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Information bulletin

South Asia region: Floods 2014

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Glide n° [FL-2014-000117-IND](#); [FL-2014-000122-PAK](#);
[FL-2014-000117-BGD](#); [FL-2014-000112-NPL](#)

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Nepal Red Cross Society and the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), have launched an [Emergency Appeal](#) and [DREF](#) respectively. While the Indian Red Cross Society and Pakistan Red Crescent Society have yet to determine if external assistance is required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

The situation

South Asia region is currently experiencing this year severe floods that are affecting the population from four countries - Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh has experienced flooding on an unusual scale during the latter half of the monsoon season. Since the second week of August, heavy rainfall in the main river basins and upstream catchments of India as well as the northwest and north-eastern parts of Bangladesh have caused a continuously worsening flooding situation that has now spread to 20 districts, with the majority of the affected population and damage in a dozen northerly districts.

The latest reports from the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief indicate that the situation is now improving. All major rivers are now receding and in many places the water is expected to recede in the coming days. However, four measurement stations (out of 83 across the country) are still indicating water levels above danger level and some areas remain inundated. There is also a month left of the monsoon season, and more rain is expected.

According to government reports around 3 million people are currently affected by the flooding and out of them more than 325,000 (68,000 families) are displaced. Almost 34,000 homes have been destroyed and around 200,000 damaged. A total of 56 people are reported to have drowned with more than 100 people injured. The



Flood response by the NDWRT in Kurigram, Bangladesh. Photo by BDRCS.

current situation and the number of affected has been described as the worst flooding since the 'mega floods' in 2007, when more than 10 million people were affected.

Nepal

The monsoon season of 2014 in Nepal has been severe compared to previous years. After an initial normal start to the season, early August saw massive landslides from a hillside in Jure, Mankhaa village of Sindhupalchowk district due to heavy rains. The landslide killed 106 people with 155 people still missing and declared dead by the government of Nepal. In addition to the normal, ongoing monsoon rains, heavy rains between August 14 and 16 caused massive flooding and several landslides in 21 districts throughout the country. The vast majority of those affected are in six districts in the mid-west.

At the peak of the floods, approx. 225,000 people) were affected. As the waters receded, the number decreased to around 125,000 people, the majority of them with their houses destroyed (8,000) or damaged (approx. 20,000). While Nepal regularly experiences localized flooding during the monsoon season, this situation is the worst experienced since the Koshi river floods in 2008, which at the time only affected a limited number of districts compared to 21 now.

Pakistan

According to the Pakistan National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), at least 193 people¹ died and 164 injured across Pakistan during the first week of September after heavy rains and floods. The four eastern overflowed rivers Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej, and Jhelum brought flash floods and caused homes to collapse in the Punjab, Gilgit Baltistan (GB) and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) regions. NDMA reports also cited 28,538 people have been affected in AJK and Punjab. The amount of people displaced by the floods is unknown at this time.

The worst affected districts are:

- Punjab – Sialkot, Narowal, Lahore, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Jhelum, Chiniot, Sargodha and Okara
- AJK - Hattian Bala, Haveli and Sudhnoti
- GB - Diamir

Although mainly dry weather is expected over most parts of the country in the coming days, isolated thunderstorms are expected and the impact of overflowing rivers and flash floods is expected to cause more losses in southern parts of Punjab and Sindh. Apart from human casualties, the NDMA reports losses to property, cattle and crops.

In addition, the NDMA has issued flood warnings across the country, advising that the River Indus is likely to attain a 'high to very high' flood level in parts of Punjab by mid-September².

While initial assessment reports from some teams are still to come in, overall, the immediate needs of the affected communities are:

- Emergency Shelter (tents and tarpaulin sheets)
- Non Food Items (kitchen sets, Hygiene kits, blankets)
- Food Package (one-month package)
- Fodder for cattle



(Above) The situation is increasingly more challenging for relief response with the rising flood waters in AJK, Pakistan.
(Below) Distribution of relief items carried out by PRCS staff and volunteers in AJK, Pakistan.
Photo by PRCS.

¹ Punjab:119; AJK: 63; GB:11

² Government of Pakistan, Climate Change Division, National Disaster Management Authority, Monsoon Weather Situation Report 2014, dated: 7 September 2014 <http://www.ndma.gov.pk/new/Documents/sitrep-7-9-2014.pdf>

In addition, assessment and relief efforts in affecting areas are hampered because of stagnant water blocking road access. However, access will be possible within 3 to 4 days when the flood waters recede. As the flood waters are passing through southern Punjab and will eventually reach Sindh, the disaster situation is evolving. These areas are already under high alert.

