

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

INDIA : FLOODS

06 September 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organisation and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 16/2004; Operations Update no. 4; Period covered: 18 August – 03 September, 2004; Appeal coverage: 57.13%; ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

Appeal history: Launched on 27 July 2004 for CHF 2,982,000 (USD 2,364,433 or EUR 1,943,417) for 10 months to assist 250,000 beneficiaries.

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,278,266 (USD 1,012,723 or EUR 1,943,417)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: [Annual Appeal 01.57/2004](#)

Operational Summary: Assessment, procurement and beneficiary identification processes are close to being finalised and the operation is still on track to meet projected distribution timeframes. Initial emergency relief activities (including those predating the request for assistance) were sustained from disaster preparedness stocks and Indian Red Cross human resources, including a large, trained volunteer base. The good response to the request for assistance to date means procurement processes have been able to proceed. However, partners are still urged to contribute to this request for assistance so the stated objectives can be fully achieved to assist the quarter of a million of the most vulnerable people affected by the floods.

- *In (India): Indian Red Cross Society (Mrs (Dr) Vimala Ramalingam, Secretary General, Indian Red Cross Society, New Delhi), email: vimalaramalingam@indianredcross.or, phone: 91 11 23716441, fax 91 11 23717454*
- *In (India): Delegation contact (Azmat Ulla, Head of Delegation, India Delegation, New Delhi), email: ifrcin65@ifrc.org, phone: 91 11 23324203, fax 91 11 2332 4235*
- *For regional overview, contact Bob McKerrow, Head of Regional Delegation, South Asia, New Delhi. Phone +91 112685 8671, mobile +91 98 1000 1534, email - ifrcin02@ifrc.org*
- *In Geneva: Nelly Khabrayal, Asia-Pacific Department; email: Nellykhabrayal@ifrc.org; phone: +41 22 730 4353 and Jagan Chapagain, email jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org, phone +41 22 730 4316.*

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background

The states of Assam and Bihar were the two areas most severely affected by torrential rains and over-flowing rivers in this disaster which struck two months ago.

Over 33 million people have been affected in the two states (21 million in Bihar and 12 million in Assam) and over 900 people died. Over half of Bihar's districts were inundated by flood waters while all 27 districts of Assam were affected.

There are still approximately 1.3 million people living in relief camps while others have had to make do with living on any raised ground they could find, such as roadsides and near railway lines.

Many districts were cut off for several days and there has been significant damage to infrastructure such as roads, bridges, etc. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) assessment states about 60 percent of crops have been destroyed, affecting 1.2 million farming families. The total crop area affected is 1.15 million hectares. Nearly 600,000 dwellings have been damaged or destroyed. The flood situation has considerably improved in the past few weeks with no further heavy rainfalls in the states and adjoining areas. River levels have also returned to normal with flood waters receding quickly. However, it should be noted that India is still only half-way through the monsoon season which extends into September.

Whilst people have now returned to the sites of their homes, many dwellings are unlivable, having been either destroyed or swamped by silt and mud. Conditions are made difficult by the stench of rotting vegetation as the water recedes. Health problems from waterborne diseases and related conditions continue to be a threat to vulnerable communities and have to be prioritised. In the latest World Health Organisation (WHO) health bulletin dated 18 August the main areas of intervention highlighted are safe drinking water, construction of sanitation facilities and the provision of essential life saving drugs.

Some villages in Bihar still remain cut off and access to these villages is still difficult, as is transporting relief items. Most of the roads were badly damaged, resulting in trucks taking much longer time than usual to reach respective destinations. A recent series of bomb blasts across the state of Assam has deteriorated the situation leading to further delay of relief distribution. Security forces and police are on high alert following further threats.

Flood waters in the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Punjab have receded and the situation has returned to almost normal.

Operational developments

The first round of distribution under the objectives outlined in this request for assistance was undertaken with distribution of 1,000 (non-food) family packs accompanied by the required food basket which was mobilised by the Bihar state branch, additional progress continues to be made in positioning/packing of relief stock, procurement and beneficiary identification.

