

# DREF 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

## YEMEN: FLOODS

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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

Period covered by this update: 20 February to 14 March, 2006

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 63,900 allocated from the Federations DREF on 24 February, 2006 to respond to the needs of this operation, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to the affected population.
- This operation is expected to be implemented for four months, and will be completed by 30 June 2006; a DREF Bulletin Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 30 September 2006).

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet 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.

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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>

## **Background and current situation**

### **Dhamar floods**

A major flash flooding occurred on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> of February, due to heavy rains that affected Ma'bar city, Dhamar governorate (100 Km from south Sana'a). Three people – two men and one child – were confirmed dead. According to the assessment report prepared by the Yemen Red Crescent Society (YRCS) Dhamar branch assessment team, the floods have caused the destruction of more than 13 houses and partial damage of more than 47 homes. In addition, about 53 goats/sheep and more than 2000 chicken were lost. Vast area of fertile farming land was submerged in flood water.

YRCS staff and volunteers helped Civil Defence personnel to evacuate 265 persons trapped in villages in Ma'bar region, which has a population of around 24,700 people. Some 435 people, mostly of the marginalized groups, have been using a government school as a temporary shelter.

### **Lahj Floods**

Another floods disaster followed just a few days after the first one. Starting at an early hour of Saturday morning, 25<sup>th</sup> of February, torrential rains continued for over six hours in Lahj Governorate in the southern part of Yemen. The disaster is remarkably evident in the two districts of Alhotah and Tuban. Alhootah city, the capital of Lahj governorate, located about 30 kilometres northwest of Aden city, is the most affected area. Wahidah, Masjid Aldolah, and Alduba, three poor residential neighborhoods, witnessed greater devastation than other places in the city. That was attributed to poverty and lack of proper infrastructure and housing planning. Most houses are weakly constructed on lower lands and in some cases right on the streams of the flowing rain waters. The situation was worsened by limitation of the old drainage system that was built during the Sultanate eras. The drainpipes capacity could not cope with the amount of waters in the submerged streets resulting in slow collapse of houses, mainly built in mud. Evacuees had been temporarily accommodated in two nearby schools, till a second option was made available.

### **The Proposal**

The first preliminary report on Dhamar floods was prepared by the assessment team and Federation Office and sent on to the Regional Office in Amman where a DREF funding request was issued and sent to Geneva. The urgent DREF Request which contained all relevant objectives and needs of the operation was used in place of a formal programme proposal.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

### **Dhamar Activities**

In Dhamar, the field assessment showed that the basic relief items needed should include shelter requirements for 200 families consisting of 200 tents, 1000 blankets, 1000 mattresses, and 200 kitchen utensil sets; and the relief food items (based on the daily nutritional needs and according to Sphere standards) should include rice, milk, sugar, fowl (beans), cooking oil for 1000 persons (approximately 200 families). It is recommended to provide food items and supplies for 15 days. Some medical supplies and essential drugs are also highly needed to cope with increasing sickness cases among evacuees. An estimated budget for all needed items was prepared and attached to the DREF request, including food, non-food, hygiene, medical supplies, and operation support.

Volunteers and staff of the national intervention team of YRCS, namely from Dhamar and Sana'a branch, were deployed to the affected area to provide rescue and needs assessment. They have also been distributing relief supplies, mainly food items, 300 blankets and mattresses which were released from the national



**Distribution of food and non food items  
by the YRCS to the flood victims**

## Yemen: Floods; DREF Bulletin no.MDRYE001; Update no.1

society's disaster preparedness stocks. Damage and needs assessments had been done, in coordination with the authorities, so as to determine if additional assistance was needed. An operations room was opened at the national society and another report will follow to identify if further intervention is needed.

After several disputes with tribes and other local persons, a plot of land was secured to build a relief camp. Due to the latest report, 82 tents have been installed.

### Lahj activities

As for Lahj floods, Yemen Red Crescent Society was the first organization to respond to this disaster when Aden branch sent a team to evaluate the disaster and needs. According to the initial field assessment some 128 houses were destroyed, leaving the same number of families homeless, and about 200 houses were affected at different degrees of damage. Despite the huge loss of property and household belongings, no causality was reported except for one minor injury. YRCS staff volunteers and DM coordinator made frequent trips to Lahj to keep an updated list of figures related to evacuees, houses destroyed, and relief needs. Accordingly, the following list has been identified including 140 tents, 740 mattresses, 1480 blankets, 128 kitchen sets, and 128 of other related small items.

A doctor from Aden branch visited the schools and provided some urgent medical treatments for evacuees. A small amount of necessary drugs was purchased locally to treat most common diseases of cold and respiratory infections. Necessary funds were promptly transferred to Taiz branch to ensure immediate shipping of relief items from Taiz YRCS disaster preparedness stocks.



