


www.ifrc.org
Saving lives,
changing minds.

Information bulletin

Mongolia: Extreme winter

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Information bulletin n° 2
8 January 2015

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation. Funding or other assistance from donors is not being sought at this time; however a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) request or an Emergency Appeal is currently being considered by the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) to support the needs of the affected population.



Heavy snow has covered many areas in Mongolia. This is one of the herder's Gers in mountain area, mid-December 2015.
Photo: National Emergency Management Authority of Mongolia

[< click here for detailed contact information >](#)

The situation

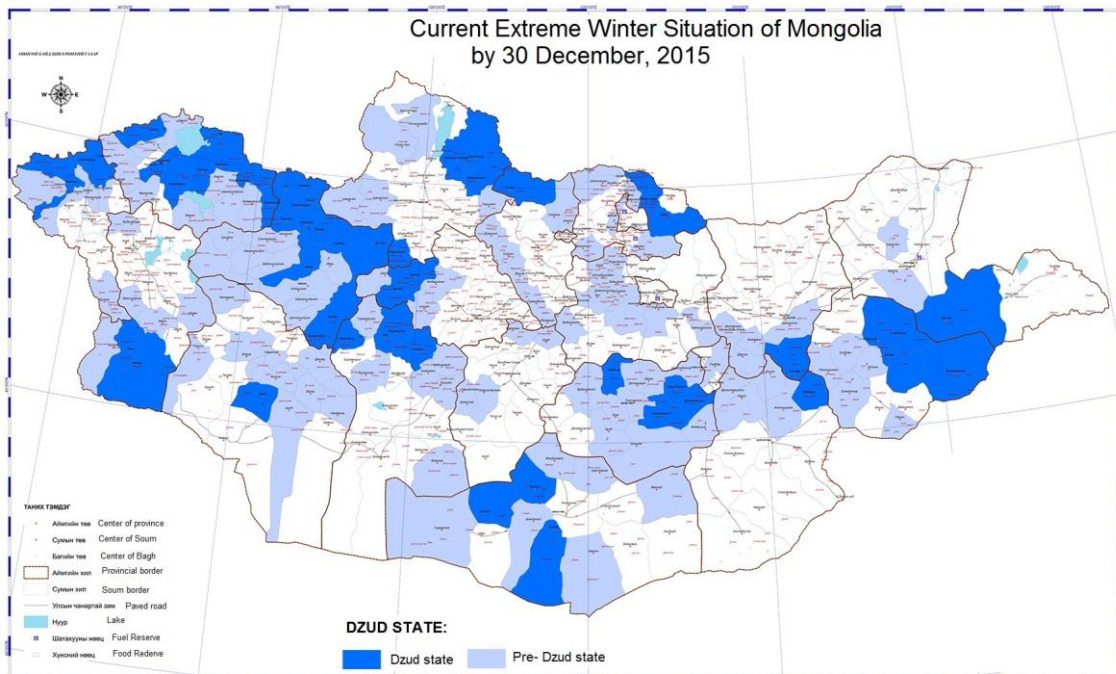
According to the National Emergency Management Authority (NEMA), snow has covered 90 per cent of the total territory with conditions getting more severe, with the thickness of snow cover between 10 - 40 cm (density 0.12 – 0.24 g/c.cm). The Mongolian National State Emergency Committee convened its second meeting on the current winter situation in country on 4 January 2016, to discuss the information gathered through government assessments which were carried out in 21 provinces in late December 2015.

The assessment report reveals that currently 50 soums (districts) in 16 aimags (provinces) are in Dzud state and 120 soums in 20 provinces are on the edge of entering Dzud¹ state. Some local level governments have already declared Dzud in their respective soums.

¹ Dzud is a cyclical slow onset disaster unique to Mongolia. It consists of a summer drought, resulting in insufficient production of hay, followed by very heavy winter snow (10 to 350 cm), winds and lower than normal temperatures (-40° C to -50° C) during which an excessive number of livestock die causing basic services, and in the longer term, livelihoods to collapse in vulnerable herder communities.

The Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment has indicated that based on the weather forecast, continuous snowfall, snowstorms and temperatures are expected to persist on average of below -25 degrees Celsius during daytime and -38 degrees during night in the coming weeks. These will further affect more than 965,000 people ² especially vulnerable herders living in the affected soums.

The map below illustrates the soums which are already Dzud state and soums entering Dzud state.