The purchase order of the tarpaulins and the other non-food items for 25,000 under the shelter and non-food objective was issued on 27 August. The non-food items will be dispatched by 5 September to their respective destinations (state capital). As outlined in Operations Update 3, 20,000 tarpaulins from disaster preparedness stocks have arrived in Assam and Bihar along with consignments of non-food family packs. There has been a delay of approximately 10 days in the procurement process of food items for distribution in Bihar due to price hikes in-state. As a result the purchase committee carried out a comparative bid analysis and has advised three items to be re-tendered from Delhi.

Quotes were received from potential suppliers of medical kits for the health, hygiene and water sanitation operation in Assam on 16 August. The purchase order is expected to be issued as the situation improves in the state of Assam. Regarding the Bihar state branch medical component, the state has been locally mobilising total medical supplies worth CHF 75,000 which is reasonable for the current situation, thus the funds allocated for the activity would be re-channelled in consultation with the IRCS NHQ and state branches.

The Indian Red Cross has recruited a floods information focal person who began his duties in second week of August. The appointment is aimed at assisting with communication and reporting flows. Additionally, two

national disaster response team members have been deputed, one of them is a local recruit while the second team member has reported last week.



The Federation secretariat in Geneva has continued to mobilise international resources for assistance. The India delegation is supporting the Indian Red Cross in mobilising the operation at all levels to ensure it runs smoothly. National headquarters (NHQ) is liaising with state branches regarding all issues related to the operation.

A logistics team visited Bihar from NHQ last month to finalise details of the procurement and to provide orientation to the volunteers on the targeting and relief distribution techniques, financial and reporting procedures. This visit was followed by a high level visit on 21 August from NHQ and Federation (consisting of secretary general, IRCS, India delegation HoD and other

senior officials) for flagging off the first distribution of 1,000 family packs (food and non-food items) in the district of Muzaffarpur in Bihar which have been locally mobilised and was distributed along with 1,000 non-food family packs from the current request for assistance stock which was packed and ready to be distributed. State branches are mobilising local human resources along with generating local resources in cash and kind.

The Bihar state branch has been very effective, raising CHF 166,000 in cash and mobilising medicines worth CHF 75,000 from the medical association and various pharmacies. To date, the Bihar state branch, along with district branches, has dispatched 31,000 tarpaulin sheets, 20,000 assorted clothes (used), 2,500 plastic buckets, 25 life jackets, 2,000 kitchen sets, 10,000 dhotis, 12,000 sarees and 40 boats. State and district branches are also providing first aid and other medical services, particularly to marooned people and those still living in temporary shelters. To date over 250,000 people have received some form of assistance from the various Red Cross branches in Bihar. USAID has donated 10 boats to IRCS (NHQ) for flood operation, of which five have been retained by Bihar state branch and the remaining has been sent to IRCS Kolkata warehouse.

The Assam state branch, along with its district and sub-district branches, has distributed 2,000 blankets, 2,000 mosquito nets, 2,000 baby food packs, utensils worth CHF 10,000, rice, sugar, barley, etc. The district branches are also running several relief camps and have distributed pulses, salt, oil, biscuits and some dry rations. The Assam district and state branches have collectively mobilised CHF 5,714. The state branch is also operating a mobile medical unit from a boat in cooperation with state health authorities. In recent developments the security situation in the state of Assam is a concern to the existing flood relief operation in the state.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Operation Goal: To meet the urgent needs of the 50,000 worst-affected families in Assam and Bihar for food, shelter, family packs and medical services, to ensure improved quality of water over a period of four months and prepare to meet the longer-term needs through necessary capacity building and disaster mitigation initiatives over a further period of six months after the emergency phase.

Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)

Shelter: Objective: 50,000 flood-affected families to receive shelter materials within one and a half months.

