

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Vietnam: Typhoon Kammuri

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at present. The Vietnam Red Cross society will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The Situation

Flash floods and landslides triggered by heavy rain from Typhoon Kammuri have resulted in several deaths and caused severe damage to property in the northern provinces of Vietnam.

Flash floods caused by Typhoon Kammuri hit the northern part of Vietnam on the night of 8 August, leaving 162 either dead or missing, and 81 injured.

This is the worst flash floods in 40 years, affecting eight mountainous provinces in the north, including Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang, Lai Chau, Son La, Ha Giang and Bac Kan. In Lao Cai, river water levels rose as high as 84.91 metres as result of flash floods compounded by torrential rains. The province was almost completely blocked off by water. Several roads, highways and railway were damaged and 213 houses totally destroyed. In the mountain village of Tung Chin I, Bat Xat, Lao Cai province, 19 out of 40 houses in the village have been swept away, leaving 21 people either dead or missing, with several dozen hectares of agricultural farmlands levelled after the night of 8 August.

Around 3,000 houses in Phu Tho province were submerged in water while in Phuong Xa commune, Cam Khe district, half of the village was under water up to the roofs of houses due to breaches in the dyke.



Flood waters swept away a village in Sang Ma Sao in the Bat Sat district, Lao Cai province. (Photo: Vietnam Red Cross/Ha Thai Binh)

"I am very concerned of water/sanitation and environment on the ground. Household wells in lowland [areas] are still flooded and people have to collect water from their neighbour's wells uphill," says the International Federation's Vietnam country office's health programme officer, speaking from the badly-hit district Ha Hoa in Phu Tho province. There are reports that within the district itself, 124 houses have been destroyed and 128 other families displaced. Rotting garbage is everywhere and the river is being contaminated further with plastic bags of rubbish. People are also in the midst of cleaning their houses of mud. At this juncture, water and sanitation as well as cleaning of the environment are priority needs.

In Yen Bai, the water level peaked at 34.3 metres, flooding seven districts in the province, destroying

222 houses and displacing residents of 7,000 households in two districts. Highways and railways were about two metres under water.

Comprehensive statistics on damages are not yet complete, but already, available statistics show vast amounts of destruction in the province itself: 125 people are reported dead, 38 missing, 92 injured; 828 houses destroyed, 17,776 more houses damaged and flooded, with 11,150 hectares of rice crops damaged and 2,061 hectares of vegetable gardens damaged. The government of Vietnam is making efforts to secure food for the affected, to provide medicine to those injured, and to restore communication links and transportation. According to the assessment team in Phu Tho, electricity has been restored in major districts since last night. It is hoped that power will fully be recovered today. Roads to communes are now accessible by foot. However, some communes are still under water. The government's priority includes repairing schools to ensure the start of the school year in early September.

Also according to the Federation's health programme officer, "The consequence of the flash flood with regard to crop farm and livelihood is so huge. More than 89 hectares of rice field to be harvested in two months' time was destroyed, and aquaculture farming lost. Their food reserve can be sustainable for one month or so. [The] upcoming maize crop will not start until October, while rice crops will not be likely until April next year." Given this situation, local residents will face the challenge of food storage for several months. Food supplies and restoration of livelihoods will be long-term needs.

In response to the situation, the Fatherland Front, an umbrella organization of the government, called for assistance to support the affected communities. The disaster management working group has held two meetings with coordination from UNDP, Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) and People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM), and has decided to conduct a detailed assessment in the three worst-hit provinces of Phu Tho, Yen Bai and Lao Cai. The joint needs assessment report will be shared on 20 August. Also, PACCOM, which plays a coordinating role for international non-government organizations in Vietnam, has started efforts in bringing aid to those affected.

