

# Operations update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Viet Nam: Floods

Emergency appeal n° MDRVN005  
GLIDE [FF-2008-000211-VNM](#)  
Operations update n° 1  
20 November 2008

**Period covered by this Operations Update:** 13-18 November 2008

**Appeal target (current):** CHF 4,779,037 (USD 4.07 million or EUR 3.17 million) in cash, kind, or services to support the Viet Nam Red Cross Society in assisting 293,860 beneficiaries (70,000 households) for 10 months

**Appeal coverage:** 8.8%; with further contributions in the pipeline. Funds are urgently needed to enable the Viet Nam Red Cross to provide assistance to the affected population. [<click here for contact details >](#)

### Appeal history:

- This emergency appeal was initially launched on 12 November 2008 for CHF 4,779,037 (USD 4.07 million or EUR 3.17 million) for 10 months to assist 293,860 beneficiaries.

### Summary:

The Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) has been mobilized in the affected areas and is collecting information from local authorities and their own branch structures. Overall, the situation is being mapped with a clearer picture of the situation forming, as provinces provide updates on their individual situations and activities implemented in the affected communities.

Government statistics indicate that a total cost of USD 28,210,000 (CHF 34 million or EUR 22.3 million) is needed to recover agricultural production for this year's winter crop and the spring crop in 2009. The government is able to cover up to USD 10,820,000 (CHF 13.04 million or EUR 8.6 million) in this recovery effort while the farming community will cover USD 5,950,000 (CHF 7.17 million or EUR 4.7 million). The Vietnamese government is seeking International aid to cover the remaining gap of USD 11,440,000 (CHF 13.8 million or EUR 9.06 million).

To date, American Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, and USAID have pledged to contribute to this appeal, and other contributions are in the pipeline.

The International Federation, on behalf of the Viet Nam Red Cross, would like to thank all partners for their response to this appeal to date.

## The situation

Six days of torrential rainfall from 30 October to 4 November have caused severe flooding in several northern and central provinces of Viet Nam. According to the ministry of agriculture and rural development, at least 89 people are dead and 600,000 people have been critically affected by the flooding. Damage to property and land is widespread, covering 180,000 houses, some 210,000 hectares of vegetable fields, 30,000 hectares of rice fields, and 40,000 hectares of aquaculture farms. Furthermore, transport and electricity have been disrupted, while public amenities such as health facilities and schools have also been badly damaged. Total losses are estimated at up to VND 8,000 billion (USD 479 million or EUR 379 million).

The Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) society has been mobilized in the affected areas and is collecting information from local authorities and their own branch structures.

Parts of the affected area still remain inundated and access to remote areas is slowly getting better. As Vietnamese communities have experienced certain levels of flooding, they have developed a wide variety of coping mechanisms. People do not stay in the temporary evacuation shelters more than absolutely necessary. They generally return to their homes as soon as water levels recede or once storms have passed. These activities vary from changing modes of transport from bike to bamboo boat, to sharing living quarters with one's piglets to ensure they are not drowned.

Vietnamese television is disseminating messages to the public on preparedness measures. These include raising floors, stocking food and drinking water, and information on building techniques for temporary underground cyclone shelters. Means of transport in most areas is by boat and most houses have their bamboo boats stored hanging under their roofs, ready to be used as and when needed.

Those whose homes still stand face the challenges of pumping and keeping water out, and extensive cleaning of their living quarters. Those whose houses have been completely destroyed find shelter with extended families or relatives during the rebuilding of their homes. The restoration of livelihoods and the cleaning of community common areas are tasks that face all those affected.



**The damage to homes and property caused by this flooding is widespread. Up to 180,000 houses have been flooded or damaged, while some 210,000 hectares of vegetable fields, 30,000 hectares of rice fields, and 40,000 hectares of aquaculture farms have suffered its effects. Due to this destruction, there is a fear of food shortage in the longer term.**

In the villages of Tien Nha and Cuong Son in Bac Giang province, hundreds of hectares of farmland has been destroyed. What were flourishing vegetable and rice fields have now lost their crops. These areas are also void of people, many of whom, after being struck by typhoon Hagupit in September 2008, were provided with seeds for new planting and were hopeful of a new crop. Less than a month later, however, these fledgling plants have been swept away by the flood.

