

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

VIETNAM: FLOODS

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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

The first significant storms of the year have brought torrential rainfall in seven of Vietnam's northern provinces causing flash floods and landslides. Typhoon *Durian* hit the northern province of Quang Ninh on 2 July and was followed by heavy rainfall further affecting the provinces of Thai Nguyen, Tuyen Quang, Vinh Phu, Bac Can, Ha Giang and Yen Bai.

According to the government of Vietnam, as of 6 July at least 30 people were killed and three others were reported missing. Hundreds of families were evacuated by the provincial authorities. The military provided personnel and amphibious vehicles for the operation.

In most of the provinces, an estimated 80 per cent of the area was partially flooded and reports indicate that thousands of people will continue to be in considerable danger should the flood levels rise. In Thai Nguyen at least 5,000 houses were flooded and in Tuyen Quang 3,700 houses were submerged. Agriculture production was disrupted with thousands of hectares of newly planted rice and other crops flooded or washed away.

Communication with the region was also affected with considerable damage to the north/south arterial routes (Highway No. 1 and Highway No. 3). This resulted in lengthy road closure while urgent repairs and protective measures are carried out. This caused particular difficulties for tens of thousands of students scheduled to take their university entrance examinations. Additionally, dykes in Vinh Phuc province were broken and small bridges washed away.

Floodwater levels of the Lo river (the main river of the Red river system in the area), have risen to 2.6 metres above the Alarm Level III (Emergency Flood Condition) in Ha Giang and Tuyen Quang provinces. On the Thai Binh river system (the other major river system affected) water levels are also above Alarm Level III. The Hydro-Meteorological Forecast Centre said that the Thai Binh water level in the upper sections is receding but the forecast is that downstream levels will continue to rise.

The Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CFSC) in the affected provinces instructed the military, police and other agencies/organizations to 'fight against the flood'. Provincial authorities deployed almost 1,000 soldiers to work with the local residents to build protective bunds, move families to safer ground and distribute life-bouys.

The national search and rescue committee asked local authorities to carefully monitor the situation and to search for missing persons.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated situation in the south of the country, government officials and the Red Cross are monitoring the rising water levels in the Mekong delta. The floodwater levels are rising rapidly and are already above Alarm Level II in places.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Red Cross at different levels mobilized staff, shock brigade members and volunteers to help the affected people. Families are receiving support to make initial repairs to their homes, while others are being assisted to evacuate to safe areas.

Some emergency relief items, such as instant noodles, bread, clothes, plastic sheets, raincoats, water purification tablets and basic medicine were already distributed to families in the worst affected areas. In Quang Ninh province the Red Cross is helping displaced people return to their homes and is assisting in the repair of the most damaged houses. In the province of Tuyen Quang, the Red Cross staff working on the relief distribution will soon be joined by colleagues who are currently undergoing training in river rescue organized by the national society in Hue.

On 5 July, the Red Cross of Viet Nam released approximately USD 9,000 to the three provinces for the immediate procurement of relief items for affected families and to enable the Red Cross staff and volunteers to reach the worst hit areas.

On 7 July, a multi-disciplinary Red Cross team, made up of staff from the Federation's delegation and the Red Cross of Viet Nam, will carry out an assessment of the affected area.

As regular reports still continue to be received by the provincial Red Cross chapters, a more detailed plan of action is under discussion. A decision on the type, and scale of, wider Federation support will depend on information received in the coming hours.

For a full description of the national society's profile, see www.ifrc.org

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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 web site at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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

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