The Indian Red Cross and the Federation intend to distribute general purpose plastic sheets (5 x 4 m each) as temporary shelter material for 50,000 families (approximately 250,000 persons) in the 12 most affected districts of Assam and the nine most affected districts in Bihar.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

As outlined in Operations Update 2, 20,000 tarpaulins have been positioned in Assam and Bihar from preparedness stocks released from the regional warehouses in Kolkata. These were part of non-food packages

(10,000 for each state). The inclusion of funding for 50,000 tarpaulins in the request for assistance is to allow the Indian Red Cross to replenish its vital disaster preparedness stocks.

A purchase order for 25,000 more tarpaulins (15,000 funded from the current request for assistance and 10,000 from the 2004 disaster management programme, and other non-food items) has been placed on 27 August. Standard procurement procedures have been followed including technical approval from Geneva.

Impact:

N/A

Constraints:

N/A

Relief: distribution of basic food and non-food items**Objective 1: 30,000 flood-affected families to receive supplementary food items and family packs in Bihar over a period of one and a half months.**

Basic food to each family: 20 kg of beaten rice, 5 kg pulses, 2 kg jaggery (sugar cane product) and family kits each consisting of a kitchen set (20 pieces), 1 bucket, 1 dhoti (men's clothing), 1 saree (women's clothing), 1 cotton blanket, 1 towel, 1 bed sheet, 2 mosquito nets (single bed), 6 candles, 2 match boxes, 2 HDPE (high density polythene bag for packing).

Progress/Achievements :

Packaging of the 10,000 (non-food) family packs which arrived in Bihar (as per Operations Update 2) has almost been completed. The packs were released from disaster preparedness stocks in regional warehouses in Kolkata. The packs contain the following:

- 1 kitchen set consisting of 20 pieces of utensils
- 1 plastic bucket
- 2 bed sheets
- 1 towel
- 1 cotton blanket
- 2 sarees (female clothing)
- 1 dhoti (male clothing)

First round of distribution was initiated on 21 August under the current request for assistance which included 1,000 non-food family packs which were complemented by the Bihar state branch locally mobilising 1,000 food packets and distributed in the Muzaffarpur district.

The progress under the request for assistance has been that state branches are continuing beneficiary identification according to the criteria specified in the request for assistance. Out of a total of nine districts the beneficiary selection has been completed in five districts. The distribution cards are being accordingly printed by the state branch.

The non-food family packs, which have arrived earlier, will be distributed along with the food package. Clear guidelines were issued to branches by NHQ as outlined in Operations Update 1. The procurement process of food items for 30,000 families continues in Bihar but faces a delay of 10 days as per reasons outlined in the 'constraints' section below. After re-tendering in Delhi all the papers have been sent to Geneva for technical approval, which is awaited within 48 hours.

The procurement process for the other non-food items (excluding tarpaulins) has also been initiated and is detailed under the shelter objective as the process for shelter material and other non-food items is the same.

Impact: N/A

Constraints:

As outlined in Operations Update 2, there have been severe cost increases in food in Bihar due to price gouging by local suppliers. A comparative cost analysis by the Federation logistics officer and assistant director of relief (IRCS) showed that prices were cheaper in Delhi. With no indication that the price gouging in Bihar is going to abate, the decision has been made by the purchasing committee to re-tender for the three food items in Delhi. This has delayed the procurement process by at least 10 days, which includes technical approval from Geneva logistics department. However, by the re-tendering for the food items in Delhi the procurement committee managed to save funds that can cover the needs of 870 families for non-food items.

Objective 2: 20,000 flood-affected families to receive family kits in Assam over a period of one and a half months.

The family kit to be distributed consists of a kitchen set (20 pieces), one bucket, one dhoti (men's clothing), one saree (women's clothing), one cotton blanket, one towel, one bed sheet, two mosquito nets (single bed).