Current extreme winter situation Mongolia - <http://nema.gov.mn/?p=10236>

The government assessment report informs that the current hard winter situation was exacerbated by the drought of last summer which resulted in poor vegetation growth and low yield in hay-making. There is now a higher demand for hay and fodder due to excessive snowfall. In facing the extreme winter and shortage of hay and fodder, herders will start losing most of their livestock in the coming months, driving them to put more livestock on the market to exchange for cash in order to buy food, hay and other necessities. However, the oversupply of livestock has resulted in decreased prices. Since the demand for meat and meat products is low, herders are not able to sell their livestock, which means herders do not have enough cash.

Delivering ambulance services to the dwellers of some soums in the western aimags with mountainous landscape has become extremely difficult. As there is lack of vehicles for health, ambulance and emergency services in some soums, the emergency units, police, ambulance and meteorologists have often to borrow the vehicle of the governor's office or use the private vehicles of their employees.

The deputy prime minister as head of the National Emergency Commission followed up on certain issues and ordinances issued in the previous commission's meeting. Working on the information received from the government assessment and the rapid assessments done by the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS), the Mongolia government puts a high priority on maintenance of current infrastructure such as medical services and heating services. The administrations of provinces, soums, and some members of parliament have requested the State Emergency Commission to allocate additional reserves of hay and fodder to the local store points of the state reserves. The only planned actions towards the herders the distribution of hay through donation and national reserves but mostly through sale with 50 per cent discount. There is also a request to provide a nationwide policy facilitating sales of meat and livestock.

Provincial emergency commissions have implemented winter preparations, made adjustments in their emergency preparedness plans, made lists of expectant mothers, children under five years of age, elderly people and persons with disabilities, transferred soon-to-deliver pregnant women to the administrative centres. No maternal and infant mortality has been encountered.

² Figures from UNOCHA

To complement the government's nation-wide efforts in responding to the increasing Dzud situation, the government has appealed to MRCS to mobilize available resources to aid vulnerable herders' essential survival needs in some Dzud affected areas.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS)

The MRCS continues to monitor the weather situation closely, and coordinates with the Mongolian government. The MRCS mid-level branches are continuously coordinating with local governments in affected areas. The secretary general of the MRCS took part in the National Emergency Commission meeting on 4 January 2016, during which the government updated the current situation and response plan.

The MRCS national disaster response team (NDRT) members were deployed and have done a rapid assessment in two most-affected provinces namely Lun and Undurshireet soum, Tuv province on 10-11 December 2015, and Khashaat and Undur-ulaan soums in Arkhangai province on 24-26 December 2015. The situation is worsening. Snow is now covering all parts of the provinces and snow density is increasing. This reduces the livestock's access to grassland. Herders, especially poor ones struggle in their day-to-day life.

In view of the evolving situation, the MRCS has requested IFRC to provide support in preparing and responding to the extreme weather condition.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC)

The IFRC country cluster support team (CCST) in Beijing coordinates with the MRCS on rapid assessment and response planning, and with the disaster management unit of the Asia Pacific regional office in Kuala Lumpur. Aside from rapid assessments, IFRC also supports MRCS with communication and information management. An earlier information bulletin on this situation was issued on 7 December 2015 can be found [here](#).

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

Mongolian Red Cross Society:

- Nordov Bolormaa, secretary general;
tel: +976 11 323334; +976 99119353; email: nordovbolormaa@yahoo.com

IFRC East Asia country cluster support team (Beijing):

- Enkhjin Garid, IFRC Mongolia national programme coordinator;
tel: +976 11 312720; +976 99877395; email: enkhjin.garid@ifrc.org
- Baktiar Mambetov, acting head of country cluster support team;
tel:+86-10-65327162 ext.35; cell:+86 135 1106 5152; email: baktiar.mambetov@ifrc.org

IFRC Asia Pacific regional office in Kuala Lumpur, tel: +603 9207 5700

- Martin Faller, head of operations, email: martin.faller@ifrc.org
- Alice Ho, operations coordinator, mobile: +60 13 360 0366, email: alice.ho@ifrc.org
- Patrick Fuller, communications manager; phone: +60 3 9207 5705, email: patrick.fuller@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- Peter Ophoff, head of PMER, email: peter.ophoff@ifrc.org
-

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 \(NGOs\) 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.



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.
-