

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 June 2002

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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

Some 36 million people in central and western China are affected by severe flooding which has left 205 people dead and some 300 people missing. The Chinese Red Cross Society is working in cooperation with government agencies to provide assistance to those injured and who lost their homes as a result of the disaster.

Heavy rains during severe storms are causing river banks to break creating deadly landslides. The China Daily today stated that according to the State Flood-Control and Drought Prevention Headquarters, of the 205 reported deaths, 152 were reported to have occurred in the Shaanxi province.

Thousands of people have been left homeless in Shanxii, the worst-hit province, but also in Ningxia Hui and Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions, Gansu, Sichuan, Chongqing, Hubei and Guizhou. Some local officials are describing this situation as the worst flooding in the past century.

The worst areas in Shaanxi and Sichuan have not been affected by floods in recent years, in fact drought has been the prevalent concern. This may explain the high death and missing toll over a short period for a population which after years of coping with a drought had almost no warning and little preparedness to cope with extensive flooding.

So far the Yellow and Yangtze rivers, China's most flood-prone rivers have not been affected.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and Ministry of Finance have released 8 million yuan from the emergency relief fund to respond to the disaster. The Government has provided 1,100 tents to affected households in Shanxii and Sichuan.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

According to the Deputy Director of the Red Cross Society of China Relief and Health Departments, the Shanxii provincial Red Cross have already purchased, and are distributing, 100,000 yuan of relief items. The provincial branch is fundraising locally in order to provide support to as many of the 30 counties affected as possible. The most urgently needed items are food and clothing.

The Red Cross Society of China headquarters in Beijing had transferred 50,000 yuan to Shanxii Red Cross for the additional purchase of relief items and tents. In the same province, the local Red Cross has helped to form ten medical teams to provide assistance to 900 injured persons.

In Sichuan, the Red Cross Society of China has provided 100,000 yuan for the purchase of relief items.

The planned Red Cross assessment mission to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has been redirected to Shanxii province, where most of the deaths, as well as damage to housing and public infrastructure, has been reported. The Red Cross Society of China Head of Relief, two Hong Kong Red Cross staff members and the Federation Regional disaster preparedness/response delegate will travel to Shanxii tomorrow morning (14 June).

Last week, 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, the Federation representative notified the Red Cross Society of China that the Federation is prepared to launch an international appeal if requested.

The Red Cross Society of China successfully responded to the needs of those people affected by treacherous floods in 1998 and 1999 in partnership with the International Federation. This experience and lessons learned will prove valuable in taking action in response to the current flooding.

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

For further details please contact :

- *The Red Cross Society of China Beijing ; Phone 86 10 651 24 47; Fax 86 10 651 24 169; email hq@chineseredcross.org.ac.cn*
- *Aurélia G.J. Balpe, Phone 41 22 730 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.

John Horekens
Head
Relationship Management Department

Simon Missiri
Head a.i.
Asia & Pacific Department