India

Over the last two days, heavy rain in Jammu and Kashmir caused heavy flooding, the state's worst in 50 years. Ten districts are heavily affected, almost 150 people reported dead, and a number of districts are not reachable yet.³ In the region of Jammu, landslides triggered by heavy rainfall have caused serious damages to infrastructure and agricultural land. Vehicular traffic has been stopped on the Jammu-Pathankot highway. The city of Srinagar is badly affected as river Jhelum has breached embankments in several parts of the city. Major parts of the city, including the Army Cantonment area, are submerged.

Central and State governments have deployed 17 National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams for search & rescue and relief. Additional forces are also being deployed by the national authorities in Jammu and Kashmir to assist the state government in its efforts in minimizing the casualties. On 7 September, the Indian Prime Minister visited Jammu and Kashmir and has declared a state of emergency. The army has launched a major rescue operation and has reportedly evacuated 15,000 people to safety by deploying more than 200 columns of troops.

The Air Force is assisting the Army in rescuing the stranded people, including the army personnel from border outposts on the Line of Control, as the security infrastructure is also badly affected. Some 2,000 people are temporarily displaced, and are being hosted and assisted by the Army. The Government of India announced compensation packages for the affected population.

The Indian Prime Minister announced a special assistance of 10 billion INR (approx. CHF 150 million) for flood-hit Jammu and Kashmir, in addition to a compensation package from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the kin of each dead and those seriously injured.

As of today, the rain has stopped, leaving a trail of destruction. In Kashmir, the flooding remains severe. Authorities continue to sound high flood alert as most of the rivers in the state are flowing above the danger mark.

The Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India offered each other support across the Line of Control in this calamity which is affected both countries.

As of today, only military aircraft are flying to Srinagar, and it is not clear if civilian airplanes will start flying from tomorrow.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Bangladesh

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) started larger-scale food distributions on 25 August, reaching close to 4,500 families with dry food during the following week. More than 120 volunteers, including National Disaster Relief Team (NDRT) and National Disaster Water and Sanitation Relief Team (NDWRT) trained staff and volunteers have been mobilized. An additional 12 NDRTs are expected to deploy on 8 September.

BDRCS, with the support of IFRC, has issued a [DREF](#) (CHF 280,160) on 5 September. With the DREF funding, BDRCS has proceeded to procure food and non-food relief items on district and lower administrative levels. Medical teams have been deployed to provide curative medical services in the four worst affected districts. The teams started operating on September 6 and saw more than 700 patients during the first day. The teams are for now expected to stay in the field for a total of 10 days. A water treatment unit (Kit 5) has been deployed and is currently operating in Kurigram district where it has so far produced close to 30,000 litres of safe drinking water. The unit will be moved to additional districts in the coming days and weeks.

BDRCS, supported by the IFRC, is currently working on an expanded Emergency Plan of Action and an emergency appeal will be launched later this week. The appeal is expected to be for approximately CHF 2 million to support up to 10,000 families. The relief component in the DREF will be expanded to meet additional needs

³ <http://www.ndtv.com/article/cheat-sheet/jammu-and-kashmir-floods-nearly-150-dead-pm-in-state-to-assess-situation-587929?curl=1410174208>

and a recovery component including livelihoods, shelter and WASH activities with cash as a key delivery mechanism is being designed.

Nepal

The Nepal Red Cross Society has been playing a major role in the operation, mobilizing more than 100 volunteers, more than 40 staff and several National Disaster Response Team (NDRT), District Disaster Response Team (DDRT) and Community Action for Disaster Response in Emergency (CADRE) members. Utilizing preparedness stocks, non-food relief item (NFRI) distributions started immediately. As the scale of the situation became apparent, NRCS requested a [DREF](#) allocation (CHF 249,709) from the IFRC which was issued on 21 August. So far, NRCS has reached more than 5,000 families with non-food relief items, including water and sanitation and shelter items. Volunteers are active in health and hygiene promotion, restoring family links and assisting the authorities in dead body management.

The [Emergency Appeal](#) (CHF 2.4 million) launched on 27 August, which includes recovery interventions in shelter and risk reduction activities, has not yet attracted significant funding. Unless more funding is received in the coming weeks, targets will not be met in the relief phase. This is a big concern as response and resources from other organizations have mostly been limited.

Pakistan

Since the start of the rainfall in the past week, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has been closely monitoring the situation and is responding in all the affected provinces. At the National Headquarters in Islamabad, the Operational Room was activated to facilitate coordination with provincial and regional branches as well as RCRC Movement partners. At the provincial level, teams were deployed to conduct assessments in affected areas in Punjab and AJK. In addition to deploying assessment teams, the AJK State Branch is coordinating with the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), and conducted distribution of NFRIs in Bagh district. The [PRCS website](#) and the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) are being updated on regular basis.

Two NDRTs have been deployed and sitreps have been issued. Based on preliminary assessment reports, the PRCS is planning to support 5,000 affected families in GB (300), Punjab (4,000) and AJK (700) with food and non-food items, emergency health services as well as emergency shelter. This figure is likely to increase as additional information from the field becomes available. As of today, 70 affected families in Punjab are being supported by the Society while rapid assessment teams have been deployed to affected districts in Punjab and AJK.

The PRCS AJK State Branch is coordinating with the SDMA and deployed teams from the districts of Bagh and Poonch to conduct assessments. Based on the assessment undertaken in Bagh district, distribution of emergency shelters along with non-food items to 62 affected families is being carried out. The content of the relief package includes tents, tarpaulin sheets, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, and blankets.

Two teams of trained staff and volunteers were deployed in the villages of Pothi Chapprian and Bantni Tehsil Hajira of Poonch district to conduct a rapid assessment. PRCS Punjab Provincial Branch in coordination with its District Branches, deployed assessment teams to affected areas in Punjab. The PRCS in Punjab is also coordinating with local disaster management authorities. On the request of the Gilgit Disaster Management Authority, PRCS GB Branch is providing relief assistance in Daiosai, District Astore to affected families.

The IFRC Pakistan Country Delegation has been closely monitoring the situation together with the PRCS, providing technical assistance and coordinating with all in-country Partner National Societies (PNS).

India

Today, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Jammu and Kashmir State Branch staff and volunteers are working round the clock across the state and conducting evacuations from houses, managing relief shelters, and attending to the patients in hospitals. They are also providing food to the displaced in their charge through community mobilization. Around 100 first medical responders (FMR) have so far rescued 270 people, including pregnant women and sick children. The IRCS has established a control room which runs also as a helpline centre. All of the State Branches' offices and staff are also badly affected by the floods; however they continued to respond to the needs of the affected population.

IRCS National Headquarters have been coordinating their response with the state and central authorities, in response to the call for tents, blankets and kitchen sets. Since, yesterday, IRCS has airlifting the following relief supplies to Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir) from Delhi with the help of Indian Air Force aircraft. These included

tents (750), blankets (2,500), kitchen sets (1,000), visibility materials (150), windcheaters jackets (400) and tarpaulins (750).

Following additional supplies will be dispatched from Bahadurgarh warehouse (Delhi) tomorrow such as blankets (1,400), tarpaulin (900), gent's dhoti (400), sarees (400), bed sheets (400), kitchen sets (400), mosquito nets (400), and plastic buckets (400).

The Arakonam (Chennai) and Kolkata warehouses are on alert for the likely dispatches in coming days. It is expected that approximately 2,000 tents will be dispatched from Arakonam in the next 24 hours.

As soon as the situation permits, IRCS will dispatch its NDRT and NDWRT team to Jammu and Kashmir, to support the state branch in evacuation and immediate relief. Similarly, once the access improves, a joint IRCS, IFRC and ICRC assessment will take place in the coming days, as well as assessments of inter-agency groups which are currently on stand-by.

IRCS will continue to provide relief in form of tents and NFRI which are available in their regional warehouses (approximately 5,000 tents available), and have expressed the need for cash support for transport of goods, as well as for more visibility material for the volunteers. Exact needs will be formulated in the coming days, as soon as a more detailed operational plan on the distribution of available stocks is finalized, and an assessment conducted.

Other floods are affecting other parts of India and actions are taken by IRCS in Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Odisha.

IFRC SARD is supporting IRCS in coordination and communication, and will be taking part in the joint assessment. We are also participating in the Sphere-lead inter-agency group, for further coordination. IFRC is in contact with UNDMT, and efforts will be made to unite these different inter-agency coordination efforts.

IRCS has a partnership with Vodafone, which supported its relief efforts in Uttarakhand in 2013. Vodafone representatives have offered support, both in terms of establishing mobile networks (in the absence of functional mobile communication at the moment), and in contribution to relief efforts, as and when those needs are defined.

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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.



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.



South Asia region: Floods

