

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: FLOODS

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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 185 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

Following heavy rains and flash floods in different parts of India, unusually heavy rains have resulted in floods in the western state of Rajasthan, causing destruction and loss of life in the state. The worst affected district has been Barmer. So far, the floods have claimed 135 lives in the state. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced and many are missing. The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) has distributed relief items in the affected areas and is assisting the local authorities by providing volunteers.

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The Situation

Heavy monsoon rains and flash floods have adversely affected different parts of India over the last two months. Unusually heavy rains since 18 August 2006, in the western state of Rajasthan, have triggered floods and caused widespread destruction in the state. Being a desert state prone to droughts, the floods are unprecedented and the worst in 200 years. The situation has been a cause of concern (for details please see our disaster management information system - DMIS - entries).

While there was flash flooding in almost half the districts of Rajasthan, including Barmer, Jaisalmer, Kota and Udaipur, the worst affected district has been Barmer, where rains have been the heaviest in three decades. According to UNDP reports, out of 135 people killed in Rajasthan due to drowning and house collapses resulting from the floods (as on 29 August), 99 deaths were reported from Barmer district. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced and many are missing in this district.

Telephone, rail and road communication to and from Barmer and Jaisalmer districts have been disrupted. The rest of the damage



A scene from a flooded village in Rajasthan
Courtesy www.alertnet.org

assessment details are not currently available. Although no significant rainfall has been reported in the state in the past 24 hours, parts of Barmer district continue to be submerged under 10-15 feet of flood waters and the situation remains critical. Technical reports released by various official and non-official agencies claim that water is not receding in parts of the district due to the characteristics of the soil, which is made up of hard rock substrata that does not allow water to be soaked.

Administrative measures (Source: UNDP)

The national highway connecting Barmer to Jaisalmer was repaired on 28 August. The state government has constituted a team of technical experts to suggest ways to drain out stagnant water. The drinking water supply has been restored in about 500 villages out of the 800 villages affected. The power supply has been restored in about 85-90% of the villages. The state government has taken up measures to provide relief material to the affected population.



National highway damaged due to floods in Barmer district of Rajasthan
Courtesy www.alertnet.org

One engineer task force of the Indian Army and three naval diving teams have been deployed for rescue and relief operations in Barmer. Two helicopters have been deployed to carryout relief operation in the affected areas.

UN and NGOs intervention

UNICEF has despatched assessment teams to Barmer district and has initiated the procurement of relief items in the areas of health, water and sanitation.

Save the Children (UK), which has a presence in the state

through an ongoing project on disaster preparedness in Barmer, has been in touch with organizations/agencies like Action Aid, CARE and UNICEF, as well as with the district administration.

The organization has sanctioned about £3,000 for immediate use in the affected areas. An assessment team was also sent to Barmer and Jaisalmer districts. A state level coordination meeting, to share information and plans, is being planned on 1 September and will be attended by a number of international NGOs.

The NGO Christian Aid conducted a rapid assessment in the affected areas through four local agencies in the districts of Barmer, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer. A grant of CHF 555,000 has been sanctioned for immediate relief, the aid being targeted towards 10,000 people in 20 villages in three above-mentioned districts. Immediate shelters are also being provided through these grants.

The NGO Care India is supporting its nutrition and hygiene programme in 9 affected districts of Rajasthan (excluding Barmer).

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) is monitoring the situation round the clock, through its disaster management centre based at national headquarters in New Delhi. The IRCS is participating in the Sphere¹ coordination meetings, along with the disaster management team from the Federation's India delegation, to share information and gather views of different agencies. The Federation is in constant touch with the IRCS national headquarters, which is collecting, updating and disseminating information on the situation.

The state branches of IRCS are assisting the local authorities by providing volunteers. The IRCS national headquarters has released relief items as given in the table on the following page.

¹ The Sphere Project is an NGO and Red Cross/Red Crescent initiative to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system, primarily although not exclusively, to those persons who have a right to protection and assistance in disasters and seeks to define the basic minimum requirements to sustain life with dignity.

Table: Relief items distributed in the affected areas

Items	Quantity
Women's clothing	1,000
Men's clothing	1,000
Kitchen sets	1,000
Plastic buckets	500
Cotton towels	500
Cotton blankets	500
Ground sheets	972
Bed sheets	9,065

Presently the situation is being largely taken care of by the government. The IRCS is chalking out its further course of action.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve 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.*

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 \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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