

# 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

## AFGHANISTAN: SEVERE WINTER

25 February 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

**Appeal No. 05EA003; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 21 February to 23 February, 2005; Appeal coverage: 21.1%** ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

#### Appeal history:

- Launched on 21 February, 2005 for CHF 812,000 (USD 686,330 or EUR 525,620) for three months to assist 17,542 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 100,000.

**Outstanding needs: CHF 641,000 (USD 547,785 or EUR 416,149)**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Afghanistan [Annual Appeal 05AA045](#)**

**Operational Summary:** This operation has been quickly initiated to assist the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) respond to the severe winter conditions in Kabul by providing a basic support to more than 17,000 persons whose vulnerability has been worsened by heavy snow and rain falls and temperatures reaching -16 C at night. There has been a positive response from donors/partners at the local level. ARCS is receiving support from Afghanistan traders and other private donors.

*For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:*

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## Background

Afghanistan has been suffering from extremely severe winter conditions since mid-January with heavy snowfalls, rain and bitterly cold conditions. Hundreds of people have died nationwide as a result. The Afghanistan Red Crescent has been given a major role in assisting 3,435 highly vulnerable families of internally displaced persons (IDPs) currently living in very basic conditions in Kabul. They are in the process of being relocated in three districts. While this process is continuing, many have to live in old and partially damaged buildings which offer little protection against the elements.

## Operational developments

### Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

#### Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)

**Overall Objective:** to improve the lives of IDPs and returnees in Kabul severely affected by the adverse winter weather and meet the urgent humanitarian needs of 3,435 unassisted families and strengthen the capacity of the Afghanistan Red Crescent through disaster preparedness and response.

**Specific objective 1:** to distribute basic food items to 3,435 families and non-food items to 1,484 families covering a three-month period and to replenish the disaster preparedness stocks used during this response.

#### Progress/Achievements



*A woman from one of 450 families to receive non-food items from ARCS on Thursday*

The registration and distribution of family cards has been completed in the three settlements where the government has decided to relocate the people previously living in tents and the process has started in the 22 temporary settlements where the target beneficiaries are located. Non-food items were distributed to 450 families on 24 February. Each family received a kit containing six blankets, two collapsible jerrycans, one kitchen set and eight square metres of plastic sheeting.

The logistics capacity of the national society is being built by providing training and coaching of ARCS staff during the whole process. The procurement process has commenced with tendering documents prepared and most of the suppliers have been identified. Non-food items already available from disaster preparedness stocks have been quickly released to allow for the rapid organisation of distribution to 2,000 families.

List of relief items released and distributed to 450 families on 24 February:

Item	Unit	Quantity	Location		
			Markazi Talimi	Takhnicum	Risat-e-panj
Jerry Can	piece	808	168	340	300
Blanket	piece	2,424	504	1020	900
Plastic Roll	roll	134	28	56	50
Kitchen Set	set	404	84	170	150

#### Impact:

Impact is difficult to measure in the early days of the operation. However, the ongoing distribution of relief items will improve the basic living conditions of the target beneficiaries who are particularly vulnerable. The knowledge that they are receiving or about to receive assistance provides an important psychological boost for people who have gone many days without help.

Good logistics efficiency in Kabul is aiding a rapid response, allowing for fast procurement and distribution. Given the brutal weather, time is a crucial factor. The operation is also assisting the capacity of the national society in the creation of a logistics department.

**Constraints:**

As outlined above logistics organised with the assistance of the Federation delegation are good. However, the operation is highlighting the national society's lack of a logistics structure and appropriate financial systems.

**Specific Objective 2: to construct community latrines, re habilitate existing toilets facilities for women and children and provide hygiene and preventive health education to the selected communities.**

**Progress/Achievements**

The Federation water and sanitation local engineer has been urgently repatriated from Herat. He has carried out the preliminary assessments in the selected settlements and is in the process of drafting the preliminary plan of action with his ARCS counterpart. Emergency actions have been taken with the construction of 27 latrines, rehabilitation and upgrading of existing facilities and the ongoing construction of specific latrines for children. A garbage collection system is being implemented in order to reduce the health risks and improve the sanitation conditions.



*ARCS staff are busy compiling beneficiary lists to aid quick, targeted distribution to the most vulnerable.*

Representatives of the communities are being identified and volunteers will be recruited in order to carry out hygiene promotion and preventive health care sessions with the targeted beneficiaries. ARCS community-based first aid (CBFA) volunteers are involved and will lead the sensitisation process. In the meantime, two medical emergency mobile units (EMU) have been deployed covering the three mentioned settlements in order to provide curative health care and to refer serious cases to hospital and clinics. More than 850 individuals have been seen by the medical teams to date.

**Impact:**

The immediate needs are being covered in terms of hardware construction or rehabilitation and the long-term sustainable assistance is being prepared by adopting a participatory approach.

**Constraints:**

The main constraint is cultural. It is difficult to bring changes in mentalities, especially when it comes to hygiene education and gender. The appropriate persons must be identified in order to convey the messages with the most effective impact.

**Specific Objective 3: to improve the capacity of ARCS in disaster preparedness and response.**

**Progress/Achievements**

Guidance and support is being provided to the ARCS disaster response units in the planning of an emergency operation, organising relief distributions and producing accurate narrative reports. Two multi-purpose tents and 13 VHF radio handsets have been handed over to ARCS.

**Impact:**

This emergency situation represents a good opportunity to test the ability and the efficiency of the ERU and disaster management (DM) personnel of ARCS. So far, the response is very satisfactory and the DM department of the Federation delegation is constantly providing support to its counterparts throughout the implementation of the operation.

**Constraints:**

Language can sometimes be a constraint as well as the lack of proper existing mechanisms within the national society.

**Federation Coordination**

The Federation is giving the lead role to ARCS and is only providing support and guidance. The delegation advocates for the national society by providing information to the traditional partners such as UN agencies and institutional donors in Kabul. Regular coordination meetings are being held between ARCS and Federation and information is being shared with the ICRC on regular basis.

**Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives**

Priority is being given to providing strong support and guidance to ARCS during the relief operation. Lessons learned will be emphasised and further support should be provided to the national society in this important and crucial period of change.

Awareness of the Movement's principles and humanitarian values will be disseminated to the beneficiaries during the relief operation, emphasising on non-discrimination and gender issues. Youth volunteers from Kabul will be involved in the dissemination of humanitarian values.

**National Society Capacity Building**

Constant guidance and support is being provided to the newly appointed ARCS management and to each concerned department involved in the operation. Integration of different programmes has been adopted and the OD capacity of the Federation is involved at every stage of the operation in order to provide appropriate and sustainable support to the national society.

**Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

Supported by the Federation delegation, ARCS is liaising with local media on the National Society response. Further contacts will be developed and international media approached and updated on the operation. Embassies and foreign missions will be updated on the operation. The first distributions which took place on 24 February received good coverage from local media (including national television channels) resulting in private donations an enhancing the image and profile of the Afghanistan Red Crescent.

**[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)**

# Afghanistan - Severe Winter

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA003

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

25/02/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

						TOTAL COVERAGE
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>812,000</b>		<b>21.1%</b>
SWEDISH - GOVT		1,000,000	SEK	171,000	22.02.05	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				171,000	CHF	21.1%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	