

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

SIERRA LEONE: FLOODS

22 December, 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. 05EA018; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 15 August to 17 November, 2005; Appeal coverage: 55.2%; (click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website).

Appeal history

- Launched on September 15, 2005 for CHF 235,000.00 for four (4) months to assist 7,000 beneficiaries. Refer to http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA018.pdf
- CHF100, 000 Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) was allocated upon approval, the financial contributions of the Swedish and Canadian Red Cross will be used to reimburse the DREF.

Outstanding needs: CHF 105,234

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: None

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For longer-term programme please refer to the Federations Annual Appeal

Background

In August 2005, Pujehun district of Sierra Leone experienced heavy torrential rains which lead to flooding in several villages, particularly those of Taninahun, Jorma Jargor, Swao and Bandakoh. The situation worsened over 24 hours as floods continued to wreck havoc within Pujehun district. Most of the affected locations/villages along the river line (particularly the Gbondapi swampy areas) are still in accessible due to damaged or flooded roads, including very high water levels and some villages are still trapped and surrounded by water. Outbreaks of cholera, diarrhoeal diseases, malaria, dengue fever and other epidemics are possible (some cases of cholera have already been reported).

Operational developments

Pujehun district is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean on the south and southwest, and the topography in most areas is interlaced by major rivers that break their banks when it rains heavily for more than a day. For these reasons, the district experiences more flash floods for which importunately there are no contingency plans in place.

On August 15, 2005, Pujehun District located in Southern Sierra Leone experienced flash floods in nine of its 12 chiefdoms affecting over 36 villages/communities. The floods rendered over 15,000 people homeless after destroying houses, contaminated latrines and wells and destroyed huge acres of farmland. The capacity of the local population was overwhelmed by this disaster and this gave raise to the Government of Sierra Leone to officially request the intervention of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) and the International Federation.

All relevant stages in relief implementation were observed through out this operation, starting with an initial needs assessment, coordination with other relevant humanitarian actors and the district DM committee. This led to the distribution of the first phase of non-food items and relief assistance which targeted 12 of the most vulnerable 200 families, with a total of 1,444 beneficiaries, from 21 to 29 August 2005.

The second phase of relief assistance was conducted from 19 to 22 September 2005. This second phase also targeted vulnerable communities and individuals with distribution of non-food items to 300 families, with a total of 2,212 beneficiaries. Therefore the cumulative total of assistance given was to 500 families totalling 3,656 beneficiaries.

Thanks to the DREF funds and financial contributions from the Swedish and Canadian Red Cross, remarkable improvement has been made on the living and sanitation conditions of the beneficiaries after the first relief assistance by the SLRCS. With this first Relief Assistance, some disaster victims who were living in public buildings (Taninahun) returned to more deserving living conditions after receiving the relief assistance distributed by the national society. As a result, life is again more meaningful for them.

However, humanitarian assistance to disaster victims is trickling in to some communities, while others are yet to benefit from it. A large number of the affected population still need humanitarian assistance in sectors such as WatSan, health, Food distribution, Agro and rehabilitation of shelters.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

The objective of the Red Cross movement initiative towards the Pujehun flood disaster victims is to assist the most vulnerable by giving timely and effective relief to alleviate human suffering. This, has a great extent, been achieved in collaboration with other UN Agencies, INGOs and the ONS while further interventions in other sectors requiring medium and long term assistance are still going on.

Below are the objectives of the Red Cross and the actions taken during this reporting period.

Objective 1: Emergency Health and Care

The following have been achieved:

- Participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation training for 50 national society's volunteers.
- Five thousand (5,000) sachets of oral re-hydration salt procured for distribution to disaster victims in Pujehun.



- IFRC CB and HIV/AIDS Delegate, the national society regional officer in Bo and field officer in Pujehun participated in inter-agency coordination meetings and assessments.

The following were procured and distributed to help facilitate the work of national society volunteers in Pujehun:

- Twenty-five (25) raincoats.
- Twenty-five (25) pairs of rain boots.
- Ten (10) stretchers.
- One hundred (100) Red Cross aprons.
- Twenty-five (25) flash lights with batteries

Several field monitoring missions have been organized and there are still pending missions and activities to undertaken very soon.

Objective 2: Shelter, food and non-food

The following non-food items were procured, transported, and distributed in Pujehun:

- Twenty-five (25) bales of assorted clothing for children and adults.
- Two thousand six hundred and twenty-five (2,625) blankets.
- Three thousand five hundred (3,500) plastic mats.
- Three thousand five hundred (3,500) bars of laundry soap.
- Four hundred (400) cooking sets.
- Five hundred (500) buckets/jerry cans.
- One (1) plastic tank (500 litres).



