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## DREF operation update India: Assam Floods

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**DREF operation n° MDRIN009**  
**GLIDE n° FL-2012-000110-IND**  
**Update n°01**  
**24 August 2012**

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

**Period covered by this update:** 13 July –16 August 2012.

**Summary:** CHF 298,424 was allocated from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 13 July 2012 to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to 200,000 beneficiaries.

In response to heavy flooding that hit Assam from 26 June 2012, Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) activated its emergency response mechanisms at district, state and national level, assisting the most vulnerable people of the 2.2 million who have been affected by this flooding through the distribution of non-food items, provision of shelter, and water, sanitation and health promotion interventions.



Gushing flood water swept away embankment in Majuli Island which resulted in inundation of villages. **Photo:** IRCS/IFRC joint assessment team.

Although flooding is a seasonal event in India, these floods are the worst to hit Assam in decades. In addition, the flooding has come extremely early in the monsoon season.

This operation is expected to be implemented within five months, and completed by 12 December 2012. In line with IFRC reporting standards, the final report (narrative and financial) will be issued 90 days after the end of the operation (by 31 March 2013).

### The situation

Following heavy monsoon rainfall towards the end of June, flooding began from 26 June 2012, soon effecting communities across all 27 districts of Assam. Of the 27 affected districts, 22 have been severely impacted. The total number of people affected by this flooding is approximately 2.2 million. More than 120 lives have been lost.

On 29 June, the state branch informed the IRCS national headquarters that additional assistance would be required to respond to the emergency, and a control room was established at national headquarters to monitor the evolving disaster and coordinate the emergency operation. Once the control room was established, 1,500 family packs were released from pre-positioned disaster preparedness stocks that same day, adding to the 500 already positioned in Assam.

On 3 July, a joint IRCS/IFRC assessment team departed to carry out an assessment in the most severely affected districts, returning to New Delhi on 9 July. On the basis of their recommendations, a plan of action was formed on how IRCS will contribute in the provision of relief items to those impacted by the floods. The major needs included food (which will be provided by the authorities and other agencies) household items, water and sanitation, and basic health services, amongst others.

On 29 July, a second team, comprising of five members of the society's NDWRT and two NDRT members, was deployed. This deployment was instrumental in transporting relief supplies from Guwahati and Jorhat. The team has since set up the water purification unit in Majuli, which is now providing safe drinking water to this community. The team is also involved in selection of beneficiaries and distribution of relief. With more than 15 days having passed since this team was deployed, some members have been called back for rest, while others continue to work with the state branch in the field. A further team will soon be deployed.

In collaboration with state and central authorities, as well as other agencies, IRCS Assam branch is providing assistance to approximately 200,000 people through a variety of interventions. This operation is being carried out under the guidance of the national headquarters with the assistance of IFRC, through this DREF allocation.

Outbreak of violence in Assam has posed additional challenges in transporting goods and deployment of resources for this relief operation. The situation remains volatile, and may further hamper implementation of the DREF operation.

## **Coordination and partnerships**

IRCS national headquarters is closely coordinating with the Assam branch in order to extend timely assistance to the people affected by floods in 22 districts of Assam. National headquarters has shared their plan of action with in-country Movement partners as well as publishing the plan on its website. At the state and district level, coordination mechanisms have been established with the government to ensure that resources and information can be shared for efficiently. The chairperson and the managing body members of the Assam branch are holding regular meetings with relevant government representatives to further ensure coordination.

However, a plan of action has been published and distributed for donors and is public on the IRCS website ([www.indianredcross.org](http://www.indianredcross.org)). Following the publishing of plan of action, Maharashtra and Manipur state branches have mobilised resources to assist Assam state branch.

Following the posting of the IRCS national headquarters plan of action on their public website, Maharashtra and Manipur state branches have raised resources at state level in order to assist in this response. Other donors have also shown interest to support IRCS in this operation. The Canadian government has contributed towards the replenishment of DREF while a further donor has expressed willingness to replenish 2,500 family packs through the IFRC India office. The overall response to the plan of action is poor.

## **Red Cross Red Crescent action**

### **Progress towards outcomes**

Following the onset of flood, the IRCS national headquarters released disaster preparedness stocks from its regional warehouses to support the Assam state branch. A joint assessment team of IRCS and IFRC carried out assessments from 4–8 July 2012. Based on the recommendations of the assessment team and a request for assistance from the state branch, national headquarters prepared a plan of action. The activities being implemented in this DREF operation are sub-set of the IRCS national headquarters overall plan of action for Assam floods. Along with their plan of action, IRCS has also uploaded onto their website a call for donations to support this current operation.

## Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

**Outcome:** 2,000 families (10,000 people) benefit from necessary shelter and non-food items

**Output:** 2,000 families (10,000 persons) received basic shelter and non-food items.

### Proposed activities:

- Deployment of national disaster response team (NDRT)/national disaster water, sanitation response team (NDWRT)/state disaster response team (SDRT) members/volunteers to conduct assessments, prepare lists of beneficiaries, and identify distribution points.
- Mobilization of stocks from the regional warehouses.
- Distribution of shelter and non-food items (tarpaulins, mosquito nets, bed sheets, kitchen sets, sarees, dhotis, buckets with lids and towels).
- Replenishment of the distributed stocks.
- Ongoing monitoring and technical advice by IRCS national headquarters and IFRC.

