

CENTRAL ASIA: POPULATION MOVEMENT

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The Disaster

The capture of Mazar-i-Sharif by Taliban forces last Saturday gave them a hold on most of northern Afghanistan and extended their control to almost 90 per cent of the country. The takeover was speedy and relatively peaceful, giving little opportunity for people to flee their homes. If however the Taliban move to take over the remaining areas still held by opposing forces -- the north of Badghis province close to the Turkmenistan border, and the mountainous areas from the Salang Pass to the Tajikistan border -- or if the forces holding them make a strategic withdrawal, significant numbers of local people could move and seek refuge across the border in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

In 25 and 26 May, a joint UNHCR/ Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan (RCST) mission surveyed the Tartabazar and Kerki area in Turkmenistan, although the two team members, the DPP officer for the RCST and the UNHCR representative in Ashkabad, were unable to fly along the Turkmen/Afghan border by helicopter as previously planned as the border was officially closed for military manoeuvres. So far, no refugees have been observed crossing the border.

In Tajikistan, the Federation country delegation is working closely with the national Red Crescent Society, monitoring the situation and preparing for population movements in accordance with contingency plans prepared some weeks ago.

Needs

The UNHCR regional delegation convened a round table on preparedness/contingency measures in Central Asia in Tashkent on 19 May. UNHCR, UNICEF, the Federation, ICRC, MSF, IOM, OSCE, SCF-UK, and SCF-US attended. The resources of each agency within each of the five

countries were discussed and likely roles allocated. The meeting gave first priority to the need for a regional co-ordination of stocks.

The five national societies of Central Asia have received significant preparedness training in the past nine months and, with Federation support, will be in an excellent position to provide life-saving support to any refugees who cross from Afghanistan into countries along its northern border. However, it is important to build up contingency stocks in the coming week so we can respond quickly if and when this happens.

The current needs are for a regional Federation contingency stock for population movement. This stock will provide initial emergency assistance for 1,000 families. 95% of the requested items can be purchased locally. As described in the table below, this stock is composed of six different, interactive modules which can be combined one with the other, depending on the type of assistance needed.

This formula will allow us to increase dramatically the effectiveness and efficiency of our response during the first period of any type of emergency operation.

<i>Module</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Procurement</i>	<i>Total Value CHF</i>
1. Shelter	1 x 12m ² tent with ground sheet	500.00	In-kind donation ?	[60 000]
2. Family food parcel	5 kg rice, 5 kg pasta, 1 kg tea, 5 kg sugar, 4 kg corned beef	1,000.00	Regional	15 000
3. Family cooking set	5 plates, 5 cups, 5 knives, 5 forks, 5 tablespoons, 1 kitchen knife, 1 ladle, 1 scrub brush, 5 boxes matches 1 x 20 lt jerry can	1,000.00	Regional	50 000
4. Hygiene	5 x 200mg bar soap, 5kg detergent, 1 bucket (10lt), 1 shovel 100 water purification tablets	1,000.00	Regional	40 000
5. Shelter	2 blankets, 10 candles, 5 boxes matches, 2 pairs galoshes(adults), 1 plastic rain coat (pancho)	1,000.00	Regional	25 000
6. Stove/pipes	1 stove, 2 straight flue sections, 1 angle flue section, 500 kg coal	500.00	Regional	30 000
Mini M sat/phone		2.00	Geneva	10 000
I.T.S.H.			Regional/Geneva	10 000
Total				180 000 ¹

(1. Not including tents)

Should a large-scale influx of refugees take place, there is likely to be a requirement for

- Personnel (camp managers, relief administrators, logisticians)
- Emergency Response Units (Mass Water, Mass Sanitation, Basic Health Care)

The Regional Delegation will proceed immediately with purchases, which will be stocked in Federation or National Society warehouses close to the border areas. In the event that they are not needed for the current emergency, they will be kept in readiness for the natural disasters that frequently trouble this part of the world.

National Societies are invited to fund one or more of the relief modules as rapidly as possible.

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