

# Information bulletin



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## India: Floods

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Relief items ferried to flood-affected villages by Indian Red Cross Society volunteers in Assam. International Federation.

The immense loss to lives and property that the heavy flooding has caused since it started this year is unprecedented. Latest figures released by the ministry of home affairs indicate that the number of people affected across the country has risen to over 25 million, with more 2,483 lives lost since the start of the floods. In addition, crops have been inundated and huge amount of houses have collapsed or been destroyed.

The major needs which have been highlighted by the various assessments undertaken by different agencies include shelter material, clothing, drinking water, food, household items as well as tracing and psychosocial support, with a large number of individuals affected psychologically due to loss of friends and families. The International Federation is coordinating within and outside the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to support the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) in responding to the needs of those affected efficiently through its districts, states and national headquarters. The IRCS coordinated well with all the stakeholders including the government and the other stakeholders within and outside the Movement.

The International Federation has been working with the IRCS and assisting it in delivering of aid to the affected population. The International Federation has mobilized its disaster relief emergency funds (DREF) amounting to CHF one million (USD 885,200 or EUR 626,350) to provide non-food items,

including tarpoulins, kitchen sets and blankets for the affected population. A DREF update will be issued by the end of next week.

<click [here](#) to view the map of the affected areas, or [here](#) for detailed contact information>

### The Situation

The floods continue with new torrential rains across country after 18 September when a new Tropical Depression struck India, affecting additional states like Delhi and Uttarakhand. Presently, affected states include Delhi, Orissa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Assam. Some states are experiencing their first wave and others their third or fourth wave of floods. The ministry of home affairs indicates that more than 25 million people are affected and 2,483 lives have been lost since the onset of floods this year in their latest report.

Area of assistance	Assam	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Himachal Pradesh	Gujarat	Uttarakhand	Bihar	Orissa
People evacuated	33,704	57,425	28,626	N/A	09	490	1,032,690	328,427
No. of relief camps	178	441	31	137	137	N/A	407	775
No. of persons in relief camps	32,067	53,526	27,587	N/A	56,992	N/A	451,562	339,815
No. of medical teams deployed	Nil	184	05	429	429	N/A	177	192
Cattle camps			N/A	12	12 vet. teams	N/A	161	
Boats deployed	85	4,330	N/A	9	09	N/A	3,654	1,863
Health centres	12		N/A			N/A	409	

The state of **Delhi** has not reported significant rainfall in past 24 hours, but due to heavy rainfall in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and other adjoining places as well as the release of water from a barrage the River Yamuna has crossed its danger level. A high alert has been sounded in adjoining areas and approximately 400 tents have been erected for evacuation and boats have been kept in readiness. The government has activated a 24-hour control room to monitor the situation.

The situation in **Orissa** remains consistent with moderate to heavy rainfall reported in a few parts of the state. Orissa received very heavy rainfalls last week, with more than 5.6 million people affected in 18 districts in 5,504 villages. The flood situation in Mahanadi system continues to be grim, with more areas submerged under water due to the opening of about 73 breaches on overflowing embankments at different places. However, an acute shortage of boats and manpower has hampered the rescue operation. Government sources report that 0.5 million hectares of crop areas have been damaged so far in the state. To date, more than 45,190 houses have been damaged, and the roads have been cut off at 939 places. A major portion of the national highway 205 connecting the state capital Bhubaneshwar with Puri remains cut off. While the waters have



Deluged—what was once this farmer's paddy field is now part of Baitrani River, Orissa. International Federation

started to recede in some of the affected areas in the interior districts, the flooding situation remains grim as rainfall continues to hamper the relief and rescue operations.

In **Bihar**, light to moderate rainfall was reported in most parts of the state, with some parts experiencing isolated heavy showers in the last 24 hours. Since the long embankment was swept away on 18 August, people from the districts of Madhepura, Purnea, Saharsa, Supaul and Araria are still living on embankments, roads and in sometimes overcrowded sporadic camps which increases the chances of water-borne diseases. The government has taken up initiatives like measles vaccination drives for children in Bihar, with 177 medical teams assisting the affected communities. In total 4.7 million people have been affected in 18 districts spread across 2,528 villages in the state. The table below details the most affected districts in Bihar.

