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Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) India: Monsoon Flash Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered for this update:
23 -26 June 2013

Summary: CHF 479,715 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 5,000 families (25,000 beneficiaries). Unearmarked funds to replenish this DREF allocation are encouraged.

Tens of thousands of people in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand have been affected by flash flooding. These floods resulted from heavy monsoon rains which started on 16 June and which came early.

More than 800 people have died in the flooding so far with fears that this figure will increase in the coming weeks when the true extent of the floods is revealed when the focus from evacuation operations cease. Government officials confirm that the death toll could rise as more bodies are recovered from remote areas that have been inaccessible. During the period under review, reports from the international media state that more than 97,000 people have been rescued since the floods and cloudbursts hit Uttarakhand state on 16 June.



Indian Red Cross Society-trained first medical responder (FMR) volunteers carrying relief items. These volunteers are headed towards Didsari, one of the badly affected districts in Uttarakhand. As there are no road access, volunteers have to walk to reach the affected people.
Photo: IFRC/Kaustubh Kukde.

This flood is the heaviest and deadliest in 80 years for the state of Uttarakhand. The continuous rain has caused water levels to rise and swollen rivers have swept away entire villages where travellers, pilgrims

and local people were left stranded. The rainfall received in two days was equal to the entirety of the normal total rainfall Uttarakhand receives in a monsoon season. May to the beginning of July is the peak tourist and pilgrimage season, where hundreds of thousands of Hindus make a pilgrimage to the four temple towns in Uttarakhand before the monsoons arrive in July.

Many parts of Uttarakhand remains cut off as more than 1,000 roads have been destroyed and landslides continue to occur following intermittent rain storms, communication lines were downed, adding to the confusion hampering relief operations where only means of access was by helicopter to access the scores of stranded pilgrims.

Food supplies and access to potable and clean water remain a challenge as supply routes and water sources are contaminated with debris, dead animals and corpses. The lack of shelter is also an issue for those stranded. The forecast of continued rains in the state is causing the situation to worsen

[<click here for the DREF budget; here for contact details>](#)

The situation

Early and heavy monsoon rains and winds have brought havoc to the states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh in northern India. The initial extreme rainfall events marking the earlier than expected beginning of the monsoon on 16 June, was heavier than usually experienced for this time of year, causing water levels to rise and rivers to swell and spill over, sweeping away entire villages. May to July is the peak tourist season, and a period where hundreds of thousands of Hindus make a pilgrimage to the four temple towns in Uttarakhand. However, with the early monsoon, the tourists and pilgrims were not prepared for the early monsoon, leaving them without food and access to shelter and clean water for several days.

More than 800 people are reported to have died in the flooding, while the international media have reported some 97,000 people have been rescued by the combined military and air force so far. Since the rains started some 10 days ago, it is almost certain that the true death toll will increase as the affected areas become more accessible and the process of recovering bodies takes place.

More than 1,250 houses are reported to have been damaged/washed away in the floods in seven districts. However, this figure will change as the mostly affected areas are mostly in high mountains with altitude above 3,000m.

Coordination and partnerships

The Red Cross Red Crescent is providing relief and first medical response support actions in coordination with the on-going rescue operations led by the Government of India and other agencies. The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) national headquarters is closely coordinating with the state branch in order to extend timely assistance to the people affected by floods in Uttarakhand. At the state and district level, coordination mechanisms have been established with the government to ensure that resources and information can be shared for efficiently.

In view of the devastating impact of the heavy rain fall in the state of Uttarakhand, the IRCS state branch secretary general held a meeting on 19 June with senior officials from IRCS national headquarters and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Following the discussion, a joint team made up of personnel from IRCS national headquarters and IFRC has been sent to Dehradun to carry out situational assessments and assist the IRCS Uttarakhand state branch coordinate with the trained first medical responders (FMR) and initiate disaster response operation. This team will continue to help the state branch to document achievements or learning from the deployment of FMR volunteers.

A meeting to coordinate and mobilise volunteers was held in the state branch where around 100 volunteers participated in the four worst-hit districts of Uttarakhand. Volunteers committed their time for relief operation activities. One team moved to Uttarkashi from Dehradun on 21 June in order to assess and coordinate relief efforts. The state branch has also requested the IRCS national headquarters to deploy four national disaster response team (NDRT) members to Pithoragard for assessment and for coordination of relief efforts.

On 22 June, the IRCS deputy secretary, IFRC head of country office and IFRC disaster management advisor visited Dehradun to meet with the IRCS Uttarakhand Management Committee and response teams to further discuss on the situation assessment and relief operation.

On 24 June, the IRCS secretary general chaired a task force meeting to appraise Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners of the current flood situation and on the IRCS response so far. This meeting saw the participation of representatives from the Belgium, Canadian, Italian, and Spanish Red Cross societies, ICRC and IFRC.

Since the onset of the disaster, the Indian prime minister had announced an INR 10 billion (approximately CHF 148,539,000) aid package for Uttarakhand, which included the usage for emergency evacuation (airlifting) and recovery.

International response to this disaster has been positive, with the Japanese government pledging USD 200,000 (approximately CHF 190,000) towards the IFRC India country office preparedness activity plan in response to the floods.

Other partners and donors that have contributed to the flood response operation include Belgium Red Cross – Flanders, Chinese Red Cross (via the Chinese ambassador), Italian Red Cross and Vodaphone India Foundation.

To date, ICRC has also donated 1,600 body bags. These body bags were distributed to authorities in Uttarakhand. ICRC will be assisting in purchasing and dispatching an additional 1,000 body bags by 30 June.

The state government has established relief camps at different sites in Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag and Chamoli districts. However, not all those affected can come to these relief camps because they are stranded at many places where the roads are damaged or under threat of landslides.

