

# Operations update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Bangladesh: Cyclone Sidr

Emergency appeal n° MDRBD003  
GLIDE [TC-2007-000208-BGD](#)  
Operations update n° 1  
18 November 2007

**Period covered by this Ops Update:** 16 to 18 November 2007

**Appeal target (current):** CHF 3,989,305 (USD 3.5m or EUR 2.4m)

**Appeal coverage:** based on unconfirmed pledges and indication of support, this appeal is well covered; however, based on the emerging information and the evolving operation, the needs are enormous and a full revised appeal is expected by the end of the week; [<click here for contact details >](#)

### Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on a preliminary basis on 17 November 2007 for CHF 3,989,305 (USD 3.5m or EUR 2.4m) to assist 235,000 beneficiaries for 9 months.
- **Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF):** CHF 250,000 was initially allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the national society to respond.



Destroyed houses in Bhola.

**Summary:** Following the impact of Cyclone Sidr, reports now indicate that the death toll is exceeding 2,000 persons, and over 5,000 injured, with thousands remaining missing. Efforts remain focused on search and rescue, supported by ships, fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. Information remains very limited and Hundreds of thousands of people reportedly remain homeless, and thousands of livestock are dead. An estimated 2.74 million people are affected in 25 districts (see initial details in the table below). Enormous efforts are underway by the Government, the United Nations, and the Red Cross Movement to respond to the needs. The rescue and relief effort is hampered by logistical constraints, and access to the affected area remains very difficult. The electricity and communications infrastructure remain down, further constraining the response operation.

With the support of the International Federation, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) continues to assist the most vulnerable cyclone-affected people. Reinforced by the extensive local BDRCS network, four Red Cross teams are in the field to assess the situation and needs (see preliminary Red Cross assessment details below). National Society volunteers are continuing to assist the injured and homeless.

The BDRCS, with the support of the Federation, is liaising and coordinating closely with the Government, various UN organizations, and local and international NGO's.

There has been a quick response from donors to the scale of this disaster. Following is a preliminary

**list of indications of support to this operation: the United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) pledged USD 1 million for shelter and water & sanitation through the American Red Cross; the Netherlands Government has pledged EUR 1 million; AusAid through the Australian High Commission in-country has pledged AUD 100,000; the Canadian Government through the Canadian Red Cross pledged CAD 250,000; the Norwegian Red Cross pledged NOK 200,000; the American Red Cross has pledged USD 100,000; the British Red Cross and German Red Cross are looking to pledge GBP 30,000 and EUR 110,000 respectively, and the United Arab Emirates will be making a pledge as well. ECHO has also made a preliminary decision of EUR 1.5 million and the Federation is in discussion with them about a possible contribution. The Swedish Red Cross is also in discussion with their government, and the Swiss Red Cross is present in country and looking to support the operation. A formal donor response update will be made available in the coming days, and the Federation expresses appreciation to those that have responded to date or are in the process of responding.**

## The situation

Cyclone Sidr developed from a depression and turned into a cyclonic storm over the southeast bay on November 12, gradually worsening by November 14. Within hours the Government meteorological department raised its caution signal from number 2 to 4 in the coastal belt, then to 10 in Mongla -- the highest danger signal.

People living in the chars (islands) and by the coastal zone were evacuated. All fishing boats and trawlers on the northeast bay were advised to return or come closer to the coast and take shelter. Major rivers in the region started swelling with water levels increasing by 50cm on average, immediately nearing the danger level. Tidal waves from the Meghna entered Charnadraj breaking the protection embankment.

Educational institutions in the affected districts were closed while all population movement was discouraged. In the aftermath, thousands of tin-shed and thatched houses in many of the affected districts were destroyed and a huge number of trees were uprooted as the cyclone swept across the districts.

Survivors and rescuers in the six worst-hit districts of Bagerhat, Barguna, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Barisal and Jhalakathi -- were seen in tears, burying relatives and friends. With roads impassable, access to the area has



Many latrines were damaged or destroyed by uprooted trees and falling debris, such as this one in Bhola.

been almost impossible, and with the communications and utility services yet to be restored fully, aid workers and rescuers have struggled to reach survivors in most of the affected areas. Thousands of people are still living under the open sky with no food, drinking water or medicine. Countless trawlers and fishing boats remain missing with hope diminishing for any survivors.



Roads were blocked by uprooted trees caused by strong winds, as was the case in Bagerhat.

Meanwhile, information on casualties has been very limited or difficult to confirm, particularly from the numerous remote islands (chars). According to media sources, the government is able to provide shelter for around 1.5 million people in 2,168 shelter houses, leaving around 3.3 million people in the coastal areas in need of shelter and therefore particularly vulnerable situation.

