

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## **VIETNAM: FLOODS AND STORM**

10 May 2001

*This Ops Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals.*

*Appeal No. 23/00*

*Launched on 13 September 2000 for CHF 338,764 for 3 months. Budget increased to CHF 9,036,180; programme extension until 31 July 2001.*

*DREF Allocated: USD 30,000*

*Beneficiaries: 350,000*

*Operations Update No. 4 Period covered: 20 November 2000 - 1 May 2001 (last Ops Update issued on 19 December 2000).*

*Phases I and II of the floods and storm operation have been completed, ensuring provision of food and non-food items to disaster victims, including fishing nets and boats to ensure longer-term support. However, distributions continue in Tien Giang and Kien Giang Provinces which were affected by floods at a later date. Phase III of the operation has begun and is progressing well. Of a total of 3,000 safe houses to be built, 1,200 have been completed to date. The Red Cross of Vietnam (VNRC)/Federation provide the house frame, foundations and roof - the basic structure of a weather-proof house - to the most vulnerable who are most exposed to natural disasters.*

### ***The context***

As of August 2000, an early, prolonged monsoon dropped heavy rain along the catchment area and the 4,000 km long engorged Mekong river which spilled over its banks and caused devastating floods in the Mekong Delta. The Delta is economically important to Vietnam as it accounts for 40% of the country's agricultural production, including 50% of the rice crop. It also houses new economic zones which are frontier settlements set up in an expansive, water logged region, barely above sea level. The area is undergoing substantial change, with swamps transformed manually into rice fields. Infrastructure is basic, with few all weather roads and the land is latticed by drainage channels, dykes, estuaries and canals which were soon overwhelmed by the swollen waters of the Mekong in flood. For the next four months, the ensuing floods had a devastating impact on human, social, economic and environmental conditions, especially in the five worst affected Mekong Delta Provinces of Dong Thap, Long An, An Giang, Kieng Giang and Tien Giang.

482 lives, including many children, were lost. Five million people had their homes flooded, and up to 60,000 households, or over a half a million people, were evacuated, often several times due to progressively crumbling or submerged dykes. These people eked out a miserable, drenched existence

huddled together in cramped conditions under temporary shelter. These people have been the focus of relief and rehabilitation assistance provided through the Red Cross of Vietnam (VNRC).

Whilst attention was focused on the badly affected Mekong Delta population, two related but geographically separate disasters also struck Vietnam - tropical storm Wukong, which hit Ha Tinh Province and seriously affected over 1,000 families, and flash floods which occurred in Dac Lac Province in the Central Highlands affecting over 600 families.

The Vietnam Red Cross has taken the lead in supporting the efforts of the government of Vietnam in the provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance following each of these disasters.

### *Latest events*

The most recent figures relating to flood damage can be seen below:

<b>SUMMARY REPORT ON DAMAGE CAUSED BY FLOODING IN MEKONG DELTA (figures as of 24 Nov)</b>									
Description	Unit	Total	Long An	Dong Thap	An Giang	Kien Giang	Can Tho	Tien Giang	Vinh Long
People dead	No.	482	73	150	116	62	31	44	6
Houses affected	No.	825,974	107,779	300,000	151,010	75,273	63,566	102,080	26,266
Houses already evacuated	No.	58,353	15,168	17,335	13,676	4,750	89	6,675	660
Houses collapsed and destroyed	No.	4,336	1,613	1,021	682	246	241	460	73
Schools inundated and damaged	No.	3,296	431	489	413	494	560	420	489
Pupils forced to be out of school	No.	834,467	103,270	345,000	129,639	59,568	59,034	110,356	27,600
Clinics inundated and damaged	No.	421	82	124	56	73	9	48	29

As the water receded in late November and December, people began to return home. For many, this led to more despair. For example, houses made from local materials which had not been included in the statistics as having collapsed, had been damaged to the extent that they needed to be completely rebuilt.

