

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 information and needs described below. The Federation is already supporting the China Red Cross Society (CRCS) in the affected area through Emergency Appeal no. 16/02, and donors are encouraged to contribute to support the objectives of this appeal. 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 southern/central Hunan Province has been repeatedly hit by flash floods and mudslides, leaving more than 200 dead and thousands homeless. A State of Emergency was declared on 21 August by the authorities in Hunan Province in response to the rise of Dongting Lake which is the second largest fresh water lake in the world and acts as a giant overflow for the flood prone Yangtze River. The heavily populated lake basin is one of China's leading rice-producing regions

Thousands of people and some 6,000 troops are working around the clock trying to reinforce the embankments of the lake which has now reached a level of 33.55 meters, or 1.55 meters above the flood warning mark. Even though the area around Dongting Lake has not experienced additional rainfall in the course of today (22 August), waters of the Xiang River emptying into the lake have flooded several lower districts of the provincial capital of Changsha. The lake is likely to reach the critical level of 34.6 meters on Saturday, 24, August. Authorities have been evacuating several urban and rural areas around the lake, but if it does overflow waters surging down the Yangtze River could threaten the neighboring Hubei Province and its capital, Wunan.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

The Red Cross Society of China has responded to these repeated disasters by releasing emergency stocks and sending joint Red Cross/Public Health Teams to the affected sites. An information and a field delegate have arrived in the Hunan capital. The RCSC and the Federation relief team in Beijing are in the process of updating contingency plans in connection with Emergency Appeal no. 16/2002 (Flash Floods) launched in June which targets eight of the most affected provinces, one of which is Hunan. Assistance in the form of tents and water purification tablets/powder has already been dispatched to the province. The need to replenish the RCSC's emergency contingency stocks remains critical.

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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