

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

BANGLADESH: CYCLONE SIDR

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 185 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

Summary

The highest alert has been raised over the imminent arrival of Cyclone Sidr, expected to hit at high tide late this evening on the west coast of Bangladesh. There is a possibility that Cyclone Sidr will hit as a category four or three, with devastating results. [<click here to see a map of possible affected areas>](#)

Authorities have deployed more than 40,000 personnel, including police, troops, coastguards and health workers on the shoreline to warn and evacuate the people. An estimated 10 million people live in the areas, with major concerns that the storm shelters in the area are sufficient for only half a million.

Since yesterday, the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) and its branches mobilized an estimated 30,000 staff and volunteers, including medical teams and first aid providers, who engaged in the dissemination of early warning and emergency evacuations to the vulnerable population along the coast. Thousands of families have been evacuated by BDRCS volunteers to concrete buildings such as schools and mosques as well as the cyclone preparedness shelters, and the volunteers remain on standby at this time of reporting.

The Situation

According to the meteorological office observation made at 12:15am on November 12, the cyclonic storm Sidr originated from a depression over the southeast bay. As the storm picked up speed, the sea became turbulent with the gale force winds blowing even harder. As of last observation, the velocity of the cyclonic storm at its core was over 210 kilometres per hour.

On 13 November, Cyclone Sidr moved over south-east bay and adjoining areas moved north-westwards, concentrating into a severe cyclonic storm (ecp 968 hpa) with a core of hurricane wind, and the situation intensified on 14 November. On the evening of 14 November the Bangladesh meteorological office requested that Mongla seaport raise the warning alert to its highest danger level of ten, while Chittagong and Cox's Bazar was raised to nine. The fear is that a cyclonic storm approaching Khulna-Barisal coast might hit land sometime between tonight and the early hours of the morning unless it changes course. Current packing winds have accelerated to more than 210 kilometres (approximately 130 miles) per hour. According to meteorology officials, this may also hit parts of eastern India.

By 15 November at 1200 hours, reports from the Bangladesh meteorological department states that the cyclonic storm (ecp 952 hpa) with a core of winds over east-central bay and adjoining areas moved northwards and now lie over east-central bay and the adjoining north bay. This is an estimated 655 kilometres south-southwest of

Chittagong port, 580 kilometres south-southwest of Cox's Bazar port and 595 kilometres south of Mongla port (near lat 17.0° n & long 89.2° e). It is likely to intensify further and move in a northerly direction and cross Khulna-Barisal coast by noon today.

The maritime port of Mongla has been advised to keep alert ten, the highest danger signal, hoisted, together with the coastal districts of Bhola, Barisal, Patuakhali, Porguna, Pirozpur, Jhalokathi, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira and their offshore islands. Maritime ports of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar have been advised to keep hoisted great danger signal number nine. The low lying areas of the coastal districts of Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Noakhali, Feni, Laxmipur, Bhola, Barisal, Patuakhali, Borguna, Chandpur, Pirozpur, Halokhathi, Bagerhat, Khulna, Satkhira and their offshore islands are likely to be inundated by storm surge of heights between 12 to 15 feet above normal astronomical tide.

The meteorological office has advised the district authorities to evacuate people living in the offshore islands, and by the coastal zone. All fishing boats and trawlers on the northeast bay have been advised to come closer to the coast and take shelter immediately. Boatmen have been advised to proceed with caution till further notice.

The district authorities have already had thousands of trained volunteers prepared for the situation. Two control rooms have been set up at the country's premier port for round-the-clock monitoring of the situation. The district administration has opened 526 storm shelters, in addition to the 86 BDRCS cyclone shelters, strategically located in nine high-risk coastal districts.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

As part of the disaster preparedness programme organized by the BDRCS and the Federation, the cyclone preparedness programme (CPP) incorporates the services of over 34,000 BDRCS volunteers, reaching approximately 1.1 million people. The CPP control room will remain open round the clock until further notice to monitor the situation. The BDRCS radio room is on standby to pass emergency alerts to the coastal areas, and CPP volunteers along the coastal areas of the country are also on standby. CPP radio operators have been advised to listen to the radio and to be prepared to respond to any emergency radio calls.