Name of the district	No. of people affected	No. of villages affected	No. of relief camps	No. of people accommodated in relief camps
Supaul	893,790	243	46	62,888
Madhepura	1.15 million	378	74	56,000
Araria	391,328	98	65	81,439
Saharsa	431,089	145	83	40,613
Purnia	150,000	20 blocks	06	NA



Affected communities living in makeshift shelters on river embankments in Bihar. International Federation.

In **Assam**, up to 21 districts have been affected by floods, the worst affected being Jorhat, Majuli, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, Morigaon, Kamrup and Dhubri. Total affected population remains at 2.5 million, and 35 lives have been lost. Moderate to heavy rainfall has been reported in a few parts of the state in the last 24 hours. Up to 32,067 people continue to live in 178 relief camps in the flood-affected areas.

In **Gujarat**, where rains have not been reported in past 24 hours, more than 1.8 million people are affected in 12 districts in 122 villages. The government is currently operating 137 relief camps in which approximately 57,000 people are taking shelter.

In **Himachal Pradesh**, light to moderate rainfall with isolated heavy falls has been reported in some parts of the state. Several parts of Shimla continue to be cut off following landslides and falling trees. Electricity and water supplies and traffic on the national highway 21 remain affected. All the rivers in the state such as Sutlej and Beas are flowing above the danger mark. Rescue operations have evacuated more than 500 people in Kinnaur and Lahaul. A large reservoir in the state, Bhakra Dam, is flowing at 1,680.28 feet, slightly above its maximum level of 1,680 feet. In total, 63,675 people have been affected in 4 districts spread across 57 villages in the state.

In **Uttar Pradesh**, the country's most populous state, the state has set up 441 camps. To date, 974 lives have been lost since the onset of monsoon this year. Mathura city is facing a serious threat of floods following the discharge of large quantities of water from Tajewala Headworks and Hathini Kund barrage in the Yamuna River. Following the threat in Yamuna River, a flood alert has been sounded in 184 villages in five districts of western Uttar Pradesh. District officials of Saharanpur, Muzzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Ghaziabad and Gautam Budh Nagar, reported on 22 September that these villages have been evacuated. In total, 2.5 million people have been affected in 23 districts spread across 4,741 villages.

In **Uttarakhand**, the state experienced moderate to heavy rainfall with isolated very heavy falls in few parts of the state. Traffic movement has been disrupted due to land slides. About 8,210 people have been disrupted through out the state and 490 have been evacuated in safe zones.

### **Government action in the flood affected states:**

In **Bihar**, approximately 19 national disaster response force (NDRF) teams, 789 personnel including 11 officers along with 158 boats were deployed in Supaul, Madhepura, Araria and Purnia.

In **Assam**, five teams have been deployed at Hailakandi, Kendukona, Dakukhana, Golakganj and Simon Chapori.

In **Delhi**, 400 tents have been erected by the government and people have been evacuated by the authorities at the river bed. A high alert has been sounded as the River Yamuna crossed the danger mark.

In **Orissa**, 689 relief camps are being run by the government and to date, more than 4 million people have been provided relief. The Orissa disaster rapid action force has been deployed in the affected areas for rescues and relief operations. Free kitchens have been opened in which food packets containing dry rations, cooked food and other essential items are being distributed to the affected people. In addition, 65 medical teams have been deployed in the affected areas to help provide basic health care. Halogen tablets, oral rehydration salt packets, water pouches, cattle feed and relief materials have also been distributed.

In **Gujarat**, approximately 10,000 food grain packets have been distributed in the flood-affected areas. Up to 12 veterinary teams have been deployed to take care of the cattle and medical officers have been deployed to the flood-affected areas.

In **Himachal Pradesh**, the government is taking adequate steps to help the affected population but details have not been reported so far. In Uttarakhand, 490 people were evacuated in Champawat district to safer places and free kitchens have been opened in which food packets containing dry rations, cooked food and other essential commodities are being distributed to the affected people.

In **West Bengal**, about 28,626 people have been evacuated to the safer places, with 31 relief centres accommodating 27,587 people. Up to five medical teams are deployed in the affected areas of the state.

In **Assam**, almost 32,067 people are still living in 178 relief camps in the flood-affected areas of the state. Presently, 85 boats continue to be deployed in the state for relief and rescue operations, evacuating 33,704 people so far.

### **Red Cross Red Crescent action**

#### Indian Red Cross Society

The IRCS has been responding to the disaster since the beginning of the monsoon in a quick manner. The IRCS national headquarters emergency operations centre (control room) is monitoring the flood situation round the clock and coordinating rescue, relief and resource mobilization efforts. Flood update meetings are held on a regular basis at the national headquarters, during which information is shared with the International Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other in-country partners on a regular basis.