The government deployed naval ships, aircraft, and

helicopters to reinforce the rescue and relief operation. The following table reflects initial details from preliminary assessment reports:

Affected districts	25
Affected upazillas (Sub-districts)	103
Affected unions	710
Affected households (families)	844,756
Affected population	2,744,081
Reported deaths	1,598
People injured	15,000
People lost (missing)	1,500
Houses damaged (Fully)	499,726
Houses damaged (Partially)	273,222
Crops damaged (Fully)	693,335 hectares
Crops damaged (Partially)	18,122 hectares
Livestock deaths	242,355
Roads damaged (Fully)	28 Kms
Roads damaged (Partially)	485 Kms
Educational institutions (Fully)	50
Educational institutions (Partially)	3407
Embankment damaged	39 Kms
Damaged trees	345,019

## Coordination and partnerships

The Federation and the BDRCS continue to work and coordinate closely with the government, UN agencies and other humanitarian agencies. The delegation participated in the DER meeting called by the government. During the meeting information on the operation was shared. Regular coordination has also been maintained with BDRCS branches. BDRCS and the delegation have held joint meetings to discuss and plan the operation.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

**Overall operational objective: To provide immediate and subsequently short-term recovery support to some 47,000 of the most vulnerable cyclone affected households (235,000 people) in Bangladesh. This will be done through the provision of basic health care including psychosocial support, health and hygiene promotion, safe water and sanitation facilities. Emergency shelter (tarpaulin including building and construction tools, materials and safer house promotion), basic instant dry food, non-food supplies (family kits including hygiene items, water containers, etc.), fishing nets, seeds and saplings are also included during the post emergency and at the early recovery stage.**

The Federation has deployed a 9-person Field Assessment and Coordination (FACT) consisting of a team leader from the Federation's regional delegation, deputy team leader from the Federation's Disaster Management Unit (DMU) in Kuala Lumpur, and relief, shelter, health, watsan, reporting, livelihood and logistics experts. Two members of the FACT (DM and health) are from the national society. The FACT members have started to arrive in Dhaka and will start their field visits from November 19. The Federation's regional communications officer is also in country assisting in the operation.

A total of four teams comprised of the BDRCS and the Federation are currently in the field to assess the extent of damage in the districts of Bagerhat Satkhira, Jessore, Khulna, Barguna, Patuakhali, Barisal, Pirojpur, Jalokhati and Bhola. These districts are assumed to be the most heavily affected. Enroute, the team for Bagerhat observed considerable destruction of vegetation. There is no power in the Bagerhat, and estimates indicate the power situation may take about 15 days to resolve. The Bagerhat administration is yet to establish connection with isolated islands of the Sunderbans (the world's largest mangrove forest). The table below reflects very preliminary information from the Bagerhat District Relief and Rehabilitation Office (DRRO) as of 16 November 2007:

Sub-district	No. of Unions	Number of affected families			Death toll	Injured	Number of houses affected	
		severely	fully	partially			fully	partially
Bagerhat Proper	10	5,000	3,500	5000	02	00	20,000	5,000
Fakirhat	08	4,600	3,600	3400	00	00	12,000	5,000
Kochua	07	4,000	3,000	4000	07	00	15,000	4,000
Mollarhat	07	1,500	3,500	3500	01	00	16,000	4,200
Morolganj	16	10,000	7,000	4000	19	00	36,000	10,000
Rampal	20	5,200	4,500	3800	00	00	17,000	3,500
Chitalmari	07	4,800	3,700	3500	11	01	15,000	3,000
Sharonkhola	04	6,000	4,000	3000	03	00	12,000	12,000
Mongla	06	6,000	4,200	3600	00	00	18,000	5,000

The BDRCS's reports indicate that the paddy land in the area has been completely inundated, with standing crops and seasonal vegetables either under water or completely damaged by the strong wind. There are concerns that diarrhoea outbreaks may occur within days due to the lack of drinking water supply sources. Many latrines have also been destroyed. Additionally, many thatched houses are damaged and roads have become inaccessible due to the fallen trees.