As of 15 November 2007, an estimated 28,500 men and 14,200 women BDRCS volunteers are actively participating in disseminating early warning to the community people through the hoisting of signal flags, megaphones, hand sirens, microphones and beating drums under the CPP command area. A total of 1,580 cyclone shelters are within the CPP area in 30 sub-districts, and volunteers in the last 24 hours have helped people to evacuate. The fishermen community was also alerted from going into the sea. However, people are getting impatient and are not willing to stay in the shelters for long hours.

A total of ten teams from the headquarters comprising of Federation and BDRCS staff have been put on standby, including medical staff. Cash arrangements have been made to facilitate the operation without any delays, and regular information is being provided on request by the delegation to various agencies including the United Nations and AusAID. The United Nations Development Programme and delegation are in close contact for necessary collaboration.

The delegation in Bangladesh has warehouses stocked with 12,000 family kits containing household items as well as 12,000 blankets for emergency deployment. In addition, pre-positioned stock in Kuala Lumpur, including family tents, hygiene kits, tarpaulins, jerry cans, buckets, kitchen sets and mosquito nets, are available and will be dispatched immediately with the assistance of the regional logistics unit, should the need arise.

Coordination

On 13 November, BDRCS cyclone preparedness programme (CPP) and the country delegation had a meeting on the recent development of the situation. The following day, the metrological department of the Bangladesh government, BDRCS cyclone preparedness programme and the country delegation conducted a joint-meeting on the latest update on the cyclonic storm situation. The government has alerted all related departments and ministries to be on standby and to closely monitor the situation. Due to the deteriorating situation, BDRCS and the Federation delegation kept a close eye on the situation overnight.

An emergency meeting was held on 15 November in the delegation for all delegates and staff. It was advised that priority be given to the cyclone situation and to be on standby for necessary actions. While this report was being

prepared, BDRCS called for an emergency meeting with all the heads of departments within the BDRCS as well as the delegation.

In addition, an emergency task force meeting was called within the Federation this evening, including representatives from Bangladesh and India country delegations, the South Asia regional delegation (SARD), the disaster management unit (DMU) from the Asia Pacific Zone office and relevant officers in Geneva. An emergency preparation and contingency plan was organized, with disaster management delegates from SARD and DMU as well as a reporting officer on standby. Furthermore, specific focal points for media and communication were determined, and a field assessment and coordination (FACT) information alert will be prepared and disseminated to global partners. Disaster management delegates from SARD and DMU will be monitoring the situation closely for further action, including regional disaster relief team (RDRT) readiness. Meanwhile, officers in Geneva will be on the alert for a possibly request for disaster relief emergency funds (DREF).

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The Federation's Global Agenda

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out **four broad goals** to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *Bangladesh Red Crescent Society: Mr. M. Shafiul Alam (Secretary General), email: bdrcs@bangla.net, phone: +88.02.935.2226.*
- *Country delegation in Bangladesh: Mr. Selvaratnam Sinnadurai (Head of delegation), email: selvaratnam.sinnadurai@ifrc.org, phone: +88.02.933.7314, fax: +88.02.934.1631.*
- *South Asia regional delegation in India: Mr. Al Panico (Head of regional delegation), email: al.panico@ifrc.org, phone: +91 11 2411 1122, fax: +91 11 2411 1128.*
- *Asia Pacific Zone office in Malaysia: Disaster management unit: Mr. Latifur Rahman (Regional disaster management delegate), email: latifur.rahman@ifrc.org; phone: + 60 3 2161 0892, mobile; +60 12 975 0144; Regional logistics unit: Mr Ilir Caushaj (Regional logistics coordinator), ilir.caushaj@ifrc.org, phone: +60 3 2628 2707, fax: +60 3 2168 8573*
- *In Geneva: Asia Pacific department, Ms. Christine South (Emergency operations coordinator), email: christine.south@ifrc.org, phone: +41.22.730.4529, fax: +41.22.733.0395*



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