To date, the national headquarters has released relief items (non-food) worth INR 57,872,500 (CHF 1,499,287) from pre-positioned stock and local donations. The national society is taking all possible routes to mobilize resources from government and private sources, and received support from the ministry of health and family welfare in deploying qualified doctors under the Red Cross banner to the affected communities. Further donations have been received from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI). In addition, major oil companies have donated 2,000 solar lanterns as well as a considerable quantity of non-food items including tents, clothing, water purification tablets and mosquito nets to the national society for distribution.

An assessment team was despatched from the national headquarters to Bihar which included members from the national societies, the International Federation and in-country partner national societies. The assessment findings were presented to the senior management of IRCS and International Federation. The final report with recommendations and a Plan of Action will be submitted by the end of next week (3 October 2008).

The IRCS state branches are in talks with the national headquarters to assist the flood-affected people of Bihar, especially in Purnia district, with psychosocial care and support. Similarly, understanding the current needs the IRCS national headquarters has also deployed an IRCS/ICRC tracing team on 12 September to Bihar. To date,

700 cases have been registered with the team in three districts, with 60 volunteers trained in the state to address this issue. A 24-hour help line is being run by the Red Cross branch in the state along with other organizations.

**The Bihar** state branch actions include:

- a round the clock flood control room,
- hiring a warehouse for transitional relief material to be placed safely.
- ensuring a financial team is in place for taking up financial reporting.
- meetings on a regular basis to decide on the future course of action.
- helping to coordinate some of the non-flood affected districts in the state to adopt affected districts in terms of providing them relief and rehabilitation while avoiding duplication of work. For example, Begusarai district has adopted Saharsa, and Muzaffarpur district has adopted Purunia
- addressing tracing needs of the affected population.



An Indian Red Cross Society-supported water purification plant in Saharsa mega camp, Bihar. International Federation.

In Supaul district, search and rescue was carried out by the district branch with a total of 65 people rescued by Red Cross volunteers, with boats provided by the district administration First-aid trained volunteers are assisting the district health authorities in the health centres and medical teams. Community kitchen at various places are also being run by IRCS volunteers.

In Bhagalpur district, the search and rescue efforts of the volunteers saved the lives of 750 villagers. A Red Cross-operated medical camp is being run at Jawhari Chok along with the district authorities.

In addition, the IRCS national headquarters has deployed seven water purification units to Bihar, with five units deployed in Saharsa and two units in Supaul. Trained teams with seven members each run these units and are responsible for the installation and operation, as well as training volunteers as part of their exit plan. All the operational costs of these units are borne by the state branch.

The **Assam** state branch has undertaken relief operations in coordination with the district authorities. A water purification unit was mobilized by the Australian Red Cross in Assam along with a two-member team, helping the national society to run it and train local volunteers so that the operation could later be taken up by the local IRCS branch.

The water purification unit is made operational in Kamrup district of Assam and is able to supply 5,000 litres of drinking water daily. There is a strong community ownership of water and sanitation equipment. Local people have taken on guarding the equipment as well as its operation and management. A national disaster response team and many local IRCS volunteers have been trained in operating and maintaining the equipment. In addition, IRCS doctors and nurses at district level are providing healthcare in the affected areas where the government services have not yet reached. First aid-trained volunteers have been deployed along with government search and rescue teams. The Red Cross's active participation was appreciated by the local authorities.

The district and state disaster response teams are also actively involved in response. The state branch has an emergency operation centre (EOC) which is being manned by SDRT volunteers. The EOC works round the clock and monitors the situation and reports back to the branch. IRCS Assam State Branch has already distributed relief items among the flood-affected people of Puthimari, Rangia District.

In **Orissa**, the state branch has requested 50,000 tarpaulins, family packs, clothing and 1,000,000 water purification tablets and oral rehydration salt sachets and medicines, along with five water purification units. The IRCS national headquarters has released 10,000 pieces each of clothing, towels, woollen blankets, mosquito nets, kitchen sets and plastic buckets as well as 2,500 tarpaulins. The IRCS also initiated the process of deploying two water purification units in the state with a capacity of supplying 2,500 litres of water daily.

