

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

## **INDIA: CYCLONE**

25 May, 2001

*Information Bulletin N° 1*

*Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: No*

*This Information Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.*

### ***The Situation***

A severe cyclone in the Arabian Sea remains stationary as of Friday morning, at approximately 10:00 hours IST, 500 km southwest of Veraval in Gujarat state. Winds are 65 to 75 km an hour with very heavy rain. The India Meteorological Department currently predicts that it will move north north-west, and is expected to curve back towards Veraval and Maliya where it is likely to hit by Saturday evening with winds predicted at 220 to 240 kilometres per hour. Heavy to very heavy rain and a storm surge of about 2.5 - 4.0 metre above the astronomical tide is expected near the point of landfall. Official sources in Veraval have announced that some 900 local fishermen have been missing since yesterday.

Still picking up the pieces in the aftermath of January's massive earthquake in the north-west region of Gujarat, thousands of people continue to live in tents or semi-permanent structures constructed with plastic sheeting or corrugated tin. The Indian government has advised residents living in several areas of Kutch that the temporary structures will not survive the cyclone and they should evacuate their homes immediately. The government has initiated evacuations of inhabitants from the coastal regions.

More than 1,000 people were killed in Gujarat in 1998 when a cyclone devastated the region, with winds up to 120 km per hour and tidal waves. A second cyclone hit the same region the following year in Kutch and Jamnagar.

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

#### **Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Action**

The IRCS Headquarters in New Delhi is coordinating the operation and is working closely with the Gujarat state branch to ensure state and district branch volunteers and resources are on standby to respond to the needs as required. The IRCS is well prepared for a disaster relief operation with a strong Red Cross regional volunteer capacity, largely as a result of the current earthquake relief activities in Gujarat. The IRCS warehouse in Verangan, 60 km from Ahmedabad, is well stocked with relief items including high protein biscuits, blankets and plastic sheeting. The district Red Cross branches in Bhavnagar, Surendranagar, Rajkot, Gandhidham and Jamnagar have a strong volunteer contingent and are on alert for a disaster relief operation.

## **Federation and PNS Action**

The Federation has the existing support infrastructure in Bhuj, Ahmadabad and Delhi to assist the IRCS if a relief operation is required. Three teams have been designated to prepare for the cyclone in Bhuj, focusing on the hospital, logistics and relief, and the Red Cross compound. Team One is evacuating the Red Cross hospital, now run by Indian authorities. They will store equipment and drugs, and secure the tents and rubhalls. Team two is dismantling the administration, restaurant and female residence tents. They will also secure the huts with rope, clear the building site for all bamboo sticks and waste, secure water supplies for two to three days, and ensure continued electricity supply. Team three will coordinate logistics and relief as needs arise.

A relief assessment delegate from the Bangladesh Red Crescent who is a specialist in cyclone relief operations is currently in the region assisting with the earthquake relief operation and is on standby.

*For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

*For further details please contact:*

- *The Indian Red Cross, New Delhi; Phone ++91-11-3716441/2/3; Fax ++91-11-3717454; email [indcross@vsnl.com](mailto:indcross@vsnl.com)*
- *Bob McKerrow; Head of South Asian Regional Delegation; ++91 9810001534 (mobile); ++91-11-6858671 (office).*
- *Stefan Kuhne-Hellmessen; Transition Coordinator; ++91 9810399651 (mobile); ++91 11 3324213 (office).*
- *Brita Garden, Information Officer, Bhuj; ++91-98-252-450-02.*
- *Angela Higney, Phone 41 22 730 4429; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email [higney@ifrc.org](mailto:higney@ifrc.org)*

*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

Peter Rees-Gildea  
Head, a.i.  
Relationship Management Department

Hiroshi Higashiura  
Head  
Asia & Pacific Department