The first international support of USD 50,000 (CHF 54,827) has come from the Chinese embassy. World Vision Vietnam initially committed USD 13,200 (CHF 14,474) for Tran Yen district and USD 16,795 (CHF 18,416) for Van Yen district (Yen Bai province). The amount mentioned was used to provide urgent food aid (in the form of rice) to people in need in both districts.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) has released 1,200 household kits consisting of cooking utensils, a mosquito net, two blankets, water bucket and collection unit. The first relief items reached the people affected in the worst-hit provinces of Phu Tho, Yen Bai and Lao Cai, two days after the disaster struck. Five thousands tonnes of rice were transported to the affected areas by the VNRC. The national society has also supported with VND 550 million in cash (USD 34,375 or EUR 23,000) from its disaster fund to support eight affected provinces.



In northern Vietnam, VNRC staff and volunteers from the Yen Bai chapter distribute relief items to the victims of the flooding by boat. (Photo: Vietnam Red Cross/Ha Thai Binh)

On the ground, Red Cross chapters are working together coordinated by the local authorities to help with cleaning the environment. In the worst-affected areas of Lao Cai, Yen Bai, and Phu Tho and where relief operations are currently being focused, Red Cross chapters mobilized their members and volunteers to carry out evacuations, and search and rescue activities. In Lao Cai, the local chapter mobilized five disaster response teams at district level and five disaster response teams at commune level to assist those affected by the flood. The chapter released VND 20 million (CHF 1,340) from its own fund to assist families who have lost members in the flood, sustained injuries or whose

homes have been destroyed. Members also visited 51 families and assisted them VND 2 million (CHF 134) per family. Up to 400 household kits have been distributed by VNRC branches at grassroots level. The Red Cross chapter also used cash to buy relief food supplies such as rice and instant noodles for families affected. In Yen Bai, Red Cross staff visited 38 families and distributed 400 household kits to as many families, coordinating with other organizations in providing members and volunteers to assist in emergency response. Similar activities were done in Phu Tho province by the local Red Cross chapter.

According to the VNRC chapters, major needs still exist including 1,250 tonnes of rice for those affected to last from October 2008 until April 2009 when the next crop is ready for harvesting; and 13,300 household kits including mosquito nets, blankets and kitchen sets for 8,300 families to prepare for the forthcoming cold weather expected in November 2008. Up to 1,390 houses which have been destroyed or badly damaged, need to be reconstructed for families now living in temporary shelters. As many as 3,000 livelihood options are necessary to assist 3,000 most vulnerable families in mountainous areas in recovering their means of living which has been completely destroyed by these floods or help provide alternative livelihoods instead.

On the ground, Red Cross chapters are working together, coordinated by the local authorities to help in cleaning the environment, and in the rebuilding of collapsed and damaged houses using existing materials

The health programme officer from the International Federation country office is now working together with representatives from other organizations, carrying out detailed needs assessments in the three most affected areas. Staff from the American Red Cross is also participating in these assessments. These have taken place over three days and will finish tomorrow. A full report will be presented at the meeting of the disaster management working group next Wednesday.

Flooding is not only confined to Vietnam, but other parts of Southeast Asia as well. The typhoon triggered torrential rains in the north and northeastern part of **Thailand** and in the northern part of **Lao PDR**, causing floods in Bokeo, Xaignbouri and Vientiane provinces of the landlocked country. Lao media reports said Wednesday, that, "damage from the floods, which have already inundated thousands of hectares of agricultural land, has been severe."

Flooding in the Thai northeast was growing more serious on Thursday, as water levels on the Mekong River rose, posing a flooding threat to low-lying areas along the river. In Nakhon Phanom, more than 100 houses, and some 400 roads and country lanes are under water. About 40,000 acres of crops have been destroyed by flood waters, and schools in the Ban Paeng district closed temporarily on Thursday. The province declared 12 districts as disaster zones. Local residents in the municipality have braced themselves for possible flooding, which may hit the municipality and its surroundings soon if the Mekong River continues to rise.

Both the Lao Red Cross and the Thai Red Cross have mobilized available stocks to provide immediate relief to those most affected. This consists of drinking water; medicine, household kits and instant noodles. The situation is being closely monitored by the national societies and the regional disaster management unit in Bangkok.

In Vietnam, the VNRC is presently working on the subsequent plan of action and welcomes any contributions and assistance from donors for the operation. The decision on launching an appeal through the International Federation is under consideration, based on the outcomes from the needs assessments currently taking place.