The state branch is also coordinating the inter-agency group which comprises of various stakeholders operational in flood response in the state. The IRCS branch in the state has been nominated by the government to be the focal point for all in-kind relief work. The state branch has 59 cyclone shelters which are being used as flood shelters by the community; in each shelter approximately 200 people are taking refuge. Up to 100 trained volunteers have been used by the state branch in search and rescue missions. The state disaster response team members have been used by the branch for assessment and for manning the emergency control room. The IRCS medical teams have been deployed with ambulances for transporting people who require medical attention to nearby hospitals.

In **Delhi**, the honorary secretary of the Delhi state branch mobilized a team of five Red Cross officials and provided assistance to 800 flood affected people in Jamia Nagar with food items such as bread loaves, rice, pulses, sugar, milk, tea leaves, edible oil and salt.

In **Gujarat**, the emergency control room has been activated and the disaster preparedness supervisor and 12 volunteers are carrying out relief distributions in Sunder Nagar district. Volunteers are also involved in government-organized search and rescue efforts. Up to 5,000 food packets were distributed in Thangadh Taluka. The state disaster response team members have evacuated school students and teachers in Sunder Nagar district.

In **Uttar Pradesh**, 23 districts are affected and the state branch is requesting for 10,000 family pack items for its relief work along with operational costs.

#### International Federation

The International Federation has released CHF one million from the disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) to purchase 10,000 kitchen sets, 22,000 blankets and 23,000 tarpaulins through its regional Framework Agreements and regional stock positions. The majority of the relief items have been released already to IRCS for onwards transport to the affected areas, while the tarpaulins are expected in India early October. An earlier proposal to have 1,250 tents included in the DREF allocation was revised later on due to current operational needs and better coverage of the affected population through the provision of tarpaulins for temporary shelter.

Two Australian Red Cross delegates were deployed with a water purification unit in a relief camp of 300 people and surrounding communities of approximately 4,300 people, Arsenic and fluoride levels in the water sources are an issue, and people were purchasing drinking water.

The International Federation country office along with the South Asia regional delegation has formed a South Asia floods task force which meet every two days to share information and review the flood situation in Nepal, Bangladesh and India. Every alternate day, an information matrix is put together which gives information on the situation and Red Cross Red Crescent response.

The International Federation India office carries out daily coordination meetings with the Indian Red Cross senior management and operational departments, and are organizing daily information sharing meetings with Movement stakeholders in Delhi.

The International Federation at this stage will focus on supporting the IRCS assessment, interventions and reporting in three major flood-affected states: Bihar, Assam, and Orissa. New assessment teams will depart to Assam and Orissa to continue assess the flood situation, mid-term needs and Red Cross Red Crescent responses carried out to date.

The upcoming assessments in Orissa and Assam will have the following expected outputs:

1. Identify the most affected districts and most vulnerable population.
2. Analyze the health, water and sanitation issues and the possible impacts on the vulnerable population.
3. Identify and prioritize relief and short term recovery needs.
4. Draw out Plan of Action and budget for immediate and medium-term needs of the affected communities in relation to the existing IRCS district branch, local government as well as international and local non-governmental organizations' capacity and current activities.
5. Analyze the response capacity of the affected state/district branches.
6. Discuss the outcome of the visit with the IRCS national headquarters and International Federation teams and submit a comprehensive report.
7. Assure that DREF implementation will be included in the Plan of Action.

However, a concern for IRCS and the International Federation is how additional funding for new floods will be found, as no international appeal will be launched to respond to the current floods in India. This support could be received through local fundraising, direct bilateral support from partner national societies to IRCS, or a revision of the International Federation's India plan and appeal, by incorporating the mid- and longer-term response into the plan.

The first DREF update will be released by the end of next week, 3 October 2008.