Repairs to essential infrastructure are ongoing including previously flooded roads, major earthworks and public buildings - schools and clinics - which are, for the most part, running once again, although in difficult conditions.

Although agricultural production stagnated and one crop has been destroyed during the crisis, the floods will have a long term beneficial effect for rice farmers. On the other hand, fruit growers and fish farmers face ruin as fish were swept away and citrus, mango and logan orchards were destroyed.

Rice crops may be back to normal in as little as four months, however fruit crops will not return to pre flood levels for some four years.

At a meeting in mid November in Dong Thap town in the centre of the flooded provinces, Prime Minister Phan Van Khai praised the relief efforts of the authorities and singled out the activities of the VNRC. This meeting, which brought together all the concerned government ministries, provincial People's Committees and the National Society, mapped out the needs for rehabilitation of the flooded provinces.

The Vice President of the National Society pledged the commitment of the VNRC to the rehabilitation of up to 3,000 family homes through building techniques in which the VNRC has specialised over recent years. The VNRC also committed to extend its programme of storm and flood resistant schools which can be used by communities as refuges in times of disaster. The VNRC, supported by Australian Red Cross/AUSAID and the Federation have undertaken to reconstruct as many as 150 primary schools in the remote areas of the stricken provinces most affected by the floods.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

### **Relief and Rehabilitation Programme •**

The Red Cross relief and rehabilitation programme is composed of three phases:

- Phase I - Emergency rescue and immediate relief - Red Cross volunteer "shock brigades" worked alongside other agencies to evacuate families from their homes to safer ground. The Federation Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) complemented VNRC's own reserves to provide emergency shelter and short term food assistance to 2,000 families in the most affected Provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An.
- Phase II - Medium term needs, including the distribution of rice (3,515 mt), plastic sheeting (19,600), mosquito nets (32,000), soap (94,000) and water purification kits (36,200), family fishing boats (4,000) and fishing nets (4,000) to ensure food and income supplements, together with provision of clean water to families remaining on dykes;
- Phase III - Longer term rehabilitation of family homes - 3,000 are under construction and a further 1,000 may be built. A disaster preparedness programme has been initiated in all twelve Mekong Delta provinces at primary schools and clinics under construction.

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### **Progress to date •**

Phase I distributions were carried out in July and August 2000. Beneficiary selection of the most vulnerable was carried out among the families already evacuated to the dykes. Beneficiary lists were prepared by the local Red Cross, verified by the district Red Cross staff and then by the People's Committee.

By the end of October 2000, all major relief distributions (phases I and II) in the three worst affected provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An were completed by the Red Cross of Vietnam. This included the distribution of plastic sheeting, mosquito nets, rice, boats and fishing nets, water purification kits and soap.

Phase II beneficiary selection was carried out among the families evacuated to the dykes and also included a number of families who had not been evacuated from their homes. The latter were unable to find refuge close enough to home, or felt that their houses were relatively solid. They were, however, short of essential food or hygiene items and therefore fell within the selection criteria.

Training was provided to staff of the VNRC at district level in the selection of beneficiaries and the management of operations according to the guidelines issued by VNRC and the Federation. Phase II was more complex than Phase I, in terms of volume and as a result of the increasing levels of the flood waters. The VNRC took into account distributions carried out by the government of Vietnam,

religious groups and international NGOs working in the provinces (in fact, many of these worked through VNRC).

The operation was facilitated by the upgrading of communications equipment within each of the provincial Red Cross chapters by providing ten mobile phones, fax machines and computers to those who needed them. A full set of office equipment was provided to Tien Giang Red Cross when the office was struck by lightning, destroying all equipment. In addition, three fast boats with outboard motors were purchased and deployed to the three worst affected provinces, together with fifteen local boats.

Phase II distributions continue in the provinces of Tien Giang and Kien Giang - two provinces affected later by the floods, for which German government food assistance was provided. In addition, a further distribution of 10,000 pieces of plastic sheeting is being prepared among the five provinces, in order to support families returning to their homes from the dykes.

