

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° 2
9 December 2008

Period covered by this Operations Update: 19 November to 5 December 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: 30.85%¹. Funds are urgently needed to enable the Viet Nam Red Cross to provide assistance to the affected population. [<click for donor response or 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:

Relief assistance in form of food and non-food items continues to reach the affected people through the Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC). In some affected areas, this is the second time that Red Cross support has been given to the affected since the early stage of the emergency. In others, Red Cross relief items have been the only support received so far. As such, for many beneficiaries, the distributed items of either rice or household kits also provide psychological comfort.

The interviewed beneficiaries, Red Cross field staff and the local authorities in the field expressed concern for food security for the period after the Lunar New Year (February) to the next harvest (May), when no assistance is guaranteed. In addition, the affected communities are in need of rice seed support for the upcoming planting season in February 2009. At present, the government's relief and recovery assistance plans are in the planning phase.

In addition to the response through the emergency appeal, some participating national societies are supporting the VNRC to meet various needs at local level. While this assistance does not come through the appeal, it comes under the overall support from the Movement to the needs identified and presented in the emergency appeal by the VNRC. Nevertheless, further assistance to fill the gap on food and livelihood is urgently sought.



In Thien Loi commune, Kim Bang district, Ha Nam province, damaged rice crops spread far and wide. The need for rice seedlings becomes increasingly urgent to recover farm production and avoid food shortages. (Photo: International Federation/Dang Van Tao)

To date, American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross/Netherlands government, Swedish Red Cross/Swedish government, the Norwegian embassy and USAID have pledged to contribute to this appeal. Bilateral support includes Australian Red Cross, Swiss Red

¹ Including soft pledges

Cross and German Red Cross through its government.

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

The situation

The affected communities have begun to resume their usual activities. However, they continue to live without the security they enjoyed before the floods. There is a concern for longer-term food security once the assistance from different resources is consumed as the affected populations lack the means for them to recover. In Thanh Oai district, one of the worst hit areas in Hanoi, some 3,000 hectares of farm land and 2,000 tonnes of fish aquaculture have been lost.

There are increasingly pressing needs for livestock and rice seeds to be available for the spring crop (February 2009). According to Ha Nam Red Cross chapter, the affected communities in the province will need about 450 tonnes of rice and vegetable seeds, as well as livestock, to recover their farm production. In some areas, for instance Thanh Oai district, Ha Noi, the local people committees recently provided seeds to the villagers from their own resources. In many other locations, people are waiting for assistance from the local governments. However, the government's relief and rehabilitation are still at planning stage.

In many places, it is rather late to replant rice for the winter crop which falls in October/November. To cope with the shortage of produce, local governments are providing people with vegetable seeds for short-term cultivation to fulfill their daily diet, while waiting for the upcoming planting season next February. The affected population and the Red Cross at local levels in areas where there is Red Cross assistance are worried that villagers may not have seeds in time for February. Any support for seeds is urgently needed and much welcome to help the affected people prepare for the upcoming planting season.

The local authorities have also expressed their concern over a step back in poverty reduction. In Cuong Son commune, Bac Giang province, there are 400 poor households which account for 34.7 per cent of the population (source: local authorities 2007 statistics). It is believed that the poverty rate is likely to increase after the disaster.

Statistics from the local news on the damages have been updated with slight increase in numbers, showing an immediate need for seed and livestock to help the affected people restore their livelihoods.

Number of deaths	Number of people affected	Number of houses damaged	Vegetable fields damaged (hectare)	Rice fields damaged (hectare)	Aquaculture farms damaged (hectare)
89	600,000	180,231	240,460	27,719	30,140

During this reporting period, the VNRC also responded to the impact by typhoon Noul (17 November), by joining the government's efforts to evacuate people and provide emergency relief items including mosquito nets and cash distributions to the affected. Although the typhoon did not directly affect the central provinces of Viet Nam, it caused much destruction, particularly in Phu Yen province. According to the Phu Yen Red Cross chapter, 11 people were reported dead, one missing and two injured. 80 houses, seven classrooms, and one health station were severely damaged. Agricultural production, irrigation system, and roads were also badly impacted. The total damage is estimated at VND 45 billion.

In Quang Nam, mountainous districts such as Nam Tra My have been fully inaccessible because of heavy rains and landslides. Seven communes in this district with 1,250 families of 6,347 people need urgent food support while 2,175 families of 9,984 people will soon be at risk of food shortage. The situation has also become urgent for some 2,500 children and 150 teachers in a school for ethnic minority children. As land access has been blocked by landslides, a variety of transportation means were used to facilitate the distribution of 70 boxes of instant noodles, 115 warm clothes, 160 sets of gifts and other relief supplies from the warehouse of the district's people committee.

Coordination and partnerships

The VNRC, through its Red Cross chapters in the provinces and districts, provides regular updates on information on needs/gaps, implemented and upcoming activities.

The plan of action format and the mapping of existing and incoming resources remain key tools developed by the Federation and continue to prove useful for the national society in managing their operations and to share with other partners. The Red Cross response to the floods is also updated with the national disaster management working group and other stakeholders.

National Society Capacity Building

With the support of the Federation country office, the VNRC continues to strengthen its efforts at local level. It deployed field teams to provide technical support on organization of relief distribution, planning for monitoring and reporting.