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

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

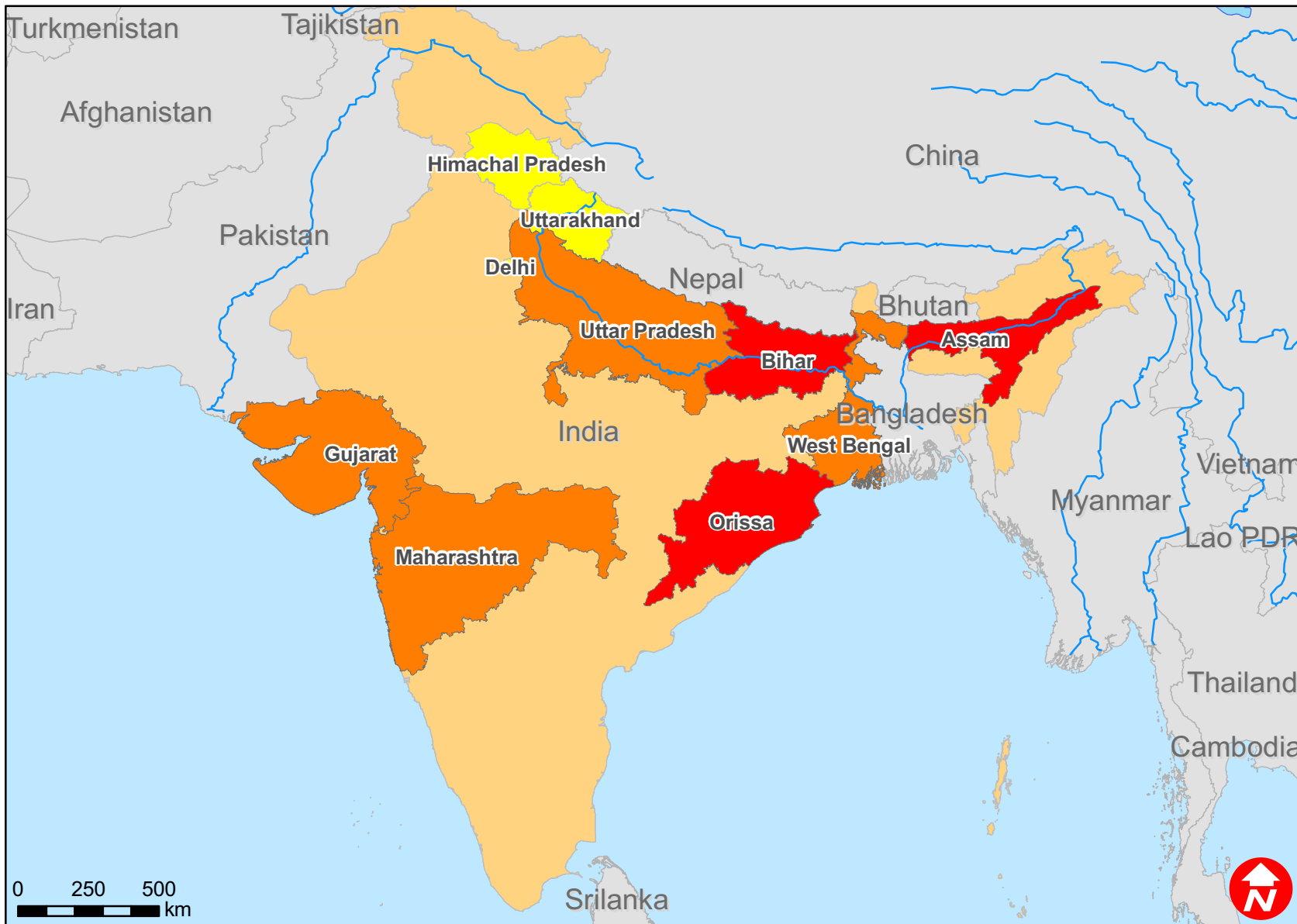
### For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:




- Indian Red Cross Society: Dr. S.P. Agarwal (secretary general), email: [spagarwalsg@indianredcross.org](mailto:spagarwalsg@indianredcross.org); phone: +91.11.2371.6424; fax: +91.11.23711.7454
- Federation country office in India: Peter Ophoff (head of office), email: [peter.ophoff@ifrc.org](mailto:peter.ophoff@ifrc.org); phone: +91.11.2332.4203; fax: +91.11.233.4235
- Federation South Asia regional delegation in India: Al Panico (head of regional delegation), email: [al.panico@ifrc.org](mailto:al.panico@ifrc.org); phone: +91.11.2411.1125; fax: +91.11.2411.1128
- Federation Asia Pacific zone in Malaysia: Amy Gaver (head of Disaster Management Unit), email: [amy.gaver@ifrc.org](mailto:amy.gaver@ifrc.org); phone: ++60 39 207 5724, fax: +60321611210
- Federation Secretariat in Geneva (Asia Pacific department): Christine South (operations coordinator), email: [christine.south@ifrc.org](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org), phone: +41.22.730.4529, fax: +41.22.733.0395

*[<map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)*



# India: Floods



-  Worst floods affected states
-  Partially floods affected states
-  States affected by heavy rains

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

Map data sources: ESRI, DEVINFO, International Federation, IB240908.mxd