

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

GEORGIA FLOODS

12 July 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. 05EA011;

Operations Update no. 1;

Period covered: 1 June to 30 June, 2005;

Appeal coverage: 62%;

[<click here for live Contributions List>](#).

Appeal history:

- The emergency appeal was launched on 24 May 2005 for CHF 467,007 (USD 380,090 or EUR 302,045) in cash, kind, or services to assist 16,000 beneficiaries for seven months .
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 50,000.

Outstanding needs: CHF 177,312 (USD 142,339 or EUR 114,839)

Related Annual Appeal no 05AA069 [<click here to access the annual appeal>](#)

Operational Summary: Over the last month, heavy rains, floods and landslides have continued in Svaneti, Imereti, and Kvemo Kartli regions . It has affected adversely the population, their livelihoods and infrastructure adding to existing deficits in the health, water and sanitation services as a result of long-term economic decline. The water supply system in Oni, Racha-Lechkhumi region in western Georgia, for instance, has collapsed. Heavy landslides in Svaneti region, in the north-west, blocked the roads to Mestia district and left its population unreachable for several weeks in June 2005. This has meant the Red Cross could not carry out planned activities in this area. Roads were still impassable when this report was released. The weather, however, has improved over the last few days. Mud on the roads has started to dry and it is expected the communication to the villages high up in the mountains will resume within a week.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross Society of Georgia, supported by the Federation Secretariat, has responded to the needs of the population in other floods-affected regions. It distributed food and non-food items donated by the Iranian and Turkish Red Crescent Societies to a total of 60 families (240 persons) in Kvemo Kartli in east Georgia. In July 2005, when the roads are cleared, food will be distributed in the Mestia district too, in coordination with the World Food Programme. The Federation has employed a technical consultant to evaluate the feasibility of rehabilitation of the water supply system in Oni. Findings indicate it is more durable to build a new system there instead of investing into rehabilitation of the old one. The scope of works and price list for the construction work will now be developed and a tender will be opened to identify a company which will carry out the works. In the meantime, the Red Cross distributed jerry cans kindly donated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to some 950 households so that the population can collect and store water from natural spring sources several kilometres away from the town. In addition, the Red Cross is planning to distribute a seven-month supply of basic hygiene items to a total of 800 of the most affected families in Mestia district as well as conduct public health and hygiene campaigns through a network of community volunteers. The procurement of items is ongoing. A training curriculum for volunteers is also being developed and community training will start shortly. The campaigns will cover the prevention of water-borne diseases, safe use of water, as well as hygiene and sanitation practices.

Donor response to the emergency appeal has been good. The total income stands at CHF 289,695, which is 62 per cent of the appeal budget. Additionally, CHF 177,312 (USD 142,339 or EUR 114,839) is required to enable the Red Cross to achieve all the set objectives by the end of the year.

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Background

Heavy rainfall, warm temperatures and a sudden onset of seasonal snow melt resulted in floods in the western Georgian regions of Racha-Lechkhumi, Lower (Kvemo) Svaneti, Imereti and Samegrelo-Upper (Zemo) Svaneti on 25-26 April 2005. On 27-30 April the eastern regions of Inner (Shida) Kartli, Lower (Kvemo) Kartli, Mtskheta-Mtianeti, Adjara and part of Samtskhe-Javakheti were also affected. Landslides and mudflows have occurred in many mountainous areas. While fortunately there has been no loss of human life, the damage to already poor infrastructure, residential buildings and agriculture has been extensive. Populations from a number of villages have been relocated due to fears for their safety. Families from damaged or destroyed houses have mostly found temporary shelter with relatives, friends, or neighbours. Transport infrastructure has been heavily affected. Many bridges and kilometres of road have been washed away isolating some of the villages.

On 28 April 2005, the Georgian government appealed for international assistance. On the same day (28 April 2005), the Federation launched a minor emergency alert to inform the international community of the disaster. CHF 50,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and a Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) was deployed to collect information on the scale of damage, identify the needs, recommend on Red Cross action and initiate an appropriate response to the disaster. Based on FACT team findings, on 24 May 2005, the Federation launched an emergency appeal to help 16,000 people in Mestia district (16 villages), Oni, Akhmeta and Khulo for seven months. [<click here to read the emergency appeal and the full report of the FACT team>](#)

Operational developments

Donor response to the emergency appeal has been good. The first contributions from the Finnish Red Cross (CHF 49,408) and the Swedish Red Cross (CHF 67,320) arrived within a week after the appeal was launched. An additional CHF 90,400 was donated by the British Red Cross (funding arrived on 3 June 2005). In mid-June 2005, the German Red Cross pledged further CHF 82,567.