In chapters with strong capacity such as the Vinh Phuc Red Cross chapter, Red Cross volunteers are actively engaged in various activities. While the health sector is taking care of environmental sanitation such as carrying out disinfection to prevent water-borne diseases, Red Cross volunteers are cleaning houses and water wells. The Red Cross volunteers have supported the relief operation with the transportation and distribution of household kits.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Overview

With response from the Movement to the needs presented by the VNRC through the emergency appeal, VNRC is currently providing relief support to beneficiaries in the affected areas. About 2,000 household kits have been distributed to the affected population in the four provinces of Ha Noi, Ninh Binh, Vinh Phuc and Ha Nam under USAID support through the emergency appeal. Another 3,270 kits and hygiene items have been delivered by the VNRC through the German Red Cross. Distribution of 2,000 household kits and 40 tonnes of rice from the Swiss Red Cross through the VNRC is underway. The Australian Red Cross is supporting the water and sanitation component with the provision of water and sanitation kits for 5,000 people. Technical support in site selection, operation and training is also provided by two water and sanitation delegates from the Australian Red Cross.

Mapping relief support is being updated by the VNRC headquarters, providing a tool for coordination of support.

Progress towards objectives

Relief (food):

The food component under this appeal has not entered implementation. However, the VNRC has been implementing emergency response operations in three "waves": Typhoon Kammuri, Typhoon Hagupit, and the present floods operation; during this reporting period 290 tonnes of rice were distributed to the worse-affected people in the three provinces of Bac Giang, Son La, and Quang Ninh under the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) operation for Typhoon Hagupit. Among these provinces, Bac Giang and Son La have subsequently been affected by the three waves of disasters. In total, 966 families have been supported.

Also through the VNRC, 40 tonnes of rice have been delivered to the affected people in the three provinces of Nghe An, Ha Tinh and Quang Binh from the Swiss Red Cross.



While Red Cross intervention has helped provide emergency relief items in the form of household kits, efforts are to be made in ensuring not only an even distribution of supplies, but more so, on the particular needs of communities affected. (Photo: International Federation/Dang Van Tao)

Non-food items:

About 2,000 families in the four provinces of Vinh Phuc, Ha Nam, Ha Noi and Ninh Binh have received household kits as of 1 December with the support of USAID through the emergency appeal. For the affected areas of Ninh Binh and Ha Noi, this is the second assistance from the Red Cross to the impacted people since the emergency relief in terms of instant noodles and rice distributed in the early stage of the floods. For the Tan Son commune, Ninh Binh province, since the occurrence of the flood, the only assistance reaching this community so far has come from the Red Cross. The following table describes the distribution of household kits under USAID assistance.

Province	Household kits	Number of selected		Distribution date
		Districts	Communes	
Hanoi	600	2	8	28 November and 1 December
Ninh Binh	500	2	2	27 November
Vinh Phuc	400	2	7	28 November
Ha Nam	500	2	10	27 and 28 November
Total	2,000	8	27	

Additionally, the VNRC distributed 3,270 household kits and hygiene items including toothbrushes, toothpaste, and face cloths, to the flood-stricken areas of Ninh Binh and Ha Noi through the German Red Cross on 5 December. The figure is derived from the initially planned distribution of 3,500 household kits and is reduced due to fluctuation in exchange rates and rising prices in procurement of these items.

The distribution of about 2,000 household kits and 40 tonnes of rice in provinces of Nghe An, Ha Tinh and Quang Binh, bilaterally supported by the Swiss Red Cross, was completed on 5 December.

The VNRC prepared a distribution plan these supplies with technical assistance from the Federation country office and zonal office to ensure a coordinated allocation of relief distribution.

The mobilization table opened for this operation has been fully covered by in-kind contributions from the Japanese Red Cross, British Red Cross and Netherlands Red Cross. In-kind contributions including 6,500 kitchen sets and 22,000 blankets were shipped by sea from the Kuala Lumpur regional logistics warehouse in Malaysia. The VNRC is hastening custom clearance to distribute the imported goods quickly. Earlier this week, 22,000 mosquito nets donated in-kind but procured from the global framework agreement supplier (from their Viet Nam factory) arrived at the VNRC's warehouse.

Water and sanitation:

The water filtration unit supported by the Australian Red Cross arrived on 3 December. The equipment is set to produce clean drinking water for 2,000 people at a capacity of 5,000 litres per hour. A training session on how to run the equipment was conducted for the staff of VNRC headquarters and Hanoi chapter on 5 December. The German Red Cross which is implementing the water and sanitation programme in Viet Nam also attended this training to share its experience with the project. As the emergency water provision needs have been met, the equipment will be stored by VNRC for future deployment.

Institutional Capacity:

The Red Cross at district and commune levels which plays key roles when implementing emergency relief and recovery support closely cooperates with the local authorities in the implementation of its activities.

There is a clear need that a plan to give support to and guide the Red Cross at district and commune levels on implementation of Red Cross activities will be discussed with the VNRC headquarters to improve the quality of service provided to beneficiaries. The plan will include representatives from the local authorities who are major partners of Red Cross in emergency response to ensure that all partners engaging in Red Cross activities have more knowledge of the Movement, the fundamental principles and the nature of Red Cross services.

Challenges:

Much effort is needed to transform the accepted method of distributing relief evenly to all affected provinces, rather than to focus on needs. Training on the Movement, Fundamental Principles and response in emergency will be provided to the Red Cross at its grassroots, particularly the district and commune levels.

While there are strong chapters which have well-implemented relief distributions, other chapters still need regular support from the VNRC headquarters to conduct more organized distributions.

The VNRC will continue to improve its monitoring skills and use monitoring reports for management.

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:

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[<click here to return to title page>](#)