**Phase I and II distribution details**

**Vietnam Red Cross Society**  
 Allocations of food and non-food items  
 Up-dated on 11th December 2000

No.	Food/non-food items	Long An	An Giang	Dong Thap	Kien Giang	Tien Giang	Can Tho	Vinh Long	Ben Tre	Tra Vinh	Soc Trang	Total
1	Plastic sheet (pc)	3,750	5,800	6,300	1,150	1,400	450	450	100	100	100	19,600
	USAID plastic sheets	108	120	120	60							408
2	Mosquito net (pc)	5,600	10,700	10,700	3,000	2,000						32,000
3	Australia Blanket (pc)		2,000	2,110								4,110
4	Soap (3 bars/unit)	16,200	31,400	31,400	9,000	6,000						94,000
5	Plastic buckets with WPT (pc)	5,000	10,000	10,000								25,000
	German bucket				2,000	1,300						3,300
	Australia bucket				4,920	3,000						7,920
6	Xuong (unit)	600	1,200	1,200	500	500						4,000
7	Fishing net (unit)	600	1,200	1,200	500	500						4,000
8	Life bouy (pc)	850	850	950	285	285	10	10	10	10	10	3,270
9	Life jacket (pc)	100	120	130	35	35	10	10	10	10	10	470
10	Rice (MT)	300	700	700	400	300		100				2,500
	WFP rice	210	315	420								945
	Ericson Rice					70						70
11	Motorboats (unit)	1	1	1								3
12	Red Cross vest/cap (set)	400	500	500	200	200						1,800
13	Composite long boats:											-
	8m - 12HP/13HP	2	4	4								10
	12m - 23HP/24HP	1	2	2								5
14	Megaphone	5	7	7	3	3						25

**Notes:**

1. WFP & Ericson purchase themselves rice and delivery to the supported provinces.

Monitoring of the distributions was carried out by a team of monitors from the Hanoi office of VNRC, supported by the Federation team, composed of four expatriate delegates and seven national staff, deployed to the field for the distributions. In addition, monitors from different donor organisations were invited to join distributions and to visit selected beneficiaries at random. Quality control for most relief goods was assured by OMIC, a Japanese quality control company, and in the case of the family fishing boats, quality control was carried out by inspectors from the Department of Forestry which checked wood types and quality against contracts.

With an operation of this size, some difficulties inevitably arise. A small number of boats from the 4,000 distributed did not meet standards - some leaked as a result of damage during transport, others had been left in the sun too long and thus had to be retreated by the Red Cross at the distribution points. With the system for distribution, each boat had been numbered by the manufacturer, and more seriously damaged or faulty boats were replaced under a four year guarantee negotiated as part of the contract with each of the manufacturers.

In a few cases, beneficiary selection caused jealousy among families living in cramped conditions on the dykes. This mainly arose when more than one organization distributed to different beneficiaries in the same area using different quantities. This identifies a real need for better coordination among organisations - NGOs, the Red Cross and the government of Vietnam. In many cases, the VNRC was able to intervene to reduce tensions and to take care of social needs as well as those related to food and shelter. Some delays were also incurred. VNRC was obliged to delay some distributions until pledges from some donors became firm.

### **Phase III •**

The rehabilitation phase, already underway, will result in safer housing for 3,000 families. These houses, adapted for use in the Mekong Delta, are an extension of the successful campaign which led to 8,500 houses being built in the Central Provinces. The new design benefited from input from local authorities, the VNRC and the beneficiaries. Moreover, houses are built on screw foundations, which is a new concept in Vietnam, and which are cost effective. The foundations are delivered to the site and are inserted manually. They are ideal for the local, soft, clay soils and they enable house construction time to be reduced from nearly two weeks to only six hours.

