

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Papua New Guinea: Cyclone Guba

Emergency appeal n° MDRPG002
GLIDE n° [FL-2007-00209-PNG](#)
Operations update n° 1
5 December 2007

Period covered by this Operations Update:
26 November to 4 December 2007

Appeal target: CHF 740,642 (USD 672,146 or EUR 452,390) in cash, kind or services [<click here for Emergency Appeal>](#).

Appeal coverage: 19%; [<click here to go directly to the updated donor response report, or here to link to contact details >](#)

Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on 26 November 2007 for CHF 740,642 (USD 672,146 or EUR 452,390) for 3 months to assist 13,000 beneficiaries.
- **Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF):** CHF 25,000 (USD 22,400 or EUR 15,260) was initially allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the national society to respond.

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months and completed by mid-February 2008. In line with Federation reporting standards, a Final Report will be made available by mid-May 2008 (three months after the end of the operation).

Summary: Access to the province of Oro remains difficult since the floods that were brought on by Cyclone Guba. More than 70 bridges and culverts were washed away, leaving Oro's provincial capital, Popondetta and many other towns and villages stranded. Media reports put the death toll at 172, with the number of affected people being scaled up to an estimated 64,000, or 40 per cent of the population in the province. Up to 13,000 people have been left homeless.

Due to limited access to the affected areas in the early days of the disaster, a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, have combined efforts to coordinate and transport aid to Popondetta. Assessments have continued alongside distributions of water, water containers, tarpaulins and kitchen sets.

Over 100 PNGRCS volunteers and staff have been involved from the start of the operation, assisting in packing and distribution as well as assessments carried out. The volunteers will continue to be deployed for the relief operation, in even greater numbers.

The Red Cross Red Crescent operation is supported by AusAID, NZAID, the British High Commission, and the national societies of Australia, New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates.

Since the launch of the Appeal, international response has been positive. However, more aid is urgently



Relief supplies from the PNGRCS warehouse in Port Moresby being dispatched to the province of Oro.

needed, particularly unearmarked cash contributions to enable the operation to respond effectively to the needs on the ground. There is a donor contribution list attached which shows contributions for which we have received pledge management notes. However, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have contributed or pledged to this appeal. Including those pledges which are currently indicated but not confirmed in writing, we would hope to reach 68 per cent coverage.

The situation

In mid-November, severe flooding inundated the provinces of Oro and Milne Bay as a result of heavy rains brought on by Cyclone Guba. Access to the province of Oro was only possible by boat and helicopter, as roads leading to the airport and Oro Bay were damaged or destroyed. More than 70 bridges and culverts were washed away, leaving Oro's provincial capital, Popondetta and many other towns and villages stranded. Media reports put the death toll at 172, with the number of affected people being scaled up to an estimated 64,000, or 40 per cent of the population in the province. Up to 13,000 people have been left homeless, and in Popondetta, it has been reported that an estimated 200 people are staying in tents near the hospital.



Some villages collected food and non-food items to give to neighbours in need.

Crops and small vegetable gardens have been destroyed, and the Popondetta water supply was severely damaged. Heavy rainfall on November 27 further affected the remaining water plant by the river, and the partial restoration of the Popondetta water supply is only possible by the end of December. The Water Board has been unable to give an analysis of either the problems faced or a realistic timeline for full resumption of drinking water supplies to the town. The hospital's director indicated that the shortage of potable water might force a reduction in hospital services or even the closure of some wards. Currently, there are an estimated 150 patients and 40 staff living on-site. The estimated 200 displaced people living in two camps near the hospital boundary also lack drinking water.

The State of Emergency declared in the province over a week ago has been extended for another two months, and obtaining reliable, up-to-date data on needs and relief distribution remains a challenge. Assessments have been made that much more difficult by the damaged roads and communications systems.

Furthermore, the acting Secretary General of the Papua New Guinea Red Cross (PNGRCS) passed away suddenly on 22 November. At the time, the chairman of the national society was attending international meetings in Geneva. Recently, a replacement acting Secretary General has been appointed.

Coordination and partnerships

The PNGRCS led the relief response with the support of the Federation and several partner national societies, in close coordination with the United Nations disaster management team and the government's national disaster council (NDC). An emergency response coordination centre in Port Moresby was established and includes the Federation, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), relevant government departments, agencies such as Oxfam, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Caritas, the Salvation Army, Rotary, Care International and the NDC. Agencies are assessing other needs such as children's nutrition, provision of clothing, hygiene promotion and disease surveillance.

In Popondetta, AusAID set up a field coordination centre to coordinate stocks through Australian Defence Force transport routes into the disaster areas.

The PNGRCS requested for Federation assistance to support the response operation. The Australian Red Cross (ARC) provided a logistician and a two-person water and sanitation emergency response team, equipped with water purification equipment to meet the critical need for clean water. Delegates will be replaced to ensure continuity of water supply. An ARC finance delegate is due to arrive on 7 December. A French Red Cross (FRC) water and sanitation engineer from Vanuatu visited to make an assessment and a New Zealand Red Cross information/media delegate is working with the team. In addition, other Pacific national societies have offered staff to support the operation.

The Federation’s regional disaster coordinator is in Papua New Guinea to coordinate response with assistance from the Federation Zone office and the Asia Pacific disaster management unit in Kuala Lumpur. The Federation’s country and regional delegations are also providing support to the national society in coordination and relief activities.



Volunteers unload relief items such as rice and tarpaulins from an Australian Defence Force Black Hawk helicopter at Saiho Village, near Popondetta.

From 25 November to 4 December the relief effort was in full swing, coordinated by AusAID and transported by Australian Defence Force (ADF) Hercules, Caribou, Black Hawk aircraft, and two AusAID-chartered helicopters. The ADF withdrew on 4 December, effectively ending the main emergency relief phase of the operation. Other transport options for goods and people are being pursued. However, fuel, vehicles/aircraft and experienced operators are in short supply. The government of Papua New Guinea has yet to propose viable transport options.

Currently, road transport between Popondetta and its airstrip (Girua) and beach landing is possible, but could close again if there is heavy rainfall. Oro Bay port is expected to open on Friday, with the road passable for four-wheel drive traffic.

With the withdrawal of the ADF, main transport options are coastal. Currently, the Red Cross Red Crescent and other agencies are shipping goods to river mouths for distribution to dinghies, which take goods upriver. In many cases, volunteers provide assistance in loading and unloading relief items. However, communities away from rivers, or where rivers are not navigable, cannot be reached.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

PNGRCS, with support from the Federation, has conducted rapid assessments in Oro Province, using an agreed two-page United Nations assessment form. Main priorities identified were food, water and shelter. Crops and vegetable gardens were destroyed, a number of water systems were damaged, and the river water is still contaminated more than two weeks after the floods. The restoration of Popondetta’s water supply is estimated to take up to six months. In addition, thousands of homes were devastated as well.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)	
Objective: Ensure basic non-food items are distributed to the displaced population in Popondetta	
Expected results	Activities planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiary selection strategy and registration system is developed. Rapid assessments prior to distribution of basic non-food items are conducted. Relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to selected beneficiaries are distributed. Relief activities and reporting on relief distributions are monitored. Transition strategy for operations is developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PNGRCS staff and volunteers will conduct relief operations for emergency needs and complete capacity assessments, with support from the Federation. A logistics hub will be established in Port Moresby, utilizing the existing warehouse. A possible alternative supply/storage warehouse is available in Lae, which is closer to beneficiaries and can be supported by a nearby PNGRCS branch, allowing for better shipping connections. ARC/FRC staff will assist the PNGRCS in these activities. In addition, the PNGRCS has two FACT-trained volunteers, and both are ready to be deployed as needed.

Progress:

The PNGRCS, with the assistance of the Federation and partner national societies, mobilized resources and aid immediately. It sent 1,700 tarpaulins, 750 collapsible jerry cans and 42 nylon ropes by a commercial shipping line to Oro Bay Port (Gona) for distribution by dinghy. In addition, the PNGRCS has contributed 1,040 tarpaulins and 2292 collapsible jerry cans to the pooled stocks.

On 1 December, a New Zealand Air Force Hercules landed in Girua with 500 blankets, 1,200 tarpaulins, 1,500 water containers and two generators donated by the New Zealand government and the New Zealand Red Cross. Volunteers in Popondetta also prepared dozens of kitchen sets with pots, water containers and enamel plates ready for distribution.

The ADF delivered the abovementioned relief supplies to forward operating bases (Tufi, Ikokama, Kokoda and Girua) for further distribution to communities in need. Red Cross Red Crescent relief items were part of a coordinated effort to maximize the use of ADF transport resources. So far, AusAID and ADF have not reported where each load of relief has been sent. However, items were distributed on the basis of need, as indicated by ongoing assessments. Village disaster committees distributed supplies among residents according to criteria such as loss of housing, number of children in a family, etc.

By the end of 28 November (the latest complete figures received from AusAID), the following total of relief (including Red Cross Red Crescent contributions) was positioned in forward operating bases or distributed directly to needy villages:

- 20,320 collapsible water containers,
- 8,244 litres of water,
- 220 tonnes of rice,
- 2,652 tarpaulins,
- 4,010 blankets,
- 1,458 aquatabs
- 2016 bottles of cooking oil,
- 870 tins of meat,
- 6,528 tins of tuna, and
- 800kg of medical stores and 14 aid post kits.



Water containers filled with treated water, ready for dispatch to the hospital in Popondetta, Oro.

Distribution figures are expected to rise significantly for the final days of the ADF presence. AusAID had hoped to return to communities to deliver a second round of relief. However, the need was under-estimated, so focus of distributions remained on communities who had not received aid. This relief will ensure people have at least some food and shelter stocks for their immediate needs, and the capacity to collect water.

Challenges:

- AusAID asked for a Red Cross Red Crescent presence on each assessment mission but this has not always been possible due to the lack of trained PNGRCS personnel as well as restricted space on aircraft or security (each mission requires at least one security officer from the PNG police or defence forces).
- With the withdrawal of ADF transport on 4 December, the main challenge will be transporting any remaining relief goods to the field.
- From 15 December to 15 January, many businesses and other operations shut down, making transport more difficult.
- Not all PNGRCS assessments were carried out using the agreed UN two-page form, which presented difficulties in collating the information gathered by different agencies.

Water and sanitation	
Objective: Ensure that clean potable drinking water is available to displaced target populations in Popondetta.	
Expected results	Activities planned
Water and sanitation team from ARC with FRC support are mobilized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an assessment of the situation. • Develop an implementation plan. • Mobilize mass water distribution for camps in Popondetta.

Two ARC water engineers who have a Nomad portable water purification unit, 20,000 litres of water storage bladders, distribution taps and water carrying containers, examined existing water flows in the river and discussed options with the Water Board, fire service and hospital. After developing a plan to pump water 180 metres from the river uphill to Popondetta hospital, and the engineers, PNGRCS staff and volunteers consulted with residents on digging a trench through their village. Residents approved the plan and offered their help. Ministry of Works heavy machinery dug a pool to form dam in the river to provide the cleanest possible water source for the system. Teams of volunteers dug the trench, and a two-inch pipe was laid.

More than 15,000 litres of water was pumped and purified on the 2 December for the hospital, displaced people and general residents. Hospital staff have been offered to the team to provide security and technical assistance. The team has increased production to 30,000 litres a day, and have provided two tap stands: one to be used by the hospital and the other to be accessed by the displaced population and general community. The team is also providing water to the local prison which has approximately 100 prisoners. Before setting up this permanent source, the team used water carried by the local fire brigade and purified this before transporting it to the hospital and prison.

The next steps will be to consider what supply of water is realistic for Popondetta while the normal water system is being repaired, and what assistance should be given to other communities in Oro Province. The unit is expected to be deployed for a month, subject to review.

Challenges:

The Nomad emergency water purification units were held up in transit by a transport company for nearly a week, despite being sent as overnight delivery from ARC, which delayed the setting up of the system. Also, heavy rainfall could alter the flow of the river or damage the makeshift dam, putting the system at risk.

Currently, the water purification system is using more filters than expected and additional supplies have been ordered from Australia. Finding fuel to power the generator and pumps could also be a challenge in the near future, with fuel supplies in Papua New Guinea running low.

Emergency shelter	
Objective: Ensure emergency shelter is provided to targeted affected rural populations.	
Expected results	Activities planned
Three thousand cyclone-affected families in Oro province have access to emergency shelter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize relief activities. • Establish distribution and set up for 3,000 emergency shelter kits. • Assess affected rural communities and identify most vulnerable rural populations within impact zones. • Prioritize rural families requiring non-food items' distribution. • Transport commodities and prepare distributions.

Funding available has been earmarked for emergency relief only. As a result, the only action towards reaching this objective is likely to be providing tarpaulins. Furthermore, shelter materials are running low in the country. Consideration also has to be taken that interventions should avoid encouraging permanent or semi-permanent settlements of displaced people. This issue will be addressed in future updates.

Capacity building	
Objective: Recruit, equip, train and manage PNGRCS volunteers and staff to ensure effective disaster management system with volunteer/staff retention.	
Expected results	Activities planned

PNGRCS branch in Popondetta established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish volunteer registration process, and training initiatives to maintain an estimated 20 or more volunteers for relief distribution, volunteers from Lae and other branches.• Ensure PNGRCS staff, volunteers and facilities are fully equipped to provide emergency services within this plan of action.• Establish rapid training programmes for PNGRCS volunteers response objectives.• Ensure coordinated and comprehensive PNGRCS disaster management capacity.• Set-up Oro PNGRCS branch if possible, using locally recruited volunteers as base.• Utilize and deploy experienced staff from other Pacific national societies, in particular from Solomon Islands Red Cross, based on recent tsunami experience.
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Progress:

Under the guidance of an experienced and FACT-trained PNGRCS disaster manager and a youth worker, more than 130 volunteers in Popondetta have been recruited and registered. They were given rapid orientation on Red Cross Red Crescent Principles and assigned to teams, who helped with damage assessments. Other activities include loading and unloading a barge at Gona beach, preparing kitchen sets with pots, plates and jerrycans and assisting the water and sanitation team in producing safe drinking water. Volunteers are also assisting other agencies in activities such as loading and unloading relief goods.

On 1 December, the PNGRCS sent a finance officer to Popondetta, to join a FACT-trained volunteer who had arrived on 26 November. A second FACT-trained volunteer joined the operation on 3 December. A branch is in the process of being set up in Popondetta.

Logistics

The PNGRCS manages a warehouse in Port Moresby which has been used as a staging/preparation centre prior to despatch to Popondetta. A similar centre will be set up in Lae if required. In Popondetta, a logistics hub was set up by the PNGRCS in Oro Bay Port, with assistance from the logistician included in the water and sanitation emergency team. Local procurement in both Lae and Port Moresby will be done by PNGRCS as required.

The Federation's regional logistics unit (RLU) in Kuala Lumpur will provide additional technical support, if required. Currently, contact has been established between PNGRCS and the RLU. If requested, the mobilization table will be prepared and published on the disaster management information system (DMIS), with the mobilization process coordinated through the RLU.

