

# 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

## ***RUSSIAN FEDERATION: FLOODS IN EASTERN SIBERIA***

23 May 2001

*Information Bulletin N° 2*

*DREF Allocated: CHF 50,000*

*This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 50,000 has been released, and the Federation is preparing an international appeal which will be launched shortly.*

### ***The Situation***

Since 13 May 2001, settlements in the Irkutsk and Yakutia regions of eastern Siberia have been inundated by the flooding Lena River. Eight people have died, two remain missing, and over 45,000 people have been evacuated or provided with some emergency assistance or temporary accommodation. Authorities declared a state of emergency, and round the clock rescue and assistance efforts are underway by the Disasters Centre and Ministry of Emergencies (EMERCOM), assisted by the zonal Red Cross committee.

In the city of Yakutsk (population 195,000), the so-called "Lensk wave" is expected to hit the city today (Wednesday, 23 May), threatening the northern and central parts of the city where 60,000 people live. Schools and kindergartens in the capital are already closed, and 35 evacuation points set up in the city are prepared to accept 30,000 citizens. Some houses are already submerged in the areas of the city which commonly experience flooding, and motor and inflatable boats are collecting people from rooftops and trees. By 21 May over 4,000 people, primarily women and children, had been evacuated to higher ground in Yakutsk.

According to the official meteorological forecasts, the emergency situation is expected to continue until the end of the week, keeping the cities of Kirensk (population 17,000), Ust-Kut (population 57,000), Olekminsk, Yakutsk and the neighbouring villages under water. In the city of Ust-Kut, 65 houses remain submerged, petroleum storage facilities are flooded, 8 electric transformers are shut down, 12 kms of underground cable have been uprooted, and 18 kms of suspended electric lines are down. In the city of Kirinsk, 838 houses are still completely under water, 47 electric transformers are destroyed, 88 kms of suspended electric lines are down, and 2.7 km of underground cable are uprooted. Water wells are flooded and contaminated, and potable drinking water is being transported to the area in barrels.

The local Yakutian government anticipates that in the four months before winter returns only 500 of the 3,000 houses destroyed by the floods will be able to be rebuilt, and they are therefore seeking federal and international support.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

In Yakutia over 20 tons of humanitarian aid, including food, medicines, hygiene kits, blankets and pillows, have been delivered by the Russian Red Cross (RRC) on EMERCOM helicopters to villages along the Lena and its tributaries. These supplies had been purchased prior to the floods and were stored in government emergency warehouses. In the village of Teply Kluch, the Red Cross-equipped evacuation centre is accommodating 100 people and will supply food for 10 days.

A clothing drive was organised by the local Red Cross branch and volunteers, in coordination with the social protection department. The Red Cross in Mirny town has also collected about 2 tons of clothes.

With temperatures still plunging below zero at night, shelter, food, warm clothes and blankets are particularly important, as is potable water. The Yakutia Red Cross considers remote settlements that have been cut off from regional centres to be a particular priority and focus for Red Cross assistance over the next few months.

Actual quantities of needs (medicines, potable water, food, bed linen/blankets, clothes) are being assessed by the RRC and its partners, and will form the basis of the appeal which is now being finalized. In addition to the CHF 50,000 allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), two sister Red Cross national societies have already responded with generous cash contributions to support the RRC operations.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

*For further details please contact :*

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*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.*

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