**The YRCS camp in Mahbar for flood victims was built and run by the YRCS**

Close coordination between disaster management (DM) departments at Headquarters, Taiz Branch, and Aden Branch resulted in a quicker response in comparison with previous disasters interventions. By the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, the first consignment of relief items reached Lahj. Taiz branch, being the nearest capable branch, extended all possible assistance and expertise through a team consisting of seven volunteers headed by the Taiz branch president. Along with Aden team, a camp was being established on a safe plot of land that was made available by the Governor's assistance.

By the 9<sup>th</sup> of March, the camp construction process was still going on with some new achievements. About 43 tents have been installed to accommodate 43 families. The remaining victims (of the proposed 786

persons) have found shelter by relatives and neighbors. In addition to the already existing ladies bathrooms, eight more new bathrooms for men have been constructed to give some convenience for many users. The sanitation service was enhanced with water supply followed by power supply to fully utilized relevant electric appliances and tools. During this time, an integrated field health clinic has been initiated with support from the Governorate Health Office. The well furnished clinic is operated by a team of three doctors and a female medical assistant. Most essential drugs are made available.

### Objectives

- To assist 200 families affected by floods disaster in Ma'bar city and nearby areas in Dhamar Governorate with needed shelter, relief services of health and food items for 15 days according to standards.
- To refurbish the emergency relief stock in warehouse and raise the capacity level of the NS to provide relief items for 1500 persons in time of disasters.

## **Yemen: Floods; DREF Bulletin no.MDRYE001; Update no.1**

### **Distribution**

Distribution has taken place according to the plan in Dhamar, after purchasing needed items from Sana'a. So far, the items sent by Headquarters to Dhamar branch included: 50 tents, 610 blankets, 405 sponge mattresses, and 100 kitchen sets. Goods were offloaded at the camp to be distributed to beneficiaries with emphasis on the most needy.

Following Lahj floods assessment, the DM Department promptly responded by giving direction to Taiz branch to send available relief items to affected areas. The priority was given to those evacuees in the schools who lost their homes and properties. The items included:

- 40 Tents
- 33 Blankets
- 33 Mattresses
- 40 Stoves
- 40 Kitchen sets
- 100 pieces of Bandages
- 2 packages of Diapers (each containing 150 pieces)

### **The Delegation**

The delegation consists of one Federation Representative and two national staff (finance administrator and programme officer/translator).

### **Participation of the Operating National Society**

The YRCS were very active in the entire operation. At an early stage the YRCS made the field assessments to both Dhamar and Lahj, with a report to Headquarters. The distribution of the shelter, the relief and food items was done by the YRCS staff and volunteers. About twenty volunteers were involved in Dhamar operation, including members from Sana'a and Al Baidah.

In Lahj, the YRCS was the first organization to intervene and provide help. It has been well appreciated by the local people and authorities, which resulted in more cooperation with the Government departments. Seven volunteers worked side by side with 13 volunteers from Aden branch, in order to get the work done.

### **Co-operation with Authorities and with other Agencies**

The assistance from the local authorities was good, both during the field assessment and the distribution of the relief items. There has been also good coordination and cooperation with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), Oxfam, Islamic Relief and other national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Generally, the NS with its active volunteers has been the distributing party during both operations. YRCS has effectively cooperated with relevant government and other international organizations in order to find support for the victims as fast as possible. The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent provided relief items consisting of 453 mattresses, 530 blankets, and food items. Care International and Islamic Relief have also contributed to the relief efforts by donating necessary food and non-food items.

### **Conclusions**

The YRCS, with its volunteers and staff in Dhamar, Aden, Taiz, and the Headquarters, have done a better job in comparison with previous interventions. After these two operations, the NS became aware of having a sufficient emergency logistic stock and trained volunteers/staff as well as clear plan for Disaster Response. When the YRCS shows its capacity regarding disaster response, it will even more introduce the YRCS to the public and enhance its visibility.

One of the main constraints was that the two floods disasters occurred almost simultaneously and the disaster managers were fully occupied in Dhamar. However, it is proven that due to the training courses facilitated by the DM coordinator from the regional Federation office in Amman, the YRCS has a good number of National Intervention Team expertise and proves it is able to manage minor disasters in all the regions where they have a near presence.

There were some shortcomings mainly in the response which should have been quicker in action in such urgent situations. Interference in responsibilities within the NS deters the smooth flow of activities to achieve the expected results of disaster response intervention in a timely fashion. During the operations, the Disaster

**Yemen: Floods; DREF Bulletin no.MDRYE001; Update no.1**

Management Coordinator was being left out by some colleagues, which caused frustration and delay in delivery of relief items. A clear mandate has to be given to one person to assume full responsibilities, in order to avoid such constraints.

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