### Progress:

- IRCS NHQ warehouses have so far dispatched non-food items, which will be repackaged as 7,000 family packs. These items have been received and stored in the warehouse at Guwahati.
- Out of 7,000 family packs, 750 have already been prepared and dispatched to Jorhat district for distribution.
- Due to unavailability of high density polyethylene (HDPE) bags, the family packs preparation was delayed, however on 16 August 2012, the Assam branch received 2,000 HDPE bags, enabling the branch to continue the packing process. An additional 5,000 HDPE bags are expected on 17/18 August 2012.



Distribution of non-food relief in Jorhat district. **Photo:** Indian Red Cross Society

- Meanwhile, the distribution of family packs has been begun in Jorhat in mid-July. To date, around 400 packs have been distributed.
- At present Assam state branch has decided on the following allocation of family packs to the districts listed in table 1.
- The process of replenishment 2,000 family packs has been initiated. Tarpaulins, mosquito nets and kitchen sets are being procured with the assistance of regional logistic unit through framework agreement. While the other items like saree, dhoti, blankets, bed sheet, plastic bucket and towel are being procured locally.
- Logistics request for the procurements to be done through regional logistics unit have already been sent.
- The quotations for the items to be procured locally have been received. The local committee on contract will soon open these quotes and subsequently decision will be taken for placing the orders for supply.
- A third team of NDRT/NDWRT members will soon be deployed to Assam to expedite the distribution of relief items at the same time to assist Assam branch in logistics management.

**Table 1**

District	Family packs allocated
Nalbari	500
Jorhat (Majuli)	750
Barpeta	500
Dhemaji	500
Kamrup rural	250

## Emergency health

**Outcome:** The immediate health risks of the flood affected and displaced population are reduced.

**Output:** Basic health services for at least 50,000 people are delivered for two months.

### Planned Activities:

- Mobilize IRCS mobile health units to provide health check-up camps and health awareness activities.
- Coordinate with district health administration.

#### Progress:

IRCS Assam branch has already discussed with the state authorities and the army so that the mobile teams can be deployed using boats. However, following the outbreak of violence in Assam, this activity has been constrained and the state branch has been forced to review this activity. Information on course of action taken by the Assam branch will be included in the next update.

### Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

**Outcome:** The risk of water and sanitation-borne related diseases has been reduced through access to safe drinking water, appropriate sanitation and hygiene promotion.

#### Outputs:

- Increased access to safe drinking water to the flood affected 50,000 people.
- Improve hygiene knowledge and behaviour of 200,000 people affected by floods.
- Increased access to appropriate sanitation for at least 200 flood affected families.

#### Planned activities:

- Detailed assessment to identify villages for intervention.
- Mobilize and installation four water treatment units in assessed locations through NDWRT.
- Establishing a water distribution system.
- Training 30 volunteers on hygiene promotion.
- Hygiene promotion activities for affected community by IRCS volunteers.
- Distribution of bucket/jerry cans for household level storage of safe drinking water.
- Distribution and explanation of the use of chlorine tablets.
- Construction of rapid latrines (approximately 200).
- Collaborate with the relief sector in providing safe water storage containers and hygiene kits to targeted families.
- Monitoring of use of latrines and household level water treatment and storage.

#### Progress:

- The managing board of the Assam branch had made a review of the potential deployment of water purification units and have decided not to deploy three man-pack water purification units received from national headquarters to the field due to their very small purifying capacity i.e. 80 litres per hour.
- One NOMAD water purification unit with the capacity to purify approx 5,000 litres per hour has been installed at Salmara village on 3 August 2012, which is now providing safe drinking water to 500 affected families in this village and surrounding area.
- Training has been provided to five local volunteers on the operations of this NOMAD water purification unit. The hygiene promotion campaign was conducted in Jorhat district.
- The NDWRT members deployed in Assam have also been engaged in hygiene promotion activities at camps, various communities and schools. The main areas of focus are on personal hygiene, including hand washing, the importance of safe drinking water, water borne diseases and sanitation etc. One of the activities in this DREF operation is distribution of chlorine tablets to cater for safe drinking water needs in a broader number of communities, due to the impracticality of widespread deployment of water purification units. As Assam branch has been unable to source these chlorine tablets locally, they have asked national headquarters for assistance in the same.



Water purification unit installed in Salmara providing purified water. **Photo:** Indian Red Cross Society

## Communications – advocacy and public information

IRCS, supported by IFRC, maintained a steady flow of timely and accurate information between the field and other major stakeholders, supporting advocacy efforts and maintaining the profile of the National Society by providing a platform to highlight the interests of floods affected communities.

A web story highlighting the situation, immediate needs and the Red Cross response was drafted in collaboration with IRCS and posted on the IFRC website: <http://bit.ly/LHWEhp>.

High quality visual materials were gathered and provided to the global IFRC online gallery to be shared with media, National Societies and partners to highlight the impact of the National Society's efforts.



Hygiene promotion campaign by NDWRT members and district branch volunteers. **Photo:** Indian Red Cross Society

The web story was also cross-promoted through the IFRC social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Regular updates were provided from the field through social media during the joint assessment team's visit to Assam. These included live photo posts from the field via Twitter. IRCS was also supported in featuring similar content on the National Society's website: <http://indianredcross.org/press-rel23-july2012.htm>.

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## DREF history:

- This DREF was allocated on 13 July 2012 for CHF 298,424 for five months to assist 200,000 beneficiaries.
- 1 DREF operation update issued.

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## How we work

All IFRC 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 the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
  2. Enable healthy and safe living.
  3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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