A state level Inter-Agency Group (IAG) emergency meeting was conducted at the Plan India office in Dehradun on 24 June. The purpose was to discuss the situation and action ahead. Forty IAG staff members have been deployed for search, rescue, and evacuation. District administrations of all the affected districts have issued an alert and have evacuated the population living in close proximity to the riverbanks. Following this, on 25 June an inter-agency coordination meeting was called for by Sphere India in Delhi. From the meeting discussions it was evident that no particular government/humanitarian organization had a full grasp on the situation, real data from the field remains sketchy at best, and no one has an overall picture of the situation.

Apart from those being carried out by the Red Cross and some other agencies, it was also noted that there had been limited field level assessments being conducted due to treacherous conditions. Sphere India and the Inter agencies are trying to coordinate one logistics hub in Uttarakhand as there are presently challenges in aerial logistics movement commodities around given the mountainous region and continuous landslides.

Shelter, access to medicines and food are the most urgent needs identified. Sanitation and problems related to decomposed bodies pose a huge public health risk.

The government has set up helplines to assist people in Uttarkashi, Tehri, Chamoli and Rudraprayag get in touch with family members.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distributions (basic non-food items)
Outcome: The immediate needs of 5,000 families (25,000 beneficiaries) are met through the distribution of non-food items.
Outputs: 5,000 families (25,000 beneficiaries) received basic shelter and non-food items.
Proposed Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deployment of NDRT/NDWRT/SDRT/volunteers to conduct needs assessments, prepare lists of beneficiaries, and identify distribution points.• Mobilization of stocks from the regional warehouses – taking into consideration the destroyed infrastructure and difficult access.• Distribution of non-food items (5,000 family packs).• Distribution of 315 family tents.• Replenishment of the distributed stocks.

- Regular monitoring and technical advice by IRCS national headquarters and IFRC.
- Conduct Lessons Learnt workshop after the completion of the operation.

Progress towards outcomes:

- Since the onset of the disaster, more than 100 FMRs have been working in many of the district branches. FMRs have been providing FNS and tracing services to people stranded in their respective regions. FMRs have also been collecting data on the stranded people in their respective regions. To date, hundreds of wellbeing messages of pilgrims have been sent out to family members in coordination with the state headquarters.
- So far, IRCS volunteers have been able to pitch 12 tents near *vikas bhawan* in Joshiyara in Uttarkhasi district. An additional 10 more tents have been received from IRCS national headquarters which are being pitched in Joshiyara. This area is being set up as a Red Cross camp. Efforts are being made to have electricity lighting arrangements at this camp site. Additionally, the construction of latrines in the camp is planned.
- IRCS volunteers started assessments in their respective regions from 22 June. Several pockets have been identified for possible intervention in Uttarkhasi district where the rise in river water level has caused severe damages and areas affected by landslides. Assessments to document impact of floods on the local population is going on and likely to be completed by 27 June.
- IRCS volunteers have been able to assist 1,720 people with first aid, navigation assistance, medicines, etc.
- On 21 June as part of the immediate response to the flood affected areas, 50 family tents, 300 stoves, 2,000 family packs and 1,000 tarpaulin sheets were dispatched from Bahadurgarh warehouse to the Uttarakhand state. A logistical bridge and pipeline has been set up where up to 5,000 families will be assisted.
- So far, two NDRTs members have been deployed to the towns of Pithoragargh, Munsiyari and Dharchula for assessment and for coordination of relief efforts.

The table below shows the items that have been distributed to date.

S.no	Items	Quantity
1.	Stoves	500
2.	Tents with tools	50
3.	Lanterns	300
4.	Kitchen sets	2,000
5.	Plastic buckets	2,000
6.	Tarpaulin sheets	1,000
7.	Saree	2,000
8.	Dhotis	2,000
9.	Bed sheets	2,000
10.	Towels	2,000
11.	Cotton Blankets	2,000
12.	Woollen Blankets	3,000
13.	Mosquito nets	2,000

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Outcome: The risk of water and sanitation related diseases have been reduced through access to safe drinking water, appropriate sanitation and hygiene promotion.

Outputs:

- **Increased access to safe drinking water to the flood affected 3,000 people.**
- **Improve hygiene knowledge and behaviour of 15,000 people affected by the flood.**
- Detailed assessment to identify villages for intervention.
- Mobilize and installation of 1 water treatment unit in assessed location through NDWRT when conditions allow.
- Establishing water distribution system.
- Training volunteers on hygiene promotion.
- Hygiene promotion activities for affected community by the IRCS volunteers.
- Monitoring of use of household level water treatment and storage.

To date, no WatSan/WASH activities have been implemented. However, initial assessments conducted showed water is a major need as there are anecdotal evidence of affected households suffering from the onset of waterborne diseases related to the floods.

There are plans in the pipeline to deploy a NOMAD water tank from Delhi to Uttarakhand.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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Please send all funding pledges to zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org

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1. Revised Emergency Appeal budget [below](#)
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How we work

All IFRC 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 the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

DREF OPERATION

01/07/2013

MDRIN012 India : Monsoon Flash Floods

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	119,700
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	6,267
Other Supplies & Services	270,667
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	396,634
Storage, Warehousing	2,068
Transport & Vehicle Costs	8,499
Logistics Services	13,981
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	24,548
International Staff	11,500
Volunteers	8,200
Total PERSONNEL	19,700
Workshops & Training	2,193
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	2,193
Travel	3,133
Information & Public Relations	2,989
Communications	157
Financial Charges	194
Other General Expenses	470
Shared Office and Services Costs	419
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	7,362
Programme and Services Support Recovery	29,278
Total INDIRECT COSTS	29,278
TOTAL BUDGET	479,715