

CENTRAL ASIA: COLD AND HUNGER (WINTER 1998 - 1999)

15 March 1999

appeal no. 34/98

situation report no. 1

period covered: 12 November 1998 - 20 February 1999

Despite the harsh winter conditions that made this appeal necessary, the funding response has been very low, paralysing most of the projected programmes and severely reducing the number of scheduled beneficiaries. Altogether, fewer than 10,000 beneficiaries out of a targeted 480,000 are receiving help.

The context

This appeal targets 480,000 of the most vulnerable in the four Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, who have endured a series of hardships in the last year, including a severe winter in 1997-98, spring floods and landslides in the mountain and delta regions, and drought and crop failure in the steppe and lowland areas. All these disasters have taken place in the context of severe, widespread economic decline.

Projected beneficiaries of the appeal are mainly isolated elderly people, multichildren families and others affected by flooding in late spring 1998 and who lack the basic necessities for confronting harsh winter conditions.

Latest events

Although the appeal was launched more than three months ago (on 12 November 1998) response to date represents only 15 per cent of the amount needed. As a result of this very low response fewer than 10,000 people are currently being assisted, as opposed to a total of 480,000 beneficiaries targeted by the appeal.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Public Canteens

The appeal scheduled the opening of 25 soup kitchens/public canteens but so far because of funding shortages only two canteens, in Kazakhstan, are currently operational. Sufficient funds to open these two canteens, in Almaty and Talgar, were raised after an ambitious campaign targeting major businesses and

Crescent Society of Kazakhstan. Each canteen is providing one hot meal per day to 160 beneficiaries, 24 days each month for six months or nearly 3,900 beneficiary meals per month. One more canteen is planned for opening shortly.

The three other National Societies are preparing to open a total of five public canteens (1 in Kyrgyzstan, 2 in Turkmenistan and 2 in Uzbekistan) which are expected to become operational by mid-March.

One of the two public canteens soon to be opened in Kyrgyzstan will be located in Bishkek in a National Society building and will provide 100 meals per day to the elderly and vulnerable. The initial programme is to provide 15,000 meals over a six month period. The site of the Kyrgyz canteen was visited by the Regional Relief Delegate on 15 February.

Canteen Plan

	Operating	Scheduled	
Kazakhstan	2 open	1, to be confirmed	6 extra desired
Kyrgyzstan	Nil	1 to open mid-March	4 extra desired
Turkmenistan	Nil	2 to open mid-March	2 extra desired
Uzbekistan	Nil	2 to open mid-March	4 extra desired

Average monthly budget for one soup kitchen

Menu	Norm	Meals	Needs	Estimate	Percent
	Kg		Kg	CHF	
Vegetable salad (oil)	0.15	3,300	495	1,083	11.84%
Soup with cabbage, potatoes and meat	0.5	3,300	1,650	1,895	20.71%
Sausages with rice or rice with meat	0.15	3,300	495	2,166	23.67%
Tea with milk and sugar	0.2	3,300	660	812	8.87%
Bread	0.15	3,300	495	542	5.93%
Bakery	0.1	3,300	330	542	5.93%
Subtotal Food Items	1		4,125	7,043	76.95%
Purchase, transport & preparation costs		3,300	4,125	1,278	13.96%
Accumulated Direct Costs				8,321	90.92%
Operational support cost /Field 7% (NS HQ Programme Monitoring & Reg. Del. Finance & Logistics)				582	7%
Operational support cost/Geneva 3%				248	3%
TOTAL:				9,151	100%

Note: The goal is for each canteen to serve 110 meals per day or 15,000 meals in a six month period. In practice the National Societies tend to have a rotating beneficiary list and this means that numbers of beneficiaries and meals served may vary. The average costs are under CHF 2.80 per meal per person.

KYRGYZSTAN

Winterisation programme

This component is assisting 6,000 beneficiaries in the Jalal-Abab region. To date they have been supplied with 6,000 pairs of boots, 4,000 blankets and 1,000 sets of bed linen. The Federation is organising the delivery of 42 tents and 7 rolls of plastic sheeting and is procuring 500 cooking sets and 2,000 winter coats.

The National Society of Kyrgyzstan has acquired extensive experience in running relief operations in the past five years. It can effectively carry out in-country procurement of commodities and co-operates well with the Federation on purchasing matters.

Plan Of Action By Country

Country	Supplementary Food		Hot Meals		Winter Clothes		Winter Boots	
	Planned Activity		Planned Activity	Actual activity	Planned Activity	Actual activity	Planned Activity	Actual activity
Kazakhstan	25,000		4,800	800	15,000	Nil	15,000	Nil
Kyrgyzstan	15,000	Nil	3,000	1200 Start Mar. 1	10,000	Nil	5,000	6,000 **
Turkmenistan	15	Nil	3,000	1200 Start mid Mar.	10,000	Nil	5,000	Nil
Uzbekistan	20,000	Nil	4,200	700 Start Mar. 15	15,000	Nil	15,000	Nil
Total Families	75,000 Families	Nil				Nil		Nil
Total Persons	375,000	Nil	15,000	3,900	50,000	Nil	40,000	6,000 **

*Note: ** Part of winterisation of Flood Victims*

Outstanding needs

The goals laid out in the appeal are not being reached, due to lack of funds. Most of the funding has been devoted to the public canteens component of the appeal, in order to reach the largest numbers of vulnerable and make optimum use of the National Societies' resources. To date funding is lacking for:

- Supplementary Food for 75,000 families**
- Winter Clothing for 50,000 persons**
- Winter Boots -- 40,000 pairs**
- Funding for 17 public canteens.**

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Contacts are being maintained with the Governments of the four Central Asian countries covered by this appeal. At local government level, close co-operation is developing between the authorities and the National Societies.

Good relationships have been developed with all Embassies and NGOs. Major businesses in Kazakhstan are giving the Federation positive support and in some cases, small donations.

The week starting 22 February saw a media campaign initiated from Geneva and simultaneously launched in Almaty, to spread the message that the situation is worsening for the most vulnerable in Central Asia, and the financial response to the appeal was very poor. The national, regional and international media based in Almaty have responded positively.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Since 1997 - 1998, when the first cold and hunger operation was conducted in Central Asia the four national societies have markedly improved their operating capacity, largely due to the very structured DPP training programme carried out in the region and the experience they have gained from a number of Federation-supported operations. The relief programmes planned as part of this appeal are therefore well within their capabilities. In addition, the operation has been given a priority rating and each Society is geared for action. However, without back up in the shape of substantial financial support, there is very little they can do to help relieve the acute misery currently being experienced by almost half a million highly vulnerable adults and children. National Societies are urged to review their support for this appeal and to respond rapidly and generously.

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