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Information bulletin

Afghanistan: Landslides

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Afghan Red Crescent Society, with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

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

The situation

A massive landslide triggered by heavy rains have buried a village in northern Afghanistan, and so far, 250 people have been confirmed dead and 100 injured. The landslide occurred on Friday, 2 May when a mountain side collapsed on the village of Hargu in Agro district in the province of Badakhshan. Initial reports from provincial authorities and Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) suggest that 300 houses have been buried. A total of 1,000 families lived in the Argo district which is located 60 kilometers from Fayzabad, the capital of Badakhshan province.

According to the provincial authorities, up to 700 families have left their homes due to the risk of more landslides. They are now at a neighbouring village, in humanitarian need of shelter, food, health assistance and various relief items such as tents, drinking water. Resources have been committed to meet these needs and distributions are expected to start on 3-4 May, access permitting. There is still a need for manpower in the area of search and rescue in the landslide-affected area.

Before initial information on the major landslide in Agor district came in, there were already reports of flash flooding in 14 districts in Badakhshan province. This suggests that the heavy rains that have fallen over large parts of Afghanistan in the past week contributed to or caused the landslides in Badakhshan.

The Provincial Disaster Management Committee (PDMC) will coordinate with Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency (ANDMA) and humanitarian organizations present in the area, including ARCS, to allocate sectorial responsibilities for the humanitarian response. While search and rescue efforts for the missing will continue, addressing the needs of the displaced population in the affected area is a key humanitarian priority. The affected areas are part of the Hindu Kush mountain range and extremely remote. Rainfall in the past week as well as landslides are likely to make access to the areas very difficult. Detailed and timely information on the situation in the area is likely to get out slowly and there will be challenges getting assistance to the areas. Local search and rescue operations is now the priority. However, rapid assessments have also been initiated to understand the full extent of the disaster.

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan, Mark Bowden, notes that more Afghans have been killed through natural disasters in the past seven days than all of 2013. In the last week, flooding and flash floods in nine Northern provinces killed up to 163 people, displacing 16,000 and affecting a further 50,000. In the province of Jawzjan alone, 27,000 people have been affected and across all the Northern provinces, up to 3,500 homes have been destroyed and the damage to public infrastructure and agricultural lands has been substantial. A separate [Information Bulletin](#) was published on the 30 April on the flood situation and Afghan Red Crescent response.

The whole northern region of Afghanistan have been experiencing recurring natural disasters such as floods, flashflood and landslides due to seasonal rain fall and spring snow melts. In 2012 the province of Badakhshan was hit by a series of avalanches, triggered by quickly rising temperatures during the month of March. Up to 80 people were killed by these avalanches.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Afghan Red Crescent Society has deployed an emergency team along with mobile medical teams to the Argo district. Temporary shelters have been established and 50 families are now living in tents. Moreover, 50 kitchen sets and 50 hygiene kits, along with 100 blankets, are being sent to the area. Further rain is forecasted for the Fayzabad district in the coming days.

ARCS has already deployed two Mobile Health Teams (MHT) to the affected area. One team arrived to the site on 2 May and another will reach on 3 May and are responding with the Regional Health Office from Kunduz ARCS regional office, northeast region. Each MHT have four members: a doctor, pharmacist, nurse/vaccinator and the driver. On the ground, they are supported by community-based health and first aid (CBHFA) volunteers.

A team from Kabul headquarters has also been deployed in the field to assist zone and branch-level colleagues in delivering aid to the flood affected people in the northern zone. The team members are requested to provide the situation update/progress report from the ground.

The response to the landslides in Badakhshan is an extension of already ongoing operations in many parts of northern Afghanistan, following heavy rains that started on the 24 April and that have caused floods and flash floods across nine provinces.

RCRC partners support in country

All IFRC prepositioned stocks in Afghanistan were handed over to ARCS before the winter season in preparation for the spring floods. These stocks were prepositioned in key parts of the country and are now being utilised in the response.

IFRC has deployed one DM officer from Kabul to Mazar-i-Sharif to assist with coordination efforts. IFRC regional DM colleagues are working together with their counterparts in Mazar and in Herat on a daily basis, as well as attending all coordination meetings with them. The IFRC's head of delegation has been in touch with ARCS' secretary general and the DM delegate is working with the ARCS' DM director and disaster response officer on a daily basis. The DM officer is liaising with ARCS DM department in Kabul, also attending their emergency operations centre (EOC) meetings.

ARCS requested logistical support in moving pre-positioned stocks from non-affected areas into the flood affected regions. IFRC logistics, together with Norwegian Red Cross logistics, is providing this effort, under the coordination of ARCS/IFRC DM.

Unless higher numbers of displaced and affected are reported in Badakhshan and elsewhere in the north, ARCS does for now have sufficient amounts of NFIs in the region to contribute to the overall response. Additional resources are available in Kabul and the northern areas have benefited from a lot of prepositioning by numerous humanitarian agencies, including all major UN agencies. IFRC is monitoring the situation and liaising with ARCS on a daily, almost hourly basis and are giving ARCS support on operational coordination.

However, logistics will be a major challenge particularly for Badakhshan and also for other provinces. The IFRC and other partners are ready to give logistical support to the operation. The need for additional support from the IFRC and/or other partners will be discussed as the overall picture becomes clearer in the coming days.

IFRC non-food items (NFI) available in Kabul:

- Hygiene Kits – 3,930 sets
- Tarpaulins – 2,461 pcs
- Blankets – 3,132 pcs
- Jerry cans – 1,272 pcs
- Kitchen sets – 1,705 pcs
- Mosquito nets – 1,999 pcs
- Tarpaulin roll – 124 rolls
- WatSan Kit No 2 – 6 kits
- Stretchers – 147

Continuous Floods Operation

Since the end of April, ARCS volunteers and staff, many of them from the ongoing CBHFA projects, have been responding in the flood-affected provinces in the north. An assessment team was deployed to the worst affected areas and 700 tents have been committed to assist those displaced. Three MHTs have also been deployed and reports suggest flooding in some district hospitals and basic health centres which are occupied by high numbers of patients with the added risk of low supply of drugs.

ARCS EOC has been active for a number of days and the situation is closely monitored by ARCS together with the IFRC, ICRC and partner national societies in the country. ARCS is also liaising with the authorities, ANDMA on a national level as well as with the PDMCs across the affected areas, including in the province of Badakhshan.

Contact information

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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 \(NGOs\) 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.

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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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