In My Hung in Quang Minh village, the main livelihood activity is pig farming. In order to protect their livestock

from the flood waters, many people have taken to keeping their animals in their family living areas. In response, the ministry of health has taken to spraying disinfectant to sanitize these areas to prevent health risks.

In several regions, particularly where agricultural production is the main source of income, people are challenged in re-establishing their livelihoods with the lack of vegetable and rice seedlings. In the long term, the need to address a possible food shortage is critical. In the Northern provinces, it is now too late to start new crop planting and expected a yield by spring (February). Even with the provision of seeds, the only hope is to wait until summer harvest in June. An alternative is to plant maize and sweet potato to supplement rice as the staple food of the Vietnamese people. Villagers affected are concerned with obtaining seeds for new plantation and more seriously how to secure food (rice) at critical times, such as before and after the Lunar New Year (from January to May) when relief distribution from different sources is finished.

Immediate needs for rice have become even more urgent. In an online meeting chaired by a deputy prime minister, 17 provinces affected by the floods have requested immediate government support of 8,400 tonnes of rice for a three-month period to the worst-hit communities who have lost all farm produce. Furthermore, the affected provinces also requested 15 tonnes of Chloramine-B tablets for water purification, 25,000 litres of disinfection chemicals, 220 units of local standard emergency medical kits, and about 1.4 million units of livestock vaccinations.

On 14 November, the ministry of agriculture and rural development requested the government to urgently release 45 tonnes of vegetable seeds, 275 tonnes of rice seedlings, and cash support of VND 1 million (CHF 72 or USD 60) to one hectare of farm for the winter crop. The ministry has also supported the request of the 17 provinces mentioned earlier for immediate food aid of 8,400 tonnes of rice to those affected.

The government has responded to this request on 18 November, by releasing 5,400 tonnes of rice, 45 tonnes of vegetable seeds, and cash of VND 310 billion (CHF 22.4 million or USD 18.6 million) for the repair of public facilities such as schools, health stations, irrigation system and roads in rural areas.

Food assistance with the aid of the Red Cross and other organizations will help fill the gap of 3,000 tonnes of rice that is presently not covered by government support.

A meeting held on 19 November focused on updates of the damages and needs, and called for international assistance. This effort is facilitated by UNDP with the participation of the disaster management working group (DMWG) members and the central committee for flood and storm control (CCFSC). Government statistics indicate that a total cost of USD 28,210,000 (CHF 34 million or EUR 22.3 million) is needed to recover agricultural production for this year's winter crop and the spring crop in 2009. The government is able to cover up to USD 10,820,000 (CHF 13.04 million or EUR 8.6 million) in this recovery effort while the farming community will cover USD 5,950,000 (CHF 7.17 million or EUR 4.7 million). The Vietnamese government is seeking International aid to cover the remaining gap of USD 11,440,000 (CHF 13.8 million or EUR 9.06 million).

The government's efforts to provide immediate assistance in the form of rice and seed to the flood-affected population in the northern and north-central regions of Vietnam continues to be challenged by new heavy rains (13 November) and typhoon Noul (17 November) which hit the central provinces of Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan. According to local news, seven people are reported dead, and three injured. Nine houses collapsed, and 110 others damaged. About 92,000 people have been evacuated by the government to safer areas. The VNRC assisted the government's efforts in evacuation. About 1,000 hectares of rice fields have been destroyed and 1,000 hectares of sugar cane uprooted. Updates on related damages are on-going.

## Coordination and partnerships

The national society, with technical support from the International Federation country office and disaster management unit (DMU) in Kuala Lumpur, maintains regular coordination meetings to share information on needs/gaps and update on new developments.

The International Federation also hosts discussions with other partner national societies including Spanish Red Cross, German Red Cross and Australian Red Cross which are engaged in the operations to support the national society to response to the needs.