Unfortunately, heavy rains have continued in several regions of Georgia triggering more landslides and mudflows and causing further damage to the already poor infrastructure. Particularly affected are Racha-Lechkhumi, Lower Svaneti, Upper Svaneti and Imereti regions. The Mestia district in Upper Svaneti was cut for several weeks hindering the delivery of relief items to the population. While waiting for the road to Svaneti to be cleared, the Red Cross Society of Georgia supported by the Federation Secretariat has distributed food and non-food items donated by the Iranian and Turkish Red Crescent Societies in Kvemo Kartli region in east Georgia to help some 60 families (240 people), who lost their farmland, meet their immediate needs.

The Federation has employed a technical consultant to evaluate the feasibility of rehabilitation of the water supply system in Oni. The consultant was supported by a local geologist and an engineer from the state planning

agency, Georgian Waterproject. Their findings indicate it is more durable to build a new system there instead of investing into rehabilitation of the old one, which was first partially damaged by April floods and has then been destroyed by the June 2005 floods. The scope of works and price list for the construction work will now be developed and a tender will be opened to identify a company which will carry out the works.

In the meantime, the Red Cross distributed jerry cans to some 950 households so that the population can collect and store water from natural spring sources several kilometres away from the town.



Water supply line cut in Oni: recent floods have destroyed the main water supply system in Oni, western Georgia. Red Cross will support the construction of a new system in the town to ensure its population have access to safe drinking water.

In addition, the Red Cross is planning to distribute a seven-month supply of basic hygiene items to a total of 800 of the most affected families in Mestia district and conduct public health and hygiene campaigns through a network of community volunteers. The procurement of items is ongoing. A training curriculum for volunteers is also being developed and community training will start shortly. The campaigns will cover the prevention of water-borne diseases, safe use of water, as well as hygiene and sanitation practices.

Following the discussions with local authorities, the population and Red Cross branch representatives in Khulo, the Red Cross have decided not to build latrines there as was originally planned. The latrines were intended to serve as examples to encourage local villagers to

replicate the models in their homes. Communities, however, have indicated this was not a priority for them. The Red Cross is considering now to redirect the funds and respond to the request from the local authorities in Mestia to build there a lavatory in a local school. The lavatory was demolished by the June 2005 floods. The feasibility is being studied.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Water

Objective

3,300 people (950 families) in Oni town (Racha-Lechkhumi region) have access to sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking, personal and domestic hygiene.

Progress

The Federation has employed a technical consultant to establish the feasibility of rehabilitating the water supply system in Oni. The consultant together with a local geologist and an engineer from the state planning agency visited Oni to assess the condition of the water supply system there. Their findings conclude that it is more durable to invest into building a new water system instead of repairing the old one which was demolished by the June 2005 floods. The scope of works and price list for the construction work will now be developed and a tender will be opened to identify a company to carry out the works.



Helping cope with immediate needs: Red Cross has responded to the needs of the floods-affected population with distribution of basic food and non-foot items.

To respond to the immediate needs of the population, the Red Cross distributed 1,900 jerry cans to some 950 households (two cans per a household).

The original plan was also to provide the residents of Oni with purification tablets i.e., to distribute the tablets to each household. On the advice of the State Sanitary Inspection, the Red Cross has opted instead to supply Oni Water Supply System with chlorine powder donated by Turkish Red Crescent Society in May 2005, to ensure the water is treated centrally.

Outside of the current appeal, the Red Cross Society of Georgia will also partner OXFAM to contribute to the rehabilitation of the sewage and water supply system in Khulo, which was also heavily damaged by the floods. The Red Cross Society of Georgia, as an implementing partner, will be responsible for recruiting relevant staff and identifying a construction company to carry out the rehabilitation works. The national society will also initiate community based education and awareness campaigns on health and hygiene.

Impact

It is too early to measure the impact of the Red Cross efforts, as the water supply system in Oni is yet to be built. But once it is there, it will be able to provide the population of Oni and the neighbouring villages (in total some 1,100 families or 3,300 people; In summer, the number increases to 6,000 people as many families return to their homes from Tbilisi, the capital city, to where they usually escape to survive harsh winter months) with safe potable water. Currently, people walk several kilometres high up in the mountains to

collect water from natural spring sources. Many families did not even have any vessels to store water. The Federation, therefore, supplied them with jerry cans as a temporary solution until the central water supply system is being built. The system will be adequately protected to prevent any floods -induced damages in the future.