The basic principles of the Red Cross of Vietnam housing programme are as follows:

- The Red Cross aims to provide families with a basic house structure which can help them to survive floods and storm conditions which they might experience, so that their family members and most valuable personal belongings can be protected during such extreme weather.
- VNRC does not provide *complete* homes to families, rather the National Society provides house frames, foundations and roofs which form a solid core onto which families can complete their homes - "a home is the work of a lifetime for a family" according to the President of VNRC, in summarising a design meeting of VNRC which established this programme.
- Beneficiaries of the programme are selected on the basis of vulnerability - those people having lost their homes, families with children, households headed by women, families with elderly members, and those who have the least resources.
- VNRC works with local authorities to ensure that families living in the most exposed areas can move to safer ground, if possible, close to their existing home - even a stronger house built in the middle of a raging torrent cannot be "safe".
- VNRC provides support to the poorest families to finish the walls of their homes using local materials.

In preparation for the flood season, the VNRC/Federation sponsored a national housing competition, offering companies throughout Vietnam the opportunity to propose new, innovative designs for safer houses, using locally available materials or other materials on the market in Vietnam. Six finalists were chosen who then built their design, which was judged by a jury chosen from the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Finance, INGOs, People's Committees, Red Cross chapters and headquarters, Federation representatives and the press. The design chosen by this independent jury was from the company which won the tenders from the Red Cross in previous operations - for reasons of simplicity of design, resilience and durability of materials and strength of design. It is hoped that during the tendering process, a wider selection of housing materials will be available.

Training for local Red Cross staff and local artisans began in January - covering building principles, technical aspects of the building technology used and monitoring procedures. Training was provided by the staff of the VNRC provinces which ran the housing programme during the 1998 and 1999 flood recovery operations. Given the importance of the contribution, house beneficiary lists will be closely monitored by frequent, random field visits. The American Red Cross will deploy a delegate to assist the Federation for five months. The team will consist of the HCMC operations manager, two engineers and a relief coordinator experienced in the housing programme in the Central Provinces. To date, 1.200 houses have been completed and the balance should be finalised by the end of June.

Also under consideration by the VNRC in Phase III is the provision of safer public buildings - schools and clinics - in the more remote areas of the Mekong Delta. This is one service in which the VNRC has specialized over recent years - most recently with the provision of 36 kindergartens/emergency response posts in the Central Provinces of Vietnam. These cost effective buildings, which are based on a pre engineered steel frame and lightweight, precast, concrete walls are designed to specifications which make them more resistant to storm and flood conditions. These buildings are unique because their strength is the result of a curved roof which encloses a functional space above the classroom. The ceiling serves to provide insulation and a floor so that for minimal extra cost the upstairs can be readily used. For example, it can be used as a library, a refuge or a disaster preparedness storage area. This construction makes up a programme which is separate from this appeal and is supported by the Australian Red Cross and AUSAID, with technical assistance from the Federation delegation.

Finally, four Red Cross mobile disaster preparedness/medical service boats are being built. They will provide community based health and first aid services as well as disaster preparedness training and services within the three worst affected provinces of Long An, Dong Thap and An Giang. The crew and staff are to be trained and the boats should be operational by June 2001. They will provide an outreach service from the Vietnam Red Cross to remote communities for years to come. The boats are funded through a grant from the Swiss government's SDC office.

## ***Outstanding needs***

The appeal coverage stands at 111 per cent and there are no outstanding needs.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

VNRC has been seen as the leading agency supporting the government of Vietnam and the Vietnam Fatherland Front in the provision of relief assistance to the families affected by the floods in the Mekong Delta. The senior leaders of the government officially recognised this achievement in the Dong Thap planning and review meeting. The National Society's work has resulted in the VNRC improving its image and public profile through exposure to both the domestic and international press

Other praise has also been forthcoming - most notably from the US President, during his historic visit to Vietnam, who paid tribute to the work of the Red Cross in a private meeting with the Red Cross of Vietnam and Federation and American Red Cross representatives.

