

# ***DPR KOREA: FLOODS AND TIDAL WAVE***

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### ***The Disaster***

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) suffered once again from natural disasters at the end of August. "Typhoon No. 12" which swept the country on 31 August, brought about almost 30 hours of heavy rain and flooded many parts of the eastern coast. Damage was extensive since the storm coincided with a tidal wave in the east sea of Korea. Roads, bridges, railways, communications, paddy fields, land and homes have been seriously damaged. Many other parts of the country were also affected by heavy rain.

#### ***Kangwon Province***

The 150 meter-long bridge linking Wonsan City with Thongchon County was completely washed away by the tidal wave. Downpours of rain occurred with over 200-300 mm recorded in Phyonggang, Kimhwa, Kosong, Thongchon, Anbyon and other counties in Kangwon Province, leaving hundreds of houses and scores of public buildings submerged or destroyed and power and communication networks totally cut. Loss of life was also reported from different areas. In Kimhwa County, in particular, two hour-long downpours with over 230 mm of rain left at least 150 houses inundated.

#### ***North Hamgyong Province***

Chongjin, the seat of the North Hamgyong Province, has been under one meter of water as a result of the tidal wave. At present, Chongjin has lost contact with other areas as telephone lines are cut in many places. Many bridges that link the city with other areas were completely or partly destroyed and travel to and from the region is not possible. The water level of the Tuman River rose so suddenly in the Onsong area of North Hamgyong Province that more than 400 surrounding houses were flooded and thousands of hectares of paddy fields and other land buried under silt.

#### ***South Hamgyong Province***

A stretch of 13 km. of road north of Hamhung city, the provincial seat, was washed away by the tidal wave and a number of bridges were destroyed. A major landslide was reported from the Tanchon area of South Hyamgyong Province. The landslide, caused by heavy downpours, accompanied by hail and thunder, caused serious damage to the mining sector, in particular.

#### ***Ryongyang Province***

There was torrential rain in several areas in the Province including Hyesan and Samsu County, which left Hyesan railway station and industrial establishments submerged and brought unexpected damage to different sectors of the national economy, including the city administration and land management. Hyesan

has been struck by major flooding three times in August. Over 1,000 families lost their homes through the flooding.

### **North Pyongan Province**

Torrential rain did damage to tens of thousands of hectares of paddy fields and other land in different areas in the Province, including Pakchon, Chonma, Thaechon, Uiju and Kusong Counties.

### **North Hwanghae Province**

Torrential rain and hail caused significant damage to crops in Rinsan, Unpha, Singye and other areas in the Province. Rainfall lasting 40 minutes resulted in 155 mm of water, and was accompanied by winds of over 20 miles per second, and followed by hail for a period of 30 to 40 minutes.

### **Kaesong City**

Due to heavy rain, scores of homes were destroyed and many hectares of paddy and fields and land remained under water for more than 3 days.

The recent natural disasters in different parts of the country destroyed a great deal of infrastructure in affected areas and have had a negative impact on harvests as well as on residents' livelihoods as homes are lost, food is scarce and water and sanitation problems are posed.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Red Cross Society of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is continuing the assessment of the scale of damage and the needs of affected people. This process is rather slow as it is severely hampered by inaccessibility to the affected areas and the cuts in telecommunication systems. Provincial and County Red Cross chapters are taking an active part in assessment and disaster response initiatives by mobilising their volunteers, though their available material resources are limited and logistical difficulties have hampered access to the worst-affected areas. The Disaster Preparedness and Response Department is working to get a full picture of the situation in the field.

## ***Needs***

While an assessment is taking place to verify the needs of the affected people, some Red Cross branches have already requested assistance in the form of blankets, kitchen utensils and food for those who are most affected. Pending the findings of the assessment, the Red Cross Society of the DPRK will decide upon action to be taken, in close consultation with the Federation Delegation. Updated information will be provided, as it becomes available.

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