

# 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: CYCLONIC STORM

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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 185 countries.*

### In Brief

**This Bulletin (no. 01/2007) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.**

*For further information specifically related to this operation please see [contact details](#) on the last page.*

### The Situation

On 14 May 2007, at 1800 hours, following a severe depression in the Bay of Bengal, a cyclonic storm 'Akash' hit the southern shores of Bangladesh - 375 kilometres south-southwest of Cox's Bazar, 460 kilometres south-southwest of Chittagong port and 485 kilometres south-southeast of Mongla Port. Under the influence of the storm, the coastal districts of Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Noakhali, Feni, Bhola, Barisal, Patuakhali and Barguna, as well as the offshore islands and chars<sup>1</sup>, experienced squally winds (with speeds up to 90 kilometres per hour) and heavy rains (the last rainfall recorded was 53 millimetres). The low-lying areas of these districts, along with those in the districts of Jalkhati, Khulna, Bagerhat and Satkhira, as well as the off-shore islands, were inundated due to high tide prompted by the cyclone. Huge waves were visible in the rough sea water of the Bay of Bengal and the sea level rose seven feet above the usual tide height.

As a result of the storm, three people were killed, four people were injured, and one person went missing. According to the media, 50 fishermen are still missing. A total of 1,751 families were affected forced to take shelter in schools and highland areas. The number of houses that were fully destroyed were 205 and the number partially damaged were 845. Crops and shrimp cultivation were destroyed in some of the affected areas. In Teknaf upazilla<sup>2</sup> (Cox's Bazar district), one kilometre of the embankment was completely destroyed and 35 kilometres partially destroyed. More detailed information on the nature and extent of damages is awaited from the field.

The government evacuated about 100,000 people to its cyclone shelters and opened up emergency control rooms in coastal upazillas. All fishing boats and trawlers over the north bay have been advised to remain in shelter till further notice. As the land depression headed towards Myanmar, the meteorological office advised the maritime ports of Chittagong and Mongla to lower danger signals and hoist local cautionary signals.

### Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) and the Federation were on alert from 1500 hours on 13<sup>th</sup> May, in preparation of the cyclonic storm. A meeting was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May, when the government raised the danger signal, to plan necessary action. All staff were asked to be on standby.

<sup>1</sup> Small, temporary, silt islands

<sup>2</sup> Sub-district

A total of 42,675 volunteers (from the cyclone preparedness programme) in the coastal belt were on standby on 14<sup>th</sup> May. BDRCS volunteers, numbering 6,655, worked to bring people to cyclone shelters as the storm damaged houses and establishments near the coastal area. Loud-speakers and megaphones were used by the volunteers to raise awareness among communities living in the coastal areas about the cyclonic storm and to ask them to move to safer places or government cyclone shelters. Regular radio contacts between the BDRCS headquarters and the field were maintained. The national society's emergency control room (under its cyclone preparedness programme) was manned on a 24/7 basis. Emergency medical teams, from the BDRCS hospitals in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet, were formed and equipped for a possible emergency operation.

So far, the amount of relief assistance required has not been identified or requested, as field units are still gathering more detailed information.

## Coordination

The BDRCS/Federation held a coordination meeting with the government, including representatives from the ministry of food and disaster management and the meteorological office, on 14<sup>th</sup> May. The Federation's Bangladesh delegation has been in close contact with the disaster and emergency response group<sup>3</sup> to maintain coordination with other agencies. The BDRCS also maintained close contact with the government's metrological department to get updates on the cyclone situation.

## 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:*

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<sup>3</sup> An in-country body coordinating during disasters, jointly chaired by the UN and the ministry of disaster management