Progress/Achievements :

Packaging of a consignment of 10,000 (non -food) family packs (contents outlined under objective 1) has been delayed due to all India truckers strike as the state branch had ordered HDPE bags which were procured from Kolkata and were stranded for a week.

As with the Bihar consignment, these packs came from disaster preparedness stock pre-positioned in regional warehouses in Kolkata.

Distribution will commence once packing is completed. The state branch continues the process of identifying beneficiaries in accordance with selection criteria outlined in the request for assistance. The state branch will organise logistics and administrative issues such as printing of distribution cards and identification of distribution points with the help of district branches. NHQ issued guidelines as outlined in Operations Update 2. The state branch is forecasting a delay in distribution of relief items due to various security concerns which arose last week including a series of bomb blasts in the state accompanied by violent demonstrations.

Impact: N/A

Constraints: The delay in packaging due to a truckers strike accompanied by political disturbances has lead to an overall delay in distribution of relief goods.

Health, Hygiene and Water Sanitation**Objective: 50,000 flood-affected families to receive preventive and curative health services through mobile and static health clinics for a period of four months.**

It is proposed to run six mobile medical units (MMUs) in Assam for a period of four months in the worst affected districts. In Bihar, the existing Red Cross clinics/maternal and child health care centre capacity will be strengthened through emergency medical supplies. *(The Bihar state branch has mobilised a reasonable stock of emergency medicines in addition to other stakeholders like government and other NGOs and have reacted to the emerging medical situation arisen due to floods. Moreover RC volunteers will continue health education and awareness.)*

Progress/Achievements:

Quotations from potential suppliers for medical kits for the MMUs in Assam have been received and the purchase committee is currently reviewing them. Potential suppliers were identified with the advice of WHO and the Federation secretariat in Geneva. The committee has finalised a vendor and is awaiting state branch clearance and improvement in situation to start procuring the medical kits.

To date, the Bihar state branch has mobilised locally-produced medicines worth CHF 75,000 from the medical association and various pharmacies. The Bihar state branch has locally mobilised resources to meet the initial medical needs for the state as outlined in the operational development. NHQ issued guidelines to the Assam state branch on the proposed mobile medical units.

Two water purification plants have been dispatched by NHQ to Assam and Bihar. The plant for Bihar arrived on 16 August and was forwarded to Muzzaffarpur and Samastipur districts on the same day. Each water purification plant has a capacity of providing clean drinking water to 10,000 people.

Impact:

The health situation of affected people has been improved through India Red Cross District and branch health interventions provided by existing health clinics and dispensaries. The resources provided by the mobilised medicines and medical personnel have been key to this response.

Constraints: N/A

Disaster Mitigation and Capacity Building

The process for this activity would only commence once the water has receded and the ground has dried for the construction to take place.

Objective 1: One flood platform with five raised tube wells and five raised latrines to be constructed at a selected site in a flood-prone area of Assam over a period of six months after the emergency phase.

A flood platform will be constructed on a secure site above the flood water level with overhead shelter for humans and cattle, with five hand tube wells and five toilet blocks.

Progress/Achievements: N/A

Impact: N/A

Constraints: N/A

Objective 2: Thirty raised tube wells to be constructed in the most affected districts of Bihar.

Raised tube wells to be constructed on secure sites above the flood water level providing safe drinking water to the community.

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective): N/A

Impact: N/A

Constraints: N/A

Objective 3: Disaster response capacity of the Indian Red Cross in flood-prone areas to be further improved through lessons learned and documentation.

The capacity building aspects for the IRCS state branches of Assam and Bihar are already addressed through the India disaster management programme as two of the targeted disaster-prone states. However, lessons learned exercises and documentation of good practice will be undertaken post-relief operations. The outcome will be widely disseminated and incorporated into future planning.

This exercise and the software component of the mitigation activities would be covered under the on-going disaster management programme for 2004 as planned.

