NHQ) and IFRC jointly dispatched non-food items (NFIs) for 600 families for immediate distribution from its existing disaster preparedness (DP) stock. Each NFI included one tarpaulin, two water jerry cans and one family kit for each family.



BDRCS volunteers helping the affected people. **Photo:** BDRCS.



NFIs distribution by BDRCS district unit to provide relief to the affected people. **Photo:** BDRCS.

Table 2: NFIs distributed by BDRCS in Brahmanbaria district

Upazila	Union	Village	No. of families
B. Baria Shadar	Sultanpur	Oshiura	40
		Fatirhata	60
	Machihata	Fulbaria	150
		Chinaay	150
	Bashudeb	Dubla, Jarultola	200
Total			600

From BDRCS NHQ, a medical team has been deployed hours after the disaster to Brahmanbaria to help the injured, while 70 unit volunteers were providing first aid in the Brahmanbaria Sadar hospital. On 23 March, the medical team adapted its service to mobile unit and provided further medical assistance to the tornado affected villages: (1) Dubla, (2) Jarultala, (3) Bashudevpur, (4) Chandanpur and (5) Chinnai. A total of 62 patients were treated, largely for sharp cuts, laceration, bruises, scalp injury and fractured bones. The serious fracture cases were referred to B.Baria general hospital. Fortunately, most of the injuries of the patients were minor in nature.



BDRCS youth volunteers offering first aid to the affected people. **Photo:** BDRCS.



BDRCS mobile unit attending to the affected people in one of the villages. **Photo:** BDRCS.

The BDRCS local units and local authorities are exchanging information on assessing the extent of the damages resulted from the tornado as well as the needs of affected population and areas of needs which is to be met by the government.

BDRCS and IFRC is regularly in contact with various relevant actors and updating the information so as to help decide the further course of action. DMIS was launched on 22 March.

IFRC is also participating in all the clusters especially the shelter cluster to facilitate an affective, joint and multi sectoral response for the affected populations.

Contact information

For further information related to this operation please contact:

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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 (NGO's) 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.

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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.
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