

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

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This Information Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

The State Media reported that as of 11 June floods in Central and Western China left at least 38 people dead and over one hundred missing. Independently, the BBC reported today at least 150 people dead and another 400 missing in Shaanxi province; 27 people dead and 15 missing in Sichuan province, including 14 in the worst-hit city, Suining; and two people killed and four injured in Gansu province. In Xinjiang rains have destroyed homes and large areas of cropland.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Red Cross Society of China is working hard to gather more precise information about the situation through provincial Red Cross branches in the affected provinces. Local media and Red Cross Branches report that transportation and communications have been badly affected.

The Vice President of the Red Cross Society of China met with the Head of the Federation's Regional Office in Beijing to discuss the situation and the potential role of the Federation. In the meeting, he notified the Red Cross Society of China that the Federation is prepared to launch an international appeal if requested.

Meanwhile on Saturday 15 June, representatives of the Red Cross Society of China, the Federation's regional disaster preparedness and disaster response delegate and representatives from the US Embassy, will travel to Xinjiang Province in North West China, to follow up a USD 50,000 USAID donation to flood affected communities in that province.

Previous Flood Operations - 1998 and 1999

In 1999, some 2 million people were made homeless by massive flooding. The Federation, on behalf of the Red Cross Society of China, was the only international relief agency to launch an appeal during that year, seeking US 6.5 million to assist flood affected victims. More than two hundred villages in four provinces - Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi and Anhui - were targeted, and the Red Cross Society of China committed itself to provide food for 250,000 people for more than four months, as well as to improve water and sanitation conditions for over one million people.

Continuous rainfall between March and August 1998, the highest in over 40 years, caused flooding throughout the Yangtze River basin, as well as along the Songhuajiang and Nenjiang Rivers. The floods affected a total of 29

Provinces along the banks of these three major rivers. It was estimated that a total of 223 million people were affected. Around 15.85 million were forced to evacuate their homes to seek temporary shelter in safer areas.

The Appeal, initially sought to provide the Red Cross Society of China with critical relief items that included food, medicines, sanitation materials and water purification tablets for 270,000 families (one million people) for a period of three months. Further flooding in September 1998, this time in the north- eastern part of China, required a revision of the 1998 Appeal to cover these newly affected areas. On 2 September, the Appeal was revised to provide additional relief supplies for the flood victims as well as basic emergency shelter and winter clothing and quilts to help the most vulnerable to survive the winter. The number of beneficiaries in the revised Appeal was increased to two million.

Federation Regional Office in Beijing

A status agreement paving the way for the establishment of the Federation Regional Office was signed between the Federation and the Government of China in October 1999. In addition to direct programme support to the Red Cross Society China, the Regional Office provides services and assistance to the participating national societies conducting programmes through bilateral cooperation in China.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see 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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