

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

30 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. 5; Period covered: 4 September – 16 September, 2004; Appeal coverage: 58.8%; ([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 2,352,706 or EUR 1,929,189) for 10 months to assist 250,000 beneficiaries.

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,227,748 (USD 974,267 or EUR 790,772)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Annual Appeal 01.57/2004

Operational Summary: The current flood operation continues to make progress. However there have been delays in some of the planned activities. In Bihar the state branch has completed the assessment, procurement, and beneficiary identification process along with packaging of 10,000 family packs.

In Assam, the assessment and procurement process for the non-food items has been completed and the beneficiary selection process is nearing completion. A series of bomb explosions on 26 August and subsequent disturbances in Assam led the suspension of the planned deployment of mobile medical units. The operation had already been earlier delayed by access problems caused by the flooding. The situation is being reviewed by the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS). If this activity is cancelled, funds allocated to the programme would be redirected for procurement of the additional family packs.

A budget revision is likely in the coming weeks and would be reflected in the next Operations Update due out in mid-October. The budget revision would feature the diversion of funds from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) reporting component as ECHO funds have not been applied for by IRCS.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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 northern states of Assam and Bihar were the worst affected by severe flooding which commenced in mid-June. Over 33 million people were affected in these two states with more than 900 killed in the disaster. At the height of the disaster, approximately 1.3 million people had been forced to take refuge in relief camps while many others fled to temporary accