

INFORMATION 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

CHINA FLOODS

13 July 2001

Information Bulletin N° 1/01

This Information Bulletin is

- being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Appeal.

The Situation

Torrential rains of up to 417 cms., brought on by two recent typhoons (Durina and Utor), 2 to 4 July and 6 to 8 July respectively, have triggered extensive flooding in the southern Chinese provinces/regions of Guangdong and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The flooding has deprived farmers of their summer rice harvest which was expected in two weeks time and, unless it recedes quickly, will jeopardize the replanting of the second rice crop.

Following the return of a recent assessment mission carried out by the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) to the worst affected areas of the Guangxi Autonomous Region, an initial picture of the effects of the flooding is emerging. While flooding in the neighbouring province of Guangdong is also severe, that province is economically much better equipped to cope with the situation; the RCSC has therefore opted to focus this report on the far poorer and underdeveloped Autonomous Region of Guangxi.

Reports from the local Red Cross branch confirm that, given the scale of the flooding, the disaster statistics below are provisional: figures are likely to rise as more information comes in from Red Cross and Government assessment teams.

- Seven out of 14 prefectures in the region have been affected
- total population affected: 12.6 million
- people killed: 16
- sick and injured: 18,900
- people stranded by water: 418,000
- people transferred to safer places: 315,000
- rooms seriously damaged: 441,000
- rooms collapsed: 85,900

- crops affected: 697,000 hectares
- total crops lost: 231,000 hectares
- estimated total economic losses: RMB 15.9 billion.

Flood waters, though still high and above danger level, have started to recede slightly in the major rivers running through the affected areas. However, the reinforcement of river banks/dikes is still in full swing. As the summer school vacation has started, schools and other facilities are being used to accommodate the homeless. Some people are staying with their relatives or friends in safer areas while others are living in simple shelters put up on higher ground. As water sources have been contaminated, most of those affected have no access to clean water which may pose a potential threat to their health. Cases of diarrhoea, fever, 'flu and skin affections have been reported.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The national headquarters of the Red Cross Society of China sent an assessment team 9-11 July to Guangxi to evaluate the overall disaster situation and discuss relief plans with the local branch. In the meantime, it released 100 tents from its regional disaster preparedness centre in Shaanxi province and allocated a total of RMB 100,000 to procure medicines and rice. A working meeting was called on 12 July to further coordinate relief efforts for the autonomous region. According to the assessment team, the most urgent needs are food, clean drinking water, medicaments, clothing and quilts. Shelter needs of people displaced by the flooding have to a large extent been met by the local government

Following the flooding, the Guangxi Red Cross branch dispatched fact-finding working groups to the various affected prefectures. Thirteen medical and disease prevention teams have been organized by the Red Cross in cooperation with the local medical department to serve in the affected areas. RMB 200,000 (approximately US\$ 24,000) worth of medicines has been distributed and another RMB 600,000 (approximately US\$ 72,000) worth of medicines, clothing and quilts have been readied for distribution.

Government Action

The central government has held several meetings to coordinate relief activities getting under way in Guangxi Autonomous Region. Working groups from various government departments have been dispatched to the affected areas to assess the situation and coordinate ongoing flood control and relief activities. The full amount of financial support from the central government is expected to be announced shortly. Local government has been organizing extensive flood prevention and relief operations, including reinforcement of river dikes and distribution of the most urgent relief items, such as food, clothing, clean drinking water, the provision of medical care and shelter. The army has been brought into action mainly for river bank reinforcement and the transfer of victims to safer places.

Current Needs

Although the RCSC does not foresee applying for international assistance through the Federation's appeal process at this stage, the RCSC and the Federation's East Asia Regional Office will continue to monitor the situation closely over the coming weeks. The RCSC will circulate its own Information Bulletins to its Provincial Branches (including the Hong Kong and Macau Red Cross branches), to ensure that they are kept full informed of the situation.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact :

— *The Red Cross Society of China in Beijing ; Phone (86) 65135933 ; Fax 65124159; email rcsc.chineseredcross.org.cn*

- *Jim Robertson, Regional Relief Delegate Federation East Asia Regional Office, Phone (86) 65327162 ext 12, email ifrcen02@ifrc.org*
- *Aurelia Balpe, Phone 4122 730 4352; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email balpe@ifrc.org*

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head, a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Head
Asia and Pacific Department