Coordination with the NGOs involved in the relief programme is ongoing. World Vision relies on VNRC to carry out distributions. Coordination of information on NGO activities has been carried out by the Hanoi office of the Federation Delegation. The UN appeal is also closely coordinated with the Federation and the VNRC, and both the World Bank and the ADB are liaising with the Red Cross of Vietnam. Oxfam UK has been particularly supportive of Red Cross initiatives, providing support through the assignment of two water and sanitation experts to assist with initial assessment and a review of implementation.

An increasing trend this year has been the number of multinational corporations based in Vietnam which have made contributions to the appeal - Intel, NIKE, Fosters, Ericsson, Motorola, Conoco (UK), UNOCAL, American Express, Citicorp, and Ford have all helped.

A CD-ROM of photographs of each stage of the operation is available from the Federation delegation in Hanoi and the Federation Secretariat in Geneva.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

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**This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's web site: <http://www.ifrc.org>**

Vietnam floods and storms						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 23/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				04.05.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>9'036'962</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 111.0%</b>
AMERICAN - GOVT		25'000	USD	42'813	28.09.00	
AMERICAN - GOVT		8'800	USD	15'576	04.12.00	
AMERICAN - RC		78'381	USD	127'604	23.10.00	
AMERICAN - PRIVATE				355	27.10.00	
AMERICAN - PRIVATE		66	USD	118	21.11.00	
AMERICAN - PRIVATE		150'000	USD	265'500	20.12.00	CONOCO & UNOCAL FOR HOUSE KITS
AMERICAN - PRIVATE		1'000'000	USD	1'770'000	20.12.00	FREEMAN FOUNDATION FOR HOUSE KITS
AMERICAN - PRIVATE		200	USD	354	19.12.00	
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		250'000	AUD	249'600	16.09.00	
AUSTRIAN - RC		25'000	EUR	38'933	20.09.00	
AUSTRIAN - GOVT		1'000'000	ATS	111'799	08.02.01	
BELGIUM - RC		37'805	EUR	58'159	11.04.01	PSB STEEL HOUSE
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID		147'059	GBP	380'883	15.09.00	RELIEF NEEDS & OPERATIONAL NEEDS
CANADIAN - RC		50'000	CAD	57'670	18.09.00	
CANADIAN - GOVT		50'000	CAD	59'560	22.09.00	
CANADIAN - PRIVATE				87	04.10.00	
CZECH - GOVT		30'000	USD	53'205	20.09.00	
DANISH - RC		185'000	DKK	38'628	18.09.00	
DANISH - RC		462'500	DKK	96'570	28.09.00	
DANISH - GOVT		32'076	USD	54'930	03.10.00	BASIC FOOD & NON-FOOD COMMODITIES
DANISH - GOVT		1'900'000	DKK	388'740	11.10.00	
DANISH - RC		462'500	DKK	94'628	20.10.00	
ECHO		280'000	EUR	194'094	02.11.00	TPS/210/2000/18006
FINNISH GOVT		22'059	USD	39'122	09.10.00	
FINNISH - RC		33'637	EUR	51'391	28.09.00	
FINNISH - RC		33'637	EUR	51'391	27.10.00	
FRENCH - GOVT		300'000'000	VND	37'500	22.09.00	RICE, MOSQUITO NETS, PLASTIC SHEETINGS
GERMAN - GOVT/RC		281'030	DEM	219'513	29.09.00	10'000 PLASTIC SHEETS & 14'000 MOSQUITO NETS
GERMAN - GOVT		865'000	DEM	675'652	07.11.00	2'320 MT RICE
ICELANDIC - RC		200'000	ISK	4'295	22.09.00	
ITALIAN - GOVT		500'000'000	ITL	394'500	04.10.00	
JAPANESE - RC				130'000	25.09.00	
JAPANESE - GOVT		50'000	USD	85'625	21.09.00	290 MT RICE & TRANSPORT, ADMIN/ OPERATIONAL COSTS
LIECHTENSTEIN - RC				50'000	02.10.00	
MONACO - RC		20'000	FRF	4'658	18.10.00	
NETHERLANDS - GOVT		38'461	USD	65'864	21.09.00	
NETHERLANDS - GOVT		495'049	NLG	343'164	27.09.00	
NETHERLANDS - RC				25'000	27.09.00	
NETHERLANDS - RC		2'657	USD	4'326	30.01.01	ID, DIRECTLY TO THE FIELD
NEW ZEALAND - GOVT		50'000	NZD	37'345	04.10.00	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		1'200'000	NOK	227'129	05.12.00	
OXFAM		41'700	USD	73'955	21.09.00	PLASTICK BUCKETS, WATER TABLETS
OXFAM		203'000'000	VND	25'375	21.09.00	PLASTIC SHEETING FOR 1500 FAMILIES IN MEKONG AREA
SINGAPORE - GOVT		20'000	USD	34'250	25.09.00	
SINGAPORE - PRIVATE		16	USD	29	21.11.00	