Since 25 November, the Australian Defence Force aircraft have flown more than 350 tonnes of pooled relief items from Port Moresby by two Hercules transports to Girua airport near Popondetta. Girua is used as a central storage centre. From here, supplies are ferried by three Caribou aircraft or helicopters (two Black Hawke, two commercial choppers) to smaller grass airfields in the area, including forward bases (Tufi, Itokama and Kokoda) for further distribution to villages.

In addition, Ela Motors, a Port Moresby Toyota dealer, has donated two canoes and 25hp outboard motors to the PNGRCS to assist in distributions. Also, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has lent a Toyota Land Cruiser for use in Popondetta. It will be shipped from Port Moresby on 5 December.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Television coverage on Red Cross Red Crescent relief has been received from Television New Zealand a PNG item with an Federation interview aired on all news bulletins on 3 December and is posted on www.tvnz.co.nz, Radio 531 PI, Radio Niu FM, Radio New Zealand International, Radio New Zealand's Checkpoint news programme etc.

In addition, three web stories on damage, relief and water support have been produced for the [Federation's website](#) and partner national societies. Furthermore, partner national societies' communication teams have been consistently updated on operational developments.

The PNGRCS has also received some media coverage within Papua New Guinea, and it has the ability to gain a lot more coverage. The late acting secretary general was the main focal point for PNG media, and this role has not been taken up by his replacement so far. However, it has been made clear that opportunities for public visibility must be balanced against the need to avoid raising expectations unrealistically.

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:

- In Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society: Mr Jeffery Philip (acting Secretary General), email: jphivpng@online.net.pg, phone +675 325 2145.
- Country delegation in Papua New Guinea: Ms. Ene-mai Oks (Head of delegation), email: enemai.oks@ifrc.org, phone: +679 331 1855.
- Pacific regional delegation in Suva, Fiji: Mr. Frank Kennedy (Head of regional delegation), email: frank.kennedy@ifrc.org, phone: +91 11 2411 1122, fax: +91 11 2411 1128; Mr. Martin Blackgrove, phone: +679 999 2487.
- Asia Pacific Zone office in Malaysia: Disaster management unit: Mr. Latifur Rahman (Regional disaster management delegate), email: latifur.rahman@ifrc.org; phone: + 60 3 2161 0892, mobile; +60 12 975 0144; Regional logistics unit: Mr. Ilir Caushaj (Regional logistics coordinator), ilir.caushaj@ifrc.org, mobile: +60 12 628 2707, fax: +60 3 2168 8573, or Mr. Jeremy Francis (Regional logistics delegate), jeremy.francis@ifrc.org, mobile: +60 12 298 9752, fax: +60 3 2168 8573.
- In Geneva: Asia Pacific department, Ms. Christine South (Operations coordinator), email: christine.south@ifrc.org, phone: +41.22.730.4529, fax: +41.22.733.0395.

[<Donor contributions' list attached below; click here to return to the title page>](#)

Donor response to MDRPG002 - Papua New Guinea - Cyclone Guba

TIMEFRAME: 19 Nov 07 to 19 Feb 08

LOCATION: Papua New Guinea

TOTAL AMOUNT SOUGHT:	740,642
TOTAL RECEIVED TO DATE:	143,234
APPEAL COVERAGE TO DATE:	19%

Updated on: 05 Dec 2007

Currency	Amount	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	Total
		CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF	CHF
BUDGET							740,642
FUNDING							
Opening Balance							
Income							
Cash contributions (received and pledged)							
Australian Red Cross (from Australian Government)	AUD	20,000		19,840			19,840
New Zealand Government	NZD	100,000		86,400			86,400
New Zealand Red Cross	NZD	10,000		8,640			8,640
United Arab Emirates Red Crescent	USD	3,000		3,354			3,354
Total Cash contributions				118,234			118,234
Other Income							
DREF Allocations	CHF	25,000		25,000			25,000
Total Other Income				25,000			25,000
Total Income				143,234			143,234
TOTAL FUNDING			0	143,234	0	0	143,234
COVERAGE							19%