

# CHINA: FLOODS

23 July 1997

## Information Bulletin N° 02

### The Disaster

More heavy rain is predicted for many provinces in southern China, where several hundred people have died so far. Flooding in a number of provinces has reached disaster proportions. Several other Red Cross Society of China Provincial Branches are reporting that flood waters are rising and anticipate flood disasters to develop. Typhoon Rosie, classified as a super typhoon on 22 July, is headed on a northerly path towards the southern tip of Japan. Overnight the storm lost strength as sustained winds of 120 knots per hour reduced significantly. The satellite images show another disturbance forming in the Pacific Ocean as the typhoon season takes off. In Hubei Province, heavy rain fell from 12 - 18 July swelling the Chiang Jiang (Yangtze) River, and causing significant flooding in its catchment area. Transportation, electricity, and communications have all been impacted. In the Guangxi Autonomous Region heavy rain fell steadily from 3 - 9 July in 19 counties -- 6 of which reached rainfall levels of 300 mm or twice the normal for this time of year. As the floodwaters moved downstream a total of 37 counties and county-level cities were affected, leaving 389 villages surrounded by water. More heavy rain is predicted. Flooding has also taken its toll on the people of Yunnan Province. The Yunnan Provincial Branch reports a second bout of heavy rain this month, from 14 - 17 July, that caused serious flooding in 4 prefectures, 9 counties, 33 townships, and 408 villages.

#### Hubei Province

Dead: 50

People affected: 7.64 million

Direct economic loss: 1.34 billion Chinese Yuan (CHF 233 million)

#### Guangxi Autonomous Region

Dead: 29

Injured: 8,125

People affected: 5.9 million

Farmland flooded: 47,000 hectares

Direct economic loss: 1.5 billion Chinese Yuan (CHF 261 million)

#### Yunnan Province

Dead: 24

Injured: 104

People affected: 1.5 million

Homeless: 1,006 families

Rooms damaged: 14,600

Rooms collapsed: 6,364

Farmland flooded: 84,000 hectares

Direct economic loss: 820 million Chinese Yuan (CHF 143 million)

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

The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has been actively conducting needs assessments in the more severe flood stricken areas. In co-operation with the Public Health Department, medical teams are working to control disease and provide first aid. A "Working Team" has been dispatched from Kunming in Yunnan Province to conduct a needs assessment as well as provide comfort and distribute relief items (value 100,000 Chinese Yuan - CHF 18,000) to their needy beneficiaries. Assessments are being carried out in other Provinces as well by RCSC paid and volunteer staff.

An assessment team comprising RCSC headquarters staff from Relief, Information, and International Departments, a representative from the Hong Kong Red Cross, and provincial and local RCSC members, are currently in Jiangxi Province. They will also travel to Guangdong Province (*see Information Bulletin no. 1 for more information on flooding in these Provinces*).

On 24 July, a team comprising the Deputy Director of the Relief Department, the Head of Media Service from the Secretariat, and an Information Delegate from the Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur, will depart for a 6 day mission to Jiangxi and Zhejiang Provinces. After flying into Nanching they will travel by road, train, and boat to document the disaster, conducting interviews of local, county, and provincial level RCSC members as well as flood victims. It is planned that both video and stills photographs will be shot. In particular, for the first time, conditions allowing, digital images will be transferred 'direct from the field' to the Secretariat (and thence onto the Internet via the Federation's Home Page) to launch an innovative pilot project in information sharing and projection.

## ***Needs***

The Chinese Government has stationed troops in the flooded areas to assist local governments in rescue operations and strengthening of flood control systems. The Government is also providing temporary shelter and relief goods.

The spread of communicable diseases is always a concern in flood disasters. Continued assistance by the medical teams is anticipated, implementing a number of duties from sanitising public areas and water supplies, to diagnosing and treating illness and disease.

Along with medicine and disinfectants, food, clothing, and quilts are needed and are being distributed from local and provincial stocks. As needs assessments are completed, a specific list will be developed.

It is important to recognise that the monsoon season will last for a further 2 -3 months, and the typhoon season has just begun. While an appeal is not planned at this time, the disaster situation is just developing and expected to worsen significantly.

Meanwhile, Shangdong Province is reporting the worst drought in 96 years affecting 3.6 million hectares of cropland and causing the summer planting of half a million hectares to be suspended. Water shortages are reported. The China Daily newspaper and Reuters news-wire report that the Minister of Health has urged local governments to prepare for more disasters and to increase epidemic prevention measures, especially in the drought and flood affected regions.

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