

Information bulletin n° 1 17 October 2013

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Cambodian Red Cross Society, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time. The Cambodian Red Cross will, however, accept direct assistance, either cash or in-kind, to provide support to the affected population.

Summary: Floods usually hit Cambodia between August and October. This year, without exception, from mid-August, the season began with flash floods affecting the provinces of Banteay Meanchey, Preah Vihear, Kampong Thom, and Kratie, claiming its first 13 casualties this year.

Since the third week of September, the flooding situation has become much worse with the combination of heavy rain and the mighty Mekong River overflowing its banks, affecting 17 out of Cambodia's 24 provinces. The death toll continues to increase with latest reported figures reaching over 200 deaths, and over 1.5 million people affected.



At Banteay Meanchey province Red Cross branch, staff and volunteers load up emergency food assistance for distribution to those affected by the floods.
Photo: Cambodian Red Cross

The Cambodian Red Cross, in close collaboration with the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM), Department of Health and other agencies, has been providing emergency assistance to some 21,769 families from the most affected communities, including evacuation to safer areas.

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The situation

Since late September 2013, floods have spread across 17 of Cambodia's 24 provinces. According to the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) in Cambodia, these floods have killed over 200 people; forced the evacuation of more than 34,000 households; and, destroyed some 200,000 hectares of



**21 August 2013: In Preah Vihear, the Red Cross branch staff and volunteers provided humanitarian relief assistance via boats to those marooned by the floods.
Photo credit: Cambodian Red Cross**



21 September 2013: Heavy rain and rising water levels in the Mekong river hit Kratie province hard. Photo: Cambodian Red Cross

rice fields, which comprise nearly 10 per cent of the country's harvest. The current flood situation appears to have the same characteristics as the floods in 2011, which took place in October, killing as many as 250 people and costing losses to the country of over USD500 million in damages. There are estimates that over 160,000 houses, 1,350 schools, 470 pagodas and almost 70 health centres have also suffered flooding while some 2,400 km of roads have been damaged.

In terms of health impact, the World Health Organization in Cambodia has reported no signs of emerging disease outbreaks in affected communities as yet.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the longer-term impact of the flooding remains uncertain as there are widespread concerns over food security. Looking ahead at the recovery period, the Agriculture Ministry has announced its plans to distribute rice seeds to flood-affected communities to help offset losses from destroyed crops. Furthermore, in a move to stabilize rice prices, which began to rise because of the flood, government authorities released 120 tonnes of government-stocked milled rice onto the market on 16 October.

The Prime Minister of Cambodia announced last week that the government would create a USD100 million fund for relief and rehabilitation but to date, there have been no details as to how this will be carried out or managed.

While the situation is expected to stabilize with the arrival of November, daily monitoring of this rainy season continues to be important until it can be well ascertained that the "danger period" is over.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In response to the immediate needs of the most vulnerable, the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) is working closely, both at national and branch levels through its staff and volunteers, in partnership with the Royal Government National Committee for Disaster Management providing humanitarian assistance and evacuation to the most affected population. Coordination between the two continues aims to ensure maximum possible coverage and to avoid duplication.

To date, Cambodian Red Cross has assisted in the evacuation of 21,769 families to safer areas. In addition to evacuation, the National Society has been providing humanitarian relief assistance to over 11,000 families. Each family receives 25 kg of rice, one carton of instant noodles, 10 cans of fish, fish sauce, soy sauce and other non-food items such as mosquito nets, blankets, clothing, tarpaulins, tents and chlorine tablets – as per availability of items at CRC branches.

The Red Cross branches will continue to provide food and non-food items to families currently located in accessible areas; however, there is a continuing struggle with the lack of access to marooned communities due to roads cut off by fast-flowing water, damaged roads and bridges, scattered locations of affected families, and the lack of boats with which to reach these communities.

At the end of September, the Royal Government of Cambodia donated 200 tonnes of rice to the Cambodian Red Cross. In coming weeks, the national society will continue to deliver humanitarian assistance to most affected families in the provinces of Preah Vihear, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, Stung Treng and Kampong Cham.



16 October 2013: The secretary general of Cambodian Red Cross joins Kampong Chhnang province Red Cross branch during the distribution of relief items to those most affected by floods in the province. Photo: Cambodian Red Cross

The Red Cross continues to maintain close co-operation and information exchange with the Humanitarian Response Forum in Cambodia consisting of UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations engaged in emergency preparedness, humanitarian assistance and early recovery in Cambodia. Red Cross Red Crescent Movement support in the relief operation thus far includes support when requested and joint field visits to affected areas.

Currently, joint assessments led by NCMD are taking place in the provinces of Banteay Meanchey, Battambang and Siem Reap.

Ongoing heavy rain continues to cause difficulties for humanitarian assistance providers, limiting the access to the most affected. The Red Cross will continue to monitor the situation, and further needs will be reported as the situation develops.

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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 \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

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.



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.
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