Progress/Achievements : N/A

Impact: N/A

Constraints: N/A

Federation Coordination

As outlined in Operations Updates 1 and 2, the disaster management team at the India delegation and the national society has briefed partner national societies. As outlined in Operations Update 1, the Indian Red Cross facilitated a USAID visit to affected areas in Bihar and Assam for an overview of the situation; for observing the Red Cross

response and to meet the relevant government authorities. The Federation disaster management delegate and an Indian Red Cross representative met the resident commissioner of Bihar along with other organisations such as UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNDP, MSF, CARE and Oxfam.

The Indian Red Cross continues to attend all UNDP coordinated meetings being held for the current flood situation at the national and state level. The task force comprising of representatives from disaster management, health, logistics, information and reporting, and finance from the India delegation and national society meet daily to review the situation.

The national society will continue with specific sectors of intervention and objectives established in appeals; for example water and sanitation; relief distribution of food and basic non-food items; shelter; etc.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

National Society Capacity Building

The Indian Red Cross is focused on developing its disaster preparedness and management, organisational training and development, and administrative structures. With more than 654 branches and over 12 million members, it is one of the largest humanitarian organisations in the country. The Indian Red Cross is now being perceived as a leading humanitarian agency in India by many stakeholders. The national society has committed leadership, a dedicated DM department, an established disaster management centre (DMC), mobile disaster units (MDU), a fully equipped national disaster response team, disaster preparedness stock, cyclone shelters and staff and volunteers trained in disaster management.

The Bihar state branch possesses a strong and committed volunteer force trained in first aid. Volunteers enjoy a good rapport and reputation with the public. This group can be quickly mobilised for relief operations. The main branch activities are health care, relief, first aid training and Junior Red Cross/Youth Red Cross activities. Health care is provided by 10 primary health care centres run by voluntary doctors on a regular basis. The state branch has 35 staff, more than 98,000 members and 5,000 volunteers.

As outlined in Operations Update 2, a training session for 67 flood-relief volunteers from targeted districts in Bihar was conducted by Indian Red Cross and Federation personnel. Since 2000, a total of 360 Assam branch volunteers have been trained under the Federation-assisted community-based first aid (CBFA) programme. A DFID-funded disaster reduction programme has been operating in Assam since 2001. This involves the pre-positioning of disaster preparedness stock for 10,000 families, training of volunteers and development of mitigation activities in two districts. This activity has placed the Assam branch in a much better position of preparedness to respond quickly to any flood situation. The branch and local NGOs are experienced in responding to floods but are increasingly looking to preparedness and mitigation responses in addition to flood relief.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

There has been extensive local media coverage of operations in Bihar, both in local newspapers and national television. There has also been local coverage of activities in Assam. The newly appointed information focal point will hold a planning meeting with India delegation and South Asia regional delegation counterparts this week to map out the communications strategy for the future.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

India - floods

ANNEX 1

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE No. 16/2004

PLEDGES RECEIVED

31/08/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				2,982,000	TOTAL COVERAGE 39.2%		
AUSTRIAN - RC		35,000	EUR	53,935	30.07.04	RELIEF NEEDS (75%), OPERATION NEEDS (25%)	
BRITISH - RC		25,000	GBP	57,150	29.07.04		
CANADIAN - RC		25,000	CAD	23,450	03.08.04	PROCUREMENT OF FOOD ITEMS F/1500 FAMILIES FOR 1.5MONTHS	
CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/IHA		250,000	CAD	234,500	03.08.04		
CHINA - HONG KONG - RC		132,376	HKD	21,418	30.07.04		
FINNISH - RC		200,000	EUR	305,800	10.08.04		
IRISH - GOVT		75,000	EUR	114,675	28.07.04		
JAPANESE - RC		114,700	USD	145,035	06.08.04		
SPANISH - RC		30,000	EUR	45,870	11.08.04		
SWEDISH GOVT/RC		1,000,000	SEK	167,500	28.07.04		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,169,334	CHF		39.2%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES						
				0	CHF	0.0%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

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