

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

The Situation

Over the last week the two northern, central provinces of Ha Tinh and Nghe An were hit by floods, flash floods and landslides. The floods in one district of Ha Tinh province, which is not particularly disaster-prone, are reportedly the worst in almost 70 years. About 70 people are confirmed dead and over a hundred more injured in both provinces. While the waters in Ha Tinh are fast receding, much flatter Nghe An province, which borders Lao, is still inundated and heavy rains continue to pound the area.

Ha Tinh province was worst affected, with 80% of communes in Huong Son district submerged and three districts of Huong Khe, Vu Quang and Duc Tho also seriously flooded. Over 50,000 houses were submerged and 667 houses washed away. Over 200 km of road were also damaged along with hundreds of bridges, wooden and concrete. Many school children were unable to go to school as a result of access being cut. The local authorities quickly released 500 metric tonnes (MT) of rice and an additional CHF 400,000 was made available to assist the local authorities in the affected districts.

In Nghe An province, over 10, 000 houses and 20,000 hectares of rice are submerged. The authorities evacuated people from the most high risk areas and provided some immediate relief assistance to the worst affected households. Senior level government staff from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development were rushed to the affected areas, and 2,000 soldiers were mobilized to help evacuate people. More than 20 boats, including fishing vessels, were used in the search and rescue operation.

Although the local Committee for Flood and Storm Control report that water levels are now receding slowly, forecasts predict that heavy rains in the area will result in further flooding again in the next few days bringing further misery to the affected people. Authorities are particularly concerned to protect the river dykes of the Ca River (the main river in the affected provinces).

River levels from Quang Binh to Quang Ngai provinces are predicted to continue to increase with water levels of the Huong river in Hue Province likely be at Alarm Level III (Very Dangerous Flood Condition) whilst other water levels of the main Bo, Vu Gia and Tra Khuc rivers will remain below Alarm Level III.

Another Tropical Storm, No. 10, is currently some 160km off the Vietnam coastline and it is forecast that the provinces from Ha Tinh to Quang Ngai will experience medium to very heavy rains in some places. Contributions

of some CHF 9,600 from the Fatherland Front and a further CHF 19,200 from the Ministry of Defence have been made to the affected provinces.

In the Mekong Delta area, the death toll from the seasonal flooding has increased with 71 people reported to have died since the onset of the flooding over the last few months. Some 57,000 houses are currently submerged and 122 lost totally. 80 km of road, 65 bridges and 30 irrigation projects are also damaged. Local authorities have provided free medical checks-up to almost 4,700 people while 676 day child care centres for more than 14,400 children have been established over the last few months.

The National Hydro-Meteorological Forecast Centre predict that the Mekong River will continue to rise, with levels of the two tributaries (the Tien and Hau rivers) currently 0.4m and 0.7m respectively above Alarm Level III.

Red Cross Red Crescent Action

The Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) headquarters immediately released some CHF 3,800 to the two provinces to enable the Red Cross chapters to procure locally available supplies for the affected people, in addition to 300 household kits, worth approximately CHF 7,500.

The Vice President of the VNRC also made a visit to the area within days of the disaster being declared to provide support to the chapters and visit affected households.

Both chapters have exhausted their reserve funds to procure food, medicines and basic household items for the affected population.

Red Cross staff and volunteers have been involved with search and rescue in both provinces, mobilising five 'shock brigades' of 50-70 people each, that travelled around the area in boats. They also helped evacuate people from submerged homes and distributed basic food and relief to people who could stay in or around their homes. In some instances, the Red Cross teams passed food and other items through holes in the roof of homes where people were staying on the upper level.

Red Cross volunteers and staff of provincial and local branches are working in close cooperation with government authorities and the military, which is normally called in when disasters strike in Vietnam. Local authorities have distributed over 40 metric tonnes of food.

So far, the VNRC has been using its own resources and stock to provide assistance to the needy. The Society is issuing an internal appeal to branches and chapters around to country. External assistance is not requested at the moment, but that could change in the coming days and weeks, if the flooding continues.

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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