

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

IRAN DROUGHT: SUPPORT TO AFGHAN REFUGEES

13 November 2002

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 19/02

Launched on 15 July 2002 for CHF 899,000 for 12 months for 65,000 beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries: 65,000

Operations Update No. 1 ;

Period covered: 15 July - 10 November ;

Next Update 2, expected February 2003

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 44.8%

Related Appeals: Middle East and North Africa regional programmes (01.54/2002)

Outstanding needs: 496,656

Summary: Implementation of the operation is underway, targeting 65,000 vulnerable people (mostly Afghan refugees) in the Sistan-va-Baluchistan province of Iran. Beneficiaries are provided with safe drinking water on a daily basis, and participate in other activities, such as preventive health and waste disposal activities. Provided that outstanding appeal needs are covered, and pending the results of an upcoming operational review and needs assessment in the region, a possible extension and/or expansion of the programme will be considered.

Operational Developments w

In July 2002, the Federation launched a second consecutive emergency appeal to assist 65,000 people affected by water shortages in the eastern province of Sistan-va-Baluchistan, close to the border with Afghanistan. Approximately 80 percent of the target population are Afghan refugees living in non-camp settlements of Zabul and Zahedan, with the rest being Iranians deprived of access to safe drinking water in the same areas. The operation is a continuation of the appeal 21/2000.

Serious water shortages in the region are due to a number of factors. A continuing drought has been affecting the whole of Central Asia for the past four years, and eastern parts of Iran have been particularly seriously hit. According to official statistics, the level of rainfall has been decreasing in Zahedan and Zabul since 1999, as indicated in the table below:

Annual rainfall (mm)	Average normal	Mar 99 - Mar 00	Mar 00 - Mar 01	Mar 01 - Mar 02
Zahedan	76	50.3	41.6	13.5
Zabul	76	56.3	33.3	9.1

In addition to drought conditions, Iran has had no access to the water coming from Afghanistan's Helmand river since 1998, in spite of the inter-state agreement allocating 26 cubic meters of water per second to Iran. In October, Afghan authorities opened the Kajaki dam for the first time since 1998, however only for a short period. The dam was closed again in the first week of November. According to Afghan officials, this trend of temporary opening and closing of the dam will continue, depending on the water needs for agricultural production in the region.

Iranian authorities have made efforts to improve water supply in the province, by initiating a campaign to connect 800 villages to a permanent water pipeline. So far, 620 villages have already been connected, however most of them are mainly populated by Iranians, while the Afghan population is still in dire need of water.

In April 2002, UNHCR initiated a voluntary repatriation scheme of Afghan refugees in Iran. Despite a generally positive repatriation process, the number of Afghan refugees in the province of Sistan-va-Baluchistan has remained virtually the same, with only 34,000 out of the total of 380,000 leaving the province as part of this scheme. Those remaining in Iran are having increasing difficulties finding work and being self-supportive, due to new laws being passed preventing organisations from hiring Afghans, because of their lack of residence status.

All above-mentioned indicators reflect continued hardship for Afghan refugees, as well as parts of the Iranian population not having access to permanent water-supply systems. In view of the situation, IRCS and the Federation have continued the drought operation initiated in August 2000, through this emergency appeal. The objectives are to provide clean drinking water to 65,000 people, carry out public health education, as well as waste disposal activities. Approximately 95 percent of the targeted beneficiaries live in Zahedan and the remaining five percent in Zabul.

Coordination w

IRCS and the Federation have been carrying out this operation in close cooperation with provincial authorities. The Zahedan water and sanitation department is organizing chlorination of water, and providing regular information on the general drought situation in the region, ongoing water supply projects, as well as future outlook. In Zabul, regular meetings with the local water department are being held to facilitate water collection and distribution. The health component of the programme is implemented jointly with the department of health.

Also, coordination meetings are being held at field level between IRCS, the Federation, UN agencies and NGOs present in the region. Finally, efforts are being made to coordinate humanitarian assistance provided through this operation with UNHCR, who are responsible for the implementation of the voluntary repatriation scheme that started in April this year.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

IRCS and the Federation have been implementing the operation since 2000. The focus has remained largely the same, both in terms of the beneficiary selection criteria, target numbers, as well as programme objectives. The continuity of the operation has provided the opportunity to refine the implementation modalities and build capacities on the basis of lessons learnt.