The national society distributed the above non-food items including 500 plastic sheets, 100 kitchen sets and a few bales of assorted clothing loaned from the DM Emergency standby stock to complete the required stock needed by the disaster victims of Pujehun. Each affected family received the following NFI: 2 blanket; 2 plastic mats; 1 kitchen set (comprising 5 plates, 5 spoons, 5 cups, 2 pots, 1 knife); 1 piece plastic sheet; 1 bucket; 2 packets of reconstituted assorted clothing; 3 bars of soap.

First Phase of non –food items Distribution

Location	No of F/H	Total Pop.
Taninahun	53	312
Mattieu	4	37
Taybor	9	63
Messima	27	180
Gbondapi	15	164
Linsar	10	89
Batahhoi	30	296
Gobaru	14	77
Bowulo	1	1
Pujehun Town	20	121
Tisor	11	70
Timbo	6	34
Total	200	1444

Second Phase of non-food items Distribution

Locations	No. of F/H	Total Pop.
Gbormukoh (M/Sakrim)	50	351
Dia	10	76
Kpiema	25	187
Yeabana	30	219
Komende (K/Kabondeh)	30	224
Mandu	15	120
Vaama (Kp/Krim)	15	112
Jewoma (YKK)	26	204
Bandakoh (Kkabondeh)	59	422
Potoru (Barri)	25	193
Jeoma (Sowa)	15	104
Total	300	2212

- Planning sessions were organized with the District Coordination team chaired by ONS to finalize the list of beneficiaries and their locations. The national society participated as a key stakeholder.
- Volunteers and a staff member from the Red Cross Bo regional office supported the relief operations in Pujehun.
- An orientation session was organized for 50 national society volunteers on registration and distribution techniques to conform to national and international standards.
- Fifty (50) SLRCS volunteers have been deployed to register and distribute non-food items and further assess the humanitarian situation in affected communities.

Objective 3: Capacity building for response to potentially new emergencies**Progress/Achievements**

- The national society and IFRC supported the government structures (office of national security which is responsible for DM) at national and district levels with technical advices on the coordination, implementation and management of disaster response.
- IFRC supported the national society headquarters, Bo and Pujehun branches with stationery and office materials.

Objective 4: Logistics, administration and telecommunications**Progress/Achievements:**

- The Federation mobilized resources and provide support to coordination and implementation by deploying the head of delegation, the regional DM coordinator , the CB/HIV/AIDS delegate, the radio operator and logistics officer to monitor and provide necessary assistance to the national society where needed.
- The Federation repaired and made operational radio communication in Bo regional office which is being used to coordinate between headquarters, Bo regional office and Pujehun.
- Support to the national society DM team and volunteers during the operation with logistics and incentives to motivate volunteers.
- IFRC supported the national society with logistics i.e. fuel, vehicle maintenance and communication during implementation period.
- The ICRC Delegation provided a truck to transport relief materials to the Bo regional branch.
- Media coverage to promote the national society and donor visibility was organized at Freetown, at both regional and district levels.
- The ICRC supported the national society's assessment on tracing needs for the dislocated populations. A Plan of Action is underway to increase tracing awareness in the district.

Outstanding needs

The following gaps have been identified in the below-mentioned sectors during the assessment and relief operation:

- WatSan: there are no indications to effectively initiate activities in this sector by any humanitarian organization especially in locations where latrines and wells have been contaminated by the flood (Gbondapi, Taninahun, Swao, etc.) and where new ones are expected to be built because of reported cases of diarrhoea diseases in Gbondapi and its immediate surrounding.
- There are very few poorly equipped medical referral points in punctuated locations within the district. Some affected communities are facing health inaccessibility.
- Non-food items were supplied to some 5,000 beneficiaries. The rest of the affected populations still need assistance, and this constitutes a considerable challenge for them in the relief to rehabilitation phase.
- Information gathered from the DM Committee meetings, DM Committee statistics and from the field indicated that several acres of farmlands were destroyed by the floods, and considering that farmers in these communities are merely subsistence farmers, there is bound to be food insecurity in the seasons ahead and an increased percentage of malnutrition amongst children.
- Unavailability of adequate relief items to meet the needs of the most vulnerable initially estimated to be 7,000 disaster victims has been and is still a big challenge to the NGO community and Pujehun DM committee.
- VHF communication constituted another constraint. It was very difficult to link up with volunteers in the field when no vehicle or radio was available in the location. Very often, the national society's land cruiser had to visit too many communities to access information. This overloaded the routine activities of the operation.

There are no contingency plans or mitigation activities for future interventions and Pujehun district is likely to be flooded again. Few weeks after the flash floods, it rained heavily for two days. As a consequence, the water levels rose again. Had it continued there would have been another disaster.

Coordination

The IFRC has coordinates with UNOCHA, ONS, ICRC, SLRCS, WFP and all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the response. The national society has been giving first aid services, conducting registration of disaster victims and braving rough terrains to access remote areas and give updates to ONS for it to be forwarded to relevant actors for action. The national society, during the emergency phase, was regarded as the lead agency because of its network of volunteers in the district and in most cases it was the first to access remote and vulnerable communities on assessment for the information of the district DM committee. The Spanish Red Cross and the ICRC provided logistical support by supplying fuel and a truck for the transportation of relief materials to the regional point in Bo and recently supported hygiene promotion training by appointing a delegate specifically for these activities. Supported by the ICRC Delegation, the national society initiated an assessment on tracing needs for the dislocated populations. A plan of action is underway to increase tracing awareness in the district.