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 \(NGOs\) 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 International Federation's activities 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

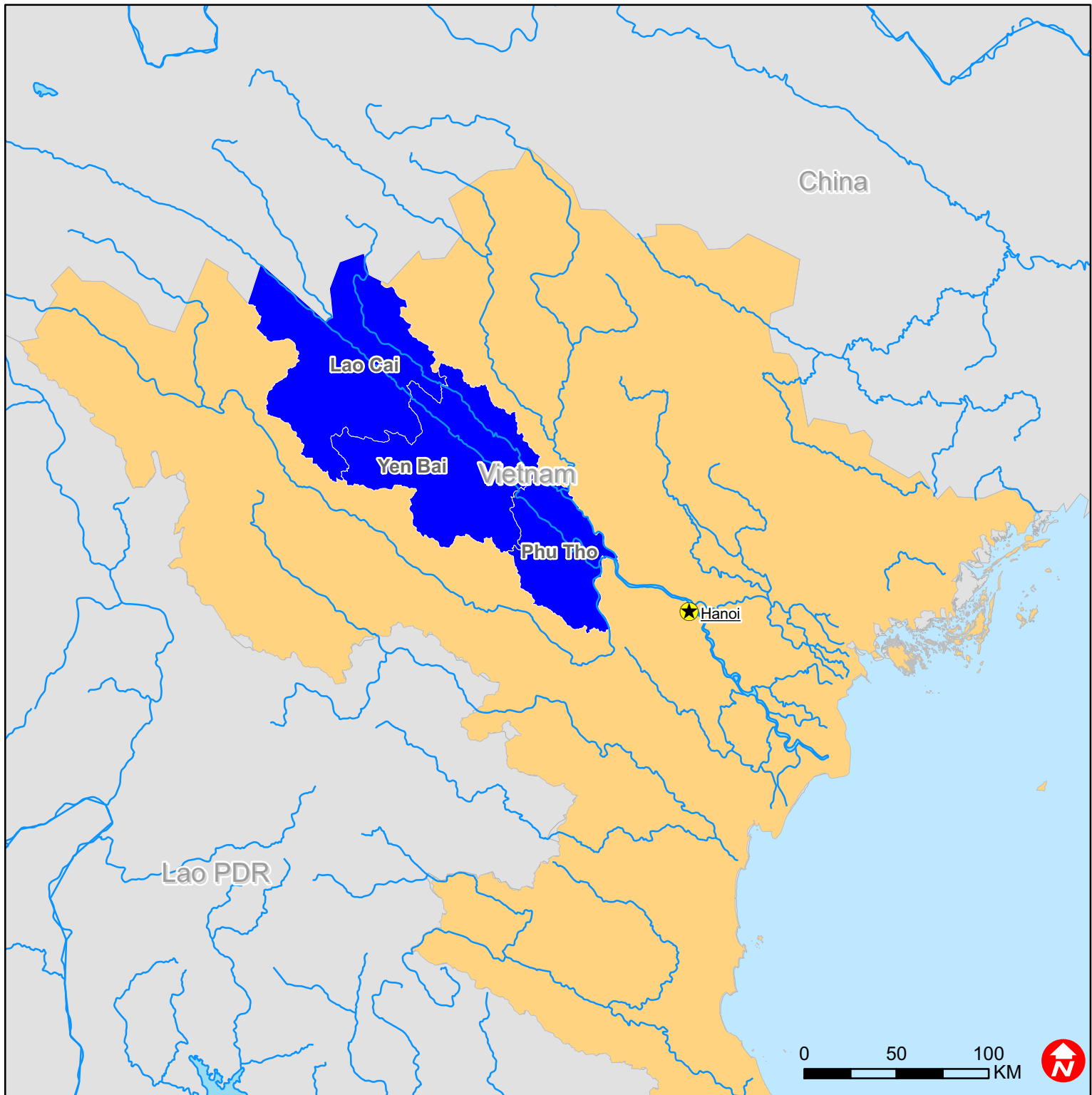
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[<map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



Vietnam: Flash floods



 Affected provinces