A joint Federation-IRCS review of the current operation, as well as possible additional needs in the region, will be carried out in January-February 2003.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w

The provincial IRCS branch has been responsible for the planing and implementation of the project since the very beginning, in close cooperation with the Federation and the IRCS headquarters. Logistical setup, established in the previous operation (appeal 21/2000) has been maintained, with all hardware capacity being in use and managed by the National Society. This includes 23 water tanks, 14 trucks of various capacity, as well as 12 tractors with trailers. Over 60 employees, such as drivers, guards, administration staff, garbage collectors and maintenance staff, as well as a number of field officers and volunteers, have been hired by the National Society branches in Zahedan and Zabul and trained to actively participate in the implementation of all objectives, including data collection, monitoring, administration of water distribution, negotiations with local authorities, health prevention campaign, etc.

Objectives, activities and results w

Water and sanitation w

Objective 1: *Distribute fresh water to the affected population in Zahedan and Zabul, populated mainly by Afghan refugees living in non-camp settlements.*

Approximately 65,000 beneficiaries are assisted on a daily basis with regular supply of fresh drinking water. Of that number, some 61,500 are in Zahedan and 3,500 in Zabul. Presently, the total amount of water distributed is 404,000 litres per day.

In Zahedan, water is collected from three private wells, on the basis of contracts signed between IRCS and well-owners. Prior to distribution, water is systematically chlorinated at chlorine stations administered by the local public health department. In addition, the health department is running mobile check points tasked to check the level of chlorination of water in tanks. The distribution is carried out twice a day, except on Fridays, through 17 fixed water tanks and 10 mobile distribution points. The total amount of water distributed in Zahedan is 344,000 litres per day - an average of 6 litres per person per day. This is due to the fact that most population in Zahedan have access to regular water-supply system. However, the water from the pipeline is saline, and is therefore used in households for other purposes, while the water distributed by IRCS is used exclusively for drinking. In areas with access to regular water supply, fixed tanks are filled only once a day.

In Zabul, the chlorinated water is collected free of charge from two water outlets of the city's water pipeline and distributed in rural areas through seven distribution points. A decrease from 15 distribution points in the previous operation to seven in this one is due to the implementation of the government plan to connect 800 villages in Zabul to regular water supply system. Eight villages targeted by the IRCS operation have been included in that plan, for which reason they were removed from the beneficiary list of this project. Subsequently, the number of beneficiaries decreased from 17,000 to some 3,500. This reduction appears not to affect the total number of target population (65,000). However, this is due to an earlier underestimated calculation of the average family size. In the emergency appeal document, the target number of 16,000 families was made to correspond to 65,000 people, on the basis of the average family size of four. Nevertheless, as the average size of the family is five, the initial target number can be corrected to 80,000 people. Therefore, the exclusion of eight villages in Zabul does represent a decrease in the original beneficiary number from 80,000 to 65,000. Beneficiaries receive an average of 17.5 litres of water per person, thus making the total amount of water distributed in Zabul 60,000 litres per day.

Out of the total fleet available for this project, in Zahedan IRCS is using 11 trucks - six of 12,000 litres capacity, four of 5,000 litres, one of 30,000 litres, as well as 10 water tractors. In Zabul, three trucks of 12,000 litres capacity are being used for water distribution.

Community members, including the women, have been selected to guard water tanks and oversee the delivery and distribution of water. Earlier, they were recruited from the Afghan population, as part of efforts to help them cope with highly limited employment opportunities. However, due to new laws being passed, as elaborated

above, the Afghan workers had to be released and new community workers were recruited from the Iranian target population.

Objective 2: *Clean up solid waste in non-camp settlements, especially in areas close to the existing water distribution points.*

The solid waste disposal project is implemented in Zahedan, with the aim to increase hygiene of the targeted areas, especially those around water distribution points. IRCS has recruited, trained and equipped two teams - 11 solid waste workers and 2 drivers. Similarly to the previous operational component, Afghan community members, earlier recruited and trained for this project, had to be replaced by native Iranians. The teams are responsible for collection of solid waste in allocated sites, and their transport by two tractor-trailers to a special disposal area allocated by the municipality, located 12 km away from Zahedan city. An average of 9,330 kg of waste (21.8 cubic metres) is being disposed of on a daily basis.