UNICEF, World Vision and Action Aid have been helping in the WatSan sector, WHO and the Ministry of Health on health issues, SLRCS on non-food items and hygiene promotion and WFP on food ration. The UN-Transitional Support Team (TST), UNAMSIL and MILOPS played supportive roles to both the Pujehun DM committee and the SLRCS during the emergency phase of the operation.

UNOCHA has played a coordinating role in Freetown and ONS Pujehun has been coordinating the activities of humanitarian actors on the field (Pujehun). The coordination role was later taken by the newly set up Disaster Management office under the auspices of the office of national security. Other assistance and collaboration was enjoyed from local departments like the military, the police and the Local District Council.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives

This operation was an opportunity for the Pujehun Red Cross branch which is newly established (early 2005) to propagate the principles of the Red Cross and to assure its community that with their support and volunteerism they will collectively help humanity.

Throughout this operation, Red Cross ideals, gender promotion, HIV/AIDS promotion and other strategic priorities have been communicated to the beneficiaries and collaborating partners in every session or before starting a relief distribution.

The Fundamental Principles of the Movement and its components were disseminated by the HoD-IFRC to the Pujehun DM Committee including local authorities and chiefdom representative. By the end of most of the dissemination sessions, the audiences indicated a better understanding knowledge of the Red Cross and promised to be supportive.

The gender issue was addressed in most areas. This was indicated in the composition of the Red Cross teams, Pujehun DM Committee, participating UN Agencies and NGOs, local structures and the targeted communities.

The self-reliant/exit strategy policy was communicated to beneficiaries for them to know that as locals they also have capacities they could tap that will help them put strategies in place to help in community development.

National Society Capacity Building

In its bid to develop the capacity of the Sierra Leone Red Cross Society, the IFRC-Freetown delegation provided the following resources and technical support to national society:

- Introduction to the Federation's Information Bulletin writing, DREF, Appeal Launching and Operational Updates on disasters.
- As the national society has a functioning DM team, there was only need to give technical advice and exposure to collaboration and cooperation with other relevant operators in the implementation of disaster relief.
- Efforts is also been made to regularize the national society financial management, procedures and reporting systems by delegating the IFRC finance development delegate and officer to give financial advice and support during the implementation of this programme, as this is an integral part to conform to in operations of this nature.

The above efforts to improve the national society capacity are yielding positive results. This is responsible for their successful collaboration with other partners in the implementation of the Pujehun emergency response, their swift and timely relief to the most vulnerable victims, and the gratitude given by the Pujehun DM Committee and WFP as the lead agency in humanitarian assistance in Pujehun.

Communication – Advocacy and Public Information

Media coverage to promote the national society and the ideals of the Movement was organized at Freetown regional and district levels over the VOA, Radio UNAMSIL, SLBS TV and Radio, KISS 104 FM Radio, *Salon Times Newspaper* and the *Vision Newspaper*.

This media coverage widened the dissemination circle of the Federation and national society relief activities and the humanitarian needs for disaster victims of Pujehun both locally and internationally, resulting to pledges of reputable institutions to support the SLRCS effort. It also encourages personal donations and contributions from prominent individuals channelled through the District Council to various categories of disaster victims.

Conclusion

Disaster victims of Pujehun flash floods targeted by IFRC/SLRCS with non-food items assistance were able to resettle again in a dignified manner after losing all their belongings. This was achieved through various actions as first aid services, non-food items distribution, health education, identification of vulnerable people and communities, etc.

Funds received for this emergency is being judiciously utilized as indicated in the budget and narrative. So far implementation has gone on well from the inception stage of the emergency right through the assessment phase, procurement of non-food items and distribution of relief assistance. However, slight variances will be indicated on the final report in activities and budget as against the actual implementation.

Relief assistance to Pujehun would not have been realized if not for the intervention of the IFRC who provided the required funds, the national society's DM team, which provided technical support and human resource and the ICRC for logistic support. However, National President and Secretary General of national society, and the HoD – IFRC played vital roles on the prompt execution and achievement of the entire relief operations.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

Sierra Leone - floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA018

PLEDGES RECEIVED

20/12/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

						TOTAL COVERAGE
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				235,000		55.2%
CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/HAPS		50,000	CAD	53,225	16.09.05	
CANADIAN - RC		23,750	CAD	25,845	09.11.05	HIV/AIDS
DENMARK - RC				8,946	05.10.05	MALAWI
SWEDISH - GOVT		250,000	SEK	41,750	24.10.05	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				129,766	CHF	55.2%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	