

# 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 the evolving situation the Federation and the Vietnam Red Cross Society (VNRC) do not anticipate any further request for support at this time.*

### **The Situation**

Although the impact from the torrential rains and floods was the cause for considerable concern a week ago, the situation has improved in most parts of the country. The flood water levels in the Mekong, however, are increasing and remain above Alarm Level III (very dangerous flood situation) in some areas of Long An, Dong Thap and An Giang provinces.

The flood water levels in the upper and middle region of the Mekong River basin are receding, although the downstream flood water levels on the Mekong River are increasing and are above the Alarm Level III. On 27 August the water level at the two principal gauging stations (near the Cambodian border) in An Giang province were well above Alarm Level III: at Chau Doc (on the Hau River) water was at 3.95m (Alarm Level III is 3.5 m) while at Tan Chau (on the Tien River) the level was 4.5m, above the Alarm Level III of 4.2m.

Forecasts indicate that water levels will increase over the next few days and then start to decrease. The situation is complex, although with water levels currently receding upstream, the level may peak and then decrease. This complex situation is not uncommon and obviously dependent upon rainfall upstream in Cambodia, Laos and China, water utilization, etc.

Geographically, summarizing the situation from the north to the south of the country:

#### ***Northern provinces***

Seventy people are now reported to have died as a consequence of the floods in the six northern provinces of Bac Can, Lao Cai, Tuyen Quang, Lai Chau, Ha Giang, and Son La, and in the central highland province of Lam Dong. An estimated 17,000 households were affected. Over 1,500 houses were totally destroyed.

#### ***Red River delta provinces***

On the Red River system, the flood water level is receding slowly and is now below Alarm Level I (9.50m) and is forecast to continue to recede to 8.8m (0.70m below Alarm Level I) -- assuming that the Hoa Binh Reservoir two bottom spillway gates remain open as at present. On the Thai Binh River system, the downstream flood water level is also receding and over the weekend (24/25 August was just above Alarm Level II (4.50m). It is also forecast that the river level will continue to recede to below Alarm Level II within a few days.

#### ***Central and Central Highland provinces***

The flood water levels on rivers in the provinces of Thanh Hoa, Thua Thien Hue, Binh Thuan, and the Central Highlands are continuing to fluctuate but are receding slowly to below Alarm Level I.

#### ***Mekong Delta provinces***

In the next few days, the flood water levels of the Cuu Long River (Mekong) are forecast to continue to increase slowly, with the flood water level at the Tan Chau reaching 4.6m (0.40m above Alarm Level III) while the flood water level at the Chau Doc will reach 4.1m just below Alarm Level III. These levels are expected to be maintained for four to five days but by 1 September, the flood water levels at Tan Chau are forecast to decrease to 4.55m and at Chau Doc to 4.05m.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

### ***Northern provinces***

Distribution of 1,200 household kits is currently being undertaken in six provinces. The Red Cross received good coverage in the media, particularly highlighting its involvement with search and rescue activity.

Senior staff of the VNRC are visiting the worst affected provinces of Ha Giang, Tuyen Quang and Bac Can to assess rehabilitation needs, provide further support to Red Cross chapters, and monitor distribution of the household kits.

Lam Dong province received about CHF 3,000 from the VNRC headquarters to locally procure 10 MT of rice. This will be distributed shortly to assist 2,000 people in the two worst affected districts of Cat Tien and Da Te. A senior VNRC staff member is to visit the province later this week.

The Red Cross chapters have been active in raising local contributions and in mobilizing their reserve funds to support relief assistance to affected households. To date approximately CHF 82,000 has been raised by the Red Cross in the provinces of Lai Chau, Ha Giang, Son La and Lam Dong.

The worst affected province, Ha Giang, received a visit from the PM and senior staff from the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) who pledged nearly CHF 1 million to assist with infrastructure repairs and relief assistance to affected households.

### ***Red River delta provinces , Central provinces and Central Highlands***

Over the last week the situation in the provinces in the Red River delta and central areas has improved significantly. During this period the local Red Cross were involved in cleaning up operations and providing assistance to vulnerable households affected by the floods, e.g. with repair of damaged homes.

### ***Mekong delta provinces***

A Red Cross team is currently visiting the worst affected areas of Long An, Dong Thap and An Giang provinces. The team will provide further information on the situation by the end of the week.

The warehouse in Ho Chi Minh City has temporary shelter, comprising 1,000 4m x 10m plastic sheeting, ready for immediate distribution to households evacuated to higher ground. 5,000 household kits are also held as part of the VNRC and Federation Reserve Stock for targeted distribution if and when the need arises.

Over the last week local Red Cross staff and volunteers have been active in the three affected provinces alongside the local authorities in assistance with evacuation and emergency relief provision to households (from local reserves/contributions).

Some of the funding from AusAID for the ongoing disaster preparedness project in 12 Mekong Delta provinces will be utilized over the next several months to procure essential disaster preparedness and response equipment and materials for the Red Cross offices at provincial and district level and for six Disaster Preparedness Centers.

## **Vietnam Red Cross disaster preparedness in Mekong Delta provinces**

### ***An Giang***

Over the last few months reviews of disaster preparedness plans were undertaken at the provincial level and in all districts. All of the districts organized five-day training courses in First Aid/disaster preparedness. Utilizing funds made available from the local authorities, a total of 745 staff/volunteers were trained. First Aid kits/other disaster preparedness/response equipment and materials (e.g. FA kits, life-bouys, life jackets) are also held in

229 FA/rescue stations which are manned by 2,213 Red Cross youth volunteers. The province has two motorboats, some 150 long boats and 140 small boats on standby. There are also commitments in each commune for the utilization, at short notice, of other boats. Each commune has a reserve of 1-2 MT of rice and there is access, through the Red Cross links to the hospitals in the province to a further 2-3 MT of rice per district.

### ***Long An***

Similar disaster preparedness planning was undertaken at the provincial and district level and a list of poor households who might be in need of assistance updated in each district. Disaster preparedness training was completed for 167 Red Cross staff/volunteers. Renewed supplies of medicines, etc. were provided to the provinces 60 FA/rescue stations. Free treatment and medicines were provided to poor households in 4 districts affected by the floods. In cooperation with the military 120 Red Cross volunteers were trained in rescue techniques. The district offices have basic disaster response equipment and each has a 20 member "shock brigade team". There are two FA/rescue stations in each commune.

### ***Dong Thap***

Recently the province organized FA/rescue training for 450 volunteers and has strengthened (following a review) the 370 FA/rescue stations, which boast some 7,400 Red Cross youth volunteers through the provision of more life-jackets and lifebuoys. The province has 7 large long boats. Over the last couple of weeks the Red Cross volunteers were active alongside the military in helping farmers to harvest their crops as the floodwaters rose.

### **Disaster management capacity**

The Regional DP Coordinator returned from a seven day mission to Vietnam. During this period the Coordinator worked with the national society on several key issues: a draft agreement outlining comprehensively the roles and responsibilities of the VNRC in disaster response operations; the internal arrangements for disaster response, both within the national society and the support from the Federation country delegation.

At this stage no further immediate action in response to the situation is envisaged, however, the national society, country delegation, and regional disaster management unit are closely monitoring the situation in the Mekong and also any developing weather systems.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://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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