Floods in Toi village, Me Linh district on the outskirts of Hanoi, where vegetables are cultivated and transported to Hanoi, have destroyed the crop. Produce is imported from China to fill the need but vegetable prices have risen, and may be a problem for many Vietnamese for whom vegetables are an essential item in their daily diet. (Photo: [www.vnexpress.net](http://www.vnexpress.net))

The plan of action format was developed and shared between VNRC and International Federation, providing a tool for the national society to effectively plan and prioritize the operation. Mapping of existing and incoming resources remains a key activity. The plan was shared with UNDP, the central committee for flood and storm control (CCFSC) and the national disaster management working group (DMWG) consisting of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) working in relief activities.

Through the regional logistics unit (RLU) in Kuala Lumpur, the International Federation has supported the VNRC in developing a mobilization table, available on the [disaster management information system](#) (DMIS), as a tool to support the international mobilization of in-kind relief items. With the national society's buffer stock running very low, household kits will be mobilized from the RLU's warehouse in Kuala Lumpur. The VNRC is working hard to expedite complex import requirements to prepare for the arrival of these relief items.

### **National Society Capacity Building**

With the support of the Federation country office, the VNRC continues to strengthen its efforts at local level. Teams are sent out into the field to provide technical support on organization of relief distribution, planning for monitoring and reporting.

Regular updates on the situation are maintained to provide partners with information on relief activities and the direction of the national society's work.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

### **Overview**

The VNRC's initial relief included cash for families who have lost their family members, instant noodles, rice, blankets and mosquito nets. These items were covered by the national society's headquarters and the chapters' own contingency funds of over VND 600 million (CHF 43,300 or USD 36,000), and have benefited nearly 4,900 people in ten provinces. VNRC preparedness stocks were proven effective when used in the initial phase of the disaster. [<Distribution details>](#)

The overall situation is being mapped and formed as provinces provide updates on their situation and activities implemented in affected communities. However, challenges exist in reporting from the field as response operations overlap in areas that have been repeatedly struck by disaster.

### **Progress towards objectives**

#### **Relief (food):**

Initial food distributions have taken place through VNRC emergency funding that was sent to provincial chapters for local procurement and provision of emergency aid. Further procurement is planned to start next week based on the allocation of contributions. The regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur has provided guidelines for procurement following International Federation procedures, and will support the process.

#### **Non-food items:**

VNRC has made and updated initial plans of intended distributions and is in process of prioritizing the plan based on further details from the field. This plan is shared among the International Federation country office and national society representatives in-country, and will be further updated based on the level of appeal coverage and implementation.

Immediate release of preparedness stocks have been supported by various in-country partners and donors. The German Red Cross will bilaterally support the VNRC with EUR 66,000 (CHF 99,651 or USD 83,279) in the form of 3,500 household kits and hygiene items including toothbrushes, toothpaste, and face cloths, for the affected areas of Ninh Binh and Ha Noi.

Bilateral support is also being given by Swiss Red Cross which will provide 2,000 household kits and 40 tonnes of rice, giving priority to the provinces of Nghe An, Ha Tinh and Quang Binh. A further 2,000 household kits are being prepared with assistance from USAID. A plan for distribution of these supplies is being drawn up by the VNRC and will target the four provinces of Vinh Phuc, Ha Nam, Ha Noi, and Ninh Binh

**Water and sanitation:**

Direct activities for water and sanitation in this appeal are focused towards longer term recovery. Identification of beneficiaries and detailed plans are being finalized. In the meantime, Australian Red Cross are assisting in the water and sanitation component of the operation by providing a water and sanitation kit for 5,000 people, (including a water purification unit), in addition to two water and sanitation delegates to support the VNRC with site selection, operation, training and handover of the water and sanitation kit.

**Livelihood Support:**

The International Federation will participate together with the French Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross at the agricultural sector coordination meeting arranged by the natural disaster mitigation partnership. This meeting was called after Viet Nam's request of assistance to the FAO.

There are clear indications that livelihood support will be an increasing issue as areas hit by several storms and affected by floods lost their re-planted crops as well.