The BDRCS has taken an important role in this emergency. For example, before the storm hit, the BDRCS's Bhola branch and CPP officials and volunteers were on stand-by. The volunteers had a briefing from the CPP Zonal office of Bhola District and started disseminating the warning signal to the community by using mega-phone and hand sirens and assisted in evacuating people, working with the government authorities. Thousands of trained volunteers were therefore prepared for the situation. Some 200,000 people living in the coastal zone were evacuated to safer places such as cyclone shelters, high-rise buildings, public and private houses. Food and water were supplied for them. Relief and rescue operations collected items such as food, medicine, cooking and lighting materials for distribution. After the evacuation CPP volunteers distributed dry food provided by government authorities. Over 21,000 people took shelter in 21 BDRCS cyclone shelters (however many of those evacuated could not take refuge due to a lack of shelters and/or poor maintenance of the existing shelters).

The BDRCS's Red Crescent Youth volunteers evacuated 2,000 people from Sadar area. The CPP volunteers and unit jointly provided First Aid to those in need.

The BDRCS team that planned to go to the Pathuakali district is reportedly stranded since the ferry service was unavailable due to the prevailing situation. Thus, the team was forced to divert their route to an area which is 40 km away from the Barguna district.

The BDRCS and the Federation have allocated and dispatched food and non-food items in 15 districts (see table below). A total of 8,400 family kits, 4,200 plastic sheets, 8,400 sarees & lungies, and 8,400 blankets will be distributed. Additionally, eight medical units are being deployed in the field to assist those affected.

#### Detailed distribution plans to the 15 affected districts

District	Dry food BDT	Family kit	Plastic sheet	Saree & lungi	Blankets	Medical teams	Distribution cost BDT (1 CHF is 1.81)
Barguna	500,000	700	350	700	700	2	60,000
Bagerhat	500,000	700	350	700	700	1	60,000
Pirojpur	500,000	700	350	700	700	1	60,000
Patuakhali	500,000	700	350	700	700	2	60,000
Jalokathi	500,000	700	350	700	700		60,000
Barisal	500,000	700	350	700	700		60,000
Khulna	300,000	500	250	500	500	1	40,000
Bhola	300,000	500	250	500	500		40,000
Madaripur	300,000	500	250	500	500		40,000

Gopalganj	300,000	500	250	500	500	1	40,000
Satkhira	300,000	500	250	500	500		40,000
Laxmipur	300,000	500	250	500	500		40,000
Chandpur	150,000	400	200	400	400		30,000
Faridpur	150,000	400	200	400	400		30,000
Narayanganj	150,000	400	200	400	400		30,000

The BDRCS's Bagerhat branch had already provided support to 426 families with chira/puffed rice (2 Kg per family) and molasses (225gm per family) with their own resources. Similar support for at least another 750 families is in the pipeline.

## Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Web stories and photos to profile the operation have been posted. The BDRCS's response, with the support of the Federation, has received wide media coverage. The International media (CNN, BBC, and Al Jazeera) has taken interviews with the Federation's Head of the Delegation. Additionally, various media are in regular contact with the delegation enquiring about the disaster and the delegation's intervention.

On Nov. 18, a press conference was organized by the BDRCS to inform the media about the intervention of the BDRCS with the assistance of the Federation. The Federation's head of delegation and the ICRC head of mission also participated in the conference along with the Swiss Red Cross and British Red Cross.

## How we work

***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.***

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its 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.

## Contact information

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

- Bangladesh Red Crescent Society: Mr. M. Shafiul Alam (secretary- general), email: [bdrcs@bangla.net](mailto:bdrcs@bangla.net), phone: +88.02.935.2226.
- Country delegation in Bangladesh: Mr. Selvaratnam Sinnadurai (head of delegation), email: [selvaratnam.sinnadurai@ifrc.org](mailto:selvaratnam.sinnadurai@ifrc.org), phone: +88.02.933.7314, fax: +88.02.934.1631.
- South Asia regional representation in India: Mr. Al Panico (regional representative), email: [al.panico@ifrc.org](mailto:al.panico@ifrc.org), phone: +91 11 2411 1122, fax: +91 11 2411 1128.
- Asia Pacific Zone office in Malaysia: disaster management unit: Mr. Latifur Rahman (regional disaster management delegate), email: [latifur.rahman@ifrc.org](mailto:latifur.rahman@ifrc.org); phone: + 60 3 2161 0892, mobile; +60 12 975 0144; regional logistics unit: Mr Igor Dmitryuk (Head of regional logistics unit), [igor.dmitryuk@ifrc.org](mailto:igor.dmitryuk@ifrc.org), mobile: +60 12 212 2407, fax: +60 3 2168 8573.
- In Geneva: Asia Pacific department, Ms. Christine South (Operations coordinator), email: [christine.south@ifrc.org](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org), phone: +41.22.730.4529, fax: +41.22.733.0395

**[<The donor response report is being updated and will be made available shortly; click here to return to the title page>](#)**