Constraints

The original plan was to repair the old water supply system in Oni. The recent floods, however, have damaged it to the extent that it is no longer a durable solution. After consultations with the local authorities, local geologists and the state planning department, it was decided to build a new system. The local communities have pledged to provide pipes. The cost of the project has been recalculated.

Health

Objective

The affected communities in Mestia district, Khulo, Akhmeta and Oni have reduced vulnerability to health related risks.

Progress

Through a tender the Red Cross selected a local supplier of hygiene items, which are being delivered to the national society's warehouse in Tbilisi and as soon as the roads to Mestia district are opened, the distribution will start.

In the meantime, the Red Cross started consultations with the local authorities and the population in Khulo to build sample latrines there so that villagers could replicate the models in their homes. As the communities indicated that latrines were not a priority, the Red Cross is considering building a lavatory in a school in Mestia, destroyed by the June 2005 floods. The Red Cross is considering a request from local authorities to help them rebuild the school toilets.

The Red Cross has also started developing a curriculum to train community volunteers on basic health and hygiene. Public education campaigns will start shortly.

Impact

The evolution of hygiene behaviour at family level will be monitored over the time and reported through further operations updates.

Constraints

The major challenge has been the lack of access to floods affected region.

Food

Objective

Distribute food parcels to 800 floods-affected families in the Mestia district.

Progress:

To avoid competition and duplication of efforts with World Food Programme (WFP), the Federation has not appealed for food. It instead opted to engage in the distribution of 800 food parcels, donated by the Turkish Red Crescent, to targeted families in the Mestia district. The distribution will be carried out in July 2005 after the roads are cleared. In the meantime, a list of beneficiaries has been established in coordination with the local authorities and the WFP.

Impact

The Red Cross activities will contribute to food security in the Mestia district, where many families have lost the agricultural land, pasture land, fodder, livestock and seeds, primarily potato seeds. In Svaneti, potatoes are the main cash crop that provides most of the income needed for the purchase of the wheat flour and other essential food and non-food commodities. Even moderate damage has therefore had a catastrophic effect to people. Many now depend solely on external aid.

Constraints

Lack of access to the target area has been a constraint. As reported above, the district has been cut for several weeks now as a result of more rains and landslides in June 2005 hampering the efforts of aid agencies to distribute food there

Advocacy

Objective

At least some success has been obtained in revitalising the dialogue between the government and the local population living in geologically high risk areas to ensure their safety.

Progress

The FACT team findings were shared with all key actors in Georgia, including the UN, the USAID, the Swiss Development and Cooperation (CDC) and the Embassy of the UK. On 25 May 2005, the Red Cross called for a press conference and communicated through media its concerns about the population living in the high risk areas, such as the Becho village in the Mestia district of Upper Svaneti region and parts of Khulo in Ajara region. The families there should urgently relocate, at least temporarily until a more durable solution, acceptable to all involved, is found.

The issue is complex and highly sensitive but it is important that the dialogue between the government and the population continues. The Red Cross will be advocating to the government on the importance of examining how best to address it. It is planning to use the launch of the World Disaster Report to highlight the threat facing the families living in high risk regions.

In parallel, a risk awareness campaign for the population will be carried out. The campaign is deemed to be important since most people while acknowledging the threat do not realise its potential speed and force. In view of

the risks of yet more landslides, first aid courses will be also organised to strengthen the population's capacity to respond to accidents.

National Society capacity building

Objective

The Georgian Red Cross society's capacity to manage programmes in order to meet the needs of the vulnerable communities is strengthened.

Progress

The emergency operation has offered a tremendous learning opportunity for the Red Cross Society of Georgia. All activities are or will be implemented primarily by the national society testing its planning and management skills. The Federation Secretariat through its country delegation in Tbilisi has been providing technical support and guidance. In addition, a number of training sessions on Project Planning Process (the Federation's main planning tool), financial management, participatory approaches and training methodology are planned for Red Cross branch staff and volunteers involved in the implementation of the emergency operation.

Coordination

Besides the Red Cross, there are a number of other actors – government and non-governmental - involved in the response operation helping the floods-affected population. These include: WFP, OXFAM, AMCOR, ADRA and the ICRC. WFP is engaged in food distribution. AMCOR and ADRA work in health sector. OXFAM is focusing on water. The Red Cross Society of Georgia coordinates its activities with all organisations via regular meetings to ensure the efforts are not duplicated and the resources are directed to where they are most needed.

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