

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

21 August, 2002

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This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. The Federation is already supporting the China Red Cross Society (CRCS) through Emergency Appeal no. 16/02. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, and depending on the evolving situation, the Federation will consider issuing a revised budget through an Operations Update to be issued shortly.

The Situation

Since the beginning of August, China's central Hunan Province has been repeatedly hit by flash floods and mudslides, leaving more than 200 deaths and thousands homeless. A State of Emergency was declared today (21 August) by the authorities in Hunan Province while the water level of Dongting Lake, the second largest fresh water lake in China, continues to rise (Dongting Lake acts as a giant overflow for the flood prone Yangtze River). According to national media reports, the level of the lake is slightly above 33.2 meters or 1.2 meters above the flood warning mark. Despite this serious situation, according to the Red Cross of China the actual level remains however 1.5 metres below the level of 1998 when the Yangtze and the Dongting broke their banks, causing a major disaster and the death of 4,000 people.

Previously in June unexpected heavy rainfalls had also affected millions of people in Hunan Province, and more than 50 died. While the flash floods and mudslides in late June, the beginning of July, and in mid-August have affected the central and the southern part of the province, the area which is currently threatened is situated in the north of the province. According to 1999 data, the total population of the province is over 65 million. Weather forecasts indicate that more rainfall is expected over the next several days. To respond to the immediate needs, the Government of China has mobilized thousands of people who are working around the clock to reinforce the thousands of kilometres of embankments

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

The RCSC has responded to these repeated disasters by releasing emergency stocks and sending joint Red Cross/Public Health Teams to the affected sites. The Federation launched Emergency Appeal no. 16/2002 (Flash Floods) in June, targeting eight of the most affected provinces, one of which is Hunan. The assistance consisting of tents and water purification powder has already been dispatched to the province, while the distribution of quilts is underway. In addition to this assistance, there is a critical need to replenish the RCSC's emergency contingency stocks emptied after the June disaster.

For a full description of the National Society 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 website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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

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