SWEDISH - GOVT		1'000'000	SEK	187'100	26.09.00	RELIEF NEEDS & TRANSPORT STORAGE AND VEHICLE COSTS
SWISS - GOVT		28'604	USD	50'729	27.09.00	
SWISS - RC				55'500	17.10.00	RELIEF ITEMS
SWISS - GOVT		85'479	USD	151'597	07.11.00	5 MEDICAL CLINIC BOATS
SWISS - GOVT/RC/SOLIDARITY CHAIN		90'000	USD	146'520	09.03.01	POST-FLOOD RECONSTRUCTION
SWISS - RC		11'123	USD	18'108	21.03.01	PSC POST-FLOOD RECONSTRUCTION
SWISS - PRIVATE				5'000	11.12.00	
UNICEF		30'000	USD	51'375	19.09.00	RELIEF GOODS, FOOD, PLASTIC SHEETING
UNDP		50'000	USD	88'675	25.09.00	TRANSPORT, STORAGE, VEHICLE COSTS FOR NON-FOOD ITEMS DISTRIBUTION; TRAVEL, COMMUNICATION & SALARIES
USAID		216'160	USD	383'360	04.10.00	PROCUREMENT & DISTRIBUTION RELIEF ITEMS
VIETNAM - INTER SEMICONDUCTOR		50'000	USD	88'675	30.10.00	700 BOATS & LOCAL TRANSPORT
VIETNAM - PRIVATE				13'108	19.10.00	13 PRIVATE DONATIONS
VIETNAM - PRIVATE		130'200'000	VND	16'275	19.10.00	NIKE COMPANY
VIETNAM - PRIVATE/HCMC		80'624'137	VND	9'836	23.11.00	AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VIETNAM - 20 PRIVATE				18'616	28.11.00	
VIETNAM - PRIVATE		200	USD	326	19.12.00	DIRECTLY TO THE FIELD
VIETNAM - PRIVATE		4'100	USD	6'675	16.01.01	DIRECTLY TO THE FIELD
VIETNAM - CONOCO/UNOCAL		50'000	USD	81'400	15.02.01	DIRECTLY TO THE FIELD
VIETNAM - GIAI DIEU VIET INC.		1'067	AUD	959	12.12.00	DIRECTLY TO THE FIELD
VIETNAM - VIETNAMESE STUDENTS		2'000	GBP	4'820	05.01.01	DIRECTLY TO THE FIELD
PRIVATES				128	26.02.01	
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH</b>				8'058'672	CHF	89.2%

**KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
BELGIUM - GOVT		756'100	EUR	1'163'184	11.04.01	1'300 STEEL HOUSE FRAME, CONSTRUCTION KITS
KOREAN, REPUBLIC - RC		30'000	USD	53'205	25.10.00	2'877 UNITS OF CLOTHES, bilateral donation
SWISS - GOVT/RC/SOLIDARITY CHAIN		249'000	USD	405'372	09.03.01	500 HOUSE-FRAMES
WFP		200'000	USD	354'700	18.09.00	945 TONS OF RICE
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES</b>				1'976'461	CHF	21.9%

**ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED</b>				0	CHF	

**THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:**

PVN513						