

SOMALIA: FLOODS

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The Disaster

Heavy floods in Eastern Africa have taken their toll on the north-east and north-west of Somalia, where rain and a cyclone have destroyed several villages. Fifteen people have been killed, 3,700 head of livestock drowned, 200 houses collapsed and 4,500 families displaced. Agricultural areas have been affected and crops washed away.

As the emergency continues to unfold, the first priority is to save lives. The floods have killed at least 2,000 people countrywide and many more are stranded on high ground, in trees or on bridges. The need for shelter, food and health services is critical. Most airstrips are flooded and roads are inaccessible. Waterborne diseases are spreading, threatening life in the short and long term.

With the support of the International Federation, the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) will intensify its existing health programme in southern Somalia and, in the north-east and north-west, deliver shelter, blankets and basic relief items to 35,000 flood victims. Together with the immediate relief response, preventive health will also be strengthened in the Northern part of the country.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

During the disaster the Federation will continue to support the SRCS Integrated Health Care programme nation-wide, with its 26 clinics and support from the British, German, Norwegian, Spanish, Belgian and Swiss Red Cross Societies. At the same time, Federation support to SRCS will be reinforced in the flood-affected areas, through provision of additional medicaments, including anti-malarial drugs, to all clinics. SRCS branches and clinics are collecting data and conducting assessments in their catchment areas, providing an important link between the affected areas and humanitarian organisations.

In Southern Somalia the ICRC is distributing shelter, blankets and dry food to flood victims with support from SRCS staff and volunteers wherever they are present.

- Other Agencies' Action

In the North WFP is providing food for 4,500 families in the westerly Zeyla area and in the easterly Burao region. UNICEF is providing medical supplies through the Ministry of Health. UNHCR has committed itself to providing fuel for transportation of relief items and Oxfam is ready to provide 600 blankets.

Needs

In north-east and north-west Somalia, SRCS, supported by the Federation, will provide shelter, blankets and kitchen sets to 4,500 families who have lost most of their belongings. This programme will use SRCS staff and volunteers to assist 1,200 families in the Awdal region, 750 in Sool, 750 in Sanag and 600 in each of the Togdher, Sahil and Hargeisa regions.

Preventive health campaigns against waterborne diseases like cholera and malaria will start immediately using SRCS health personnel and volunteers. Anti-malarial drugs are needed all over the country as most places are receiving huge amounts of rain, causing pools of stagnant water to form -- ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The International Federation has released CHF 210,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to cover purchase and transport costs of immediate relief needs: blankets, tarpaulins and kitchen sets. SRCS, with assistance from the Federation's delegation for Somalia, is monitoring the situation to ensure that future shelter, food and health needs are met, and that community-based health education activities are in place.

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