**Institutional Capacity:**

Provincial level VNRC chapters are in key roles when implementing emergency relief and support. Recent relief operations have clearly demonstrated the need to support and guide VNRC headquarters in their training and monitoring activities.

**Challenges:**

Vietnam Red Cross Society have been implementing emergency response operations in three "waves": Typhoon Kammuri, Typhoon Hagupit, and the present floods operation have kept field personnel busy at provincial and district levels. One big challenge to address in this floods emergency appeal operation is to distinguish the activities from each operation when reporting on them. For VNRC field staff, this separation is artificial and those reporting on individual operations will need to creatively find solutions to map different activities.

Reporting from the field also needs compilations and verification within VNRC as they have several donors for all of their operations. Chapters in the field need to improve their methods of verifying information and record-keeping to track their different sources of assistance.

Under this appeal, the VNRC and the International Federation country office in Vietnam will be supported with short-term logistics assistance from the regional logistics unit, and technical assistance from other relevant units at the regional and zone offices. The possibility of human resource support for operation coordination either in-country or from the region is currently under discussion.

**How we work**

*All International Federation 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 is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

**Global Agenda Goals:**

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

## Contact information

### For further information specifically related to this operation, please contact:

- Viet Nam Red Cross: Mr. Doan Van Thai, secretary general, phone +84 913.216.549, email: [doanvanthai62@yahoo.com.vn](mailto:doanvanthai62@yahoo.com.vn)
- Federation country office, Viet Nam: Mr. Dang Van Tao, disaster management manager, phone +84 913.361.581, email: [tao.vandang@ifrc.org](mailto:tao.vandang@ifrc.org)
- Federation Southeast Asia regional office in Bangkok (phone: +66 2 6661 8201):
  - Alan Bradbury, head of regional office, email: [alan.bradbury@ifrc.org](mailto:alan.bradbury@ifrc.org)
  - Patrick Fox, head of Southeast Asia disaster management unit, email: [patrick.fox@ifrc.org](mailto:patrick.fox@ifrc.org).
  - Lasse Norgaard, communications delegate, phone: +66 847 526 441, email: [lasse.norgaard@ifrc.org](mailto:lasse.norgaard@ifrc.org)
- Federation Asia Pacific zone office, Kuala Lumpur (phone: +603 9207 5700):
  - Heikki Väättämoinen, disaster response delegate phone: +6012 230 7895, email: [heikki.vaatamoinen@ifrc.org](mailto:heikki.vaatamoinen@ifrc.org)
  - Penny Elghady, resource mobilization and PMER coordinator, phone: +6012 230 8634, email: [penny.elghady@ifrc.org](mailto:penny.elghady@ifrc.org)  
*Please send pledges of funding to [zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org](mailto:zonerm.asiapacific@ifrc.org)*
  - For mobilization of relief items: (fax: +60 3 2168 8573)
    - Jeremy Francis, regional logistics coordinator, phone: +60 12 298 9752, email: [jeremy.francis@ifrc.org](mailto:jeremy.francis@ifrc.org)
    - Aysegul Bagci, regional logistics delegate, phone +60 12 295 6730, email: [aysegul.bagci@ifrc.org](mailto:aysegul.bagci@ifrc.org)

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**Utility of cash released from VNRC HQs to local chapters**

No	Province	Total received (mil VND)	Utility purpose					Beneficiaries	
			Dead	Support for rebuilding houses (house)	Instant noodles (box)	Rice (tonne)	Seeds		Blanket and mosquito net
1	Thai Nguyen	30	6	4			6		220
2	Vinh Phuc	30	7	16	250				332
3	Hoa Binh	30	5			5			500
4	Hanoi	150	34		1,344				1,378
5	Ninh Binh	50	1			5.5			550
6	Thanh Hoa	60	15					167	835
7	Nghe An	100	30			10			1,030
8	Ha Tinh	50							
9	Ha Nam	50							
10	Quang Binh	50	1			5.5			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,594</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>4,845</b>

**Note:**

- \_ Dead: families received VND 2 million/deceased person (VND 2 million = CHF 145 or USD 120)
- \_ Instant noodles: 1 box/family