Health and care w

Objective 1: *Establish a community based preventive health and hygiene promotion programme, in order to improve the living conditions of the Afghan refugee population in non-camp settlements.*

Reviews of health activities part of the previous emergency appeal have indicated increased awareness of beneficiaries of water-borne diseases and their prevention, hygiene and safe use of water. Therefore, the scope and type of activities within this operation will remain the same. The implementation has not begun yet, however negotiations with the local department of health are underway to reach an agreement on the joint implementation of the health education activities. Pending the finalization of the agreement, trained IRCS volunteers will be used by the department of health in dissemination of preventive health messages. Volunteers will carry out two visits to beneficiaries households, in November 2002 and January 2003 respectively. They will collect the information on the beneficiaries' general health situation, provide advice and guidance on safe use of water, hygiene and health. During the second visit, the teams will distribute some basic hygiene and household items to beneficiaries, pending the availability of funds for this operational component.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives w

This operation mainly targets Afghan refugees living in non-camp settlements who do not have access to clean water and sanitation facilities, and most of whom do not have regulated residence in Iran and therefore cannot qualify for work. IRCS and the Federation play an important role in advocating the need for provision of minimum standard of assistance to refugees, jointly with UNHCR and ICRC. In close cooperation with the authorities, efforts are being made to promote more sustainable ways of providing assistance to refugees, such as construction of wells, while acknowledging their temporary residence on the territory of Iran. Also, inclusion of the vulnerable Iranian population from the same settlements in this operation ensures the balance in provision of assistance and adherence to the criterion of vulnerability as the most important one in identifying target groups.

Female beneficiaries are of major importance in projects such as this one, in view of their central role in the maintenance of households, including the use of water and family hygiene. For that reason, they are especially targeted in health education campaigns, and provided with information on safe use of water, proper hygiene and preventive health measures. Women are also being recruited to supervise and administer water distribution from fixed water tankers.

National Society Capacity Building w

When the operation first started in August 2000, slow donor response imposed prioritisation of objectives and reduction of the original target of 100,000 beneficiaries. Over the past two years, IRCS provincial branch has considerably strengthened its technical and human resources capacity. The vehicle fleet procured through the emergency appeal was handed over to the National Society to replace old malfunctioning trucks and a number of leased vehicles. Human resources have been enhanced, with over 100 new staff and volunteers recruited and

trained. IRCS project coordinators and field officers have assumed a greater number of responsibilities within the programme.

Federation Delegation w

The Federation delegation is assisting IRCS in the overall operational management, by coordinating donor response, monitoring the implementation and providing technical assistance to IRCS in capacity building with a focus on planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, facilitation in the strengthening of human and financial resources and standardization of procedures.

Direct support to the National Society is provided by the relief delegate, mainly responsible for monitoring of project implementation. A field officer based in Zahedan is in charge for daily coordination of activities with the IRCS provincial branch, as well as monitoring and data collection, including information on weather conditions, health statistics, repatriation process and other information necessary for the evaluation of the impact of the operation on the most vulnerable.

Advocacy/Public Information w

Most activities to advocate the needs and rights of the target population are made at the field level, through cooperation with local authorities, UN and NGOs present in the region. Local and international media are active in the follow up of the drought situation in the region, as well as issues of water distribution between Afghanistan and Iran. Finally, IRCS and the Federation are using their respective web sites to draw further attention of external partners and general public to the need to continue supporting this needed operation. The Federation's regional delegation in Amman is assisting in further media mobilization on this issue.

Outstanding needs w

The current level of donor support will ensure a smooth running of the operation until March 2003 only. Donors are hereby strongly encouraged to respond to the outstanding needs of this appeal. Provided that present appeal needs are covered, and following the upcoming review of the operation and a related needs assessment in the region, possible extension and/or expansion of the programme will be considered.

For further details please contact: Evgeni Parfenov, Phone : 41 22 730 43 25; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: parfenov@ifrc.org.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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Iran - Drought, support to Afghan refugees						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 19/2002		PLEDGES RECEIVED			13.11.2002	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				899'000		TOTAL COVERAGE 44.8%
AMERICAN - PRIVATE DONOR		140	USD	218	31.07.2002	
FINNISH - RC		20'000	EUR	29'396	14.08.2002	
GERMAN - RC		50'000	EUR	73'400	11.09.2002	
JAPANESE - RC		20'000	USD	29'480	14.08.2002	
SWEDISH - RC		750'000	SEK	119'850	25.07.2002	
SWISS - GOVT				150'000	28.08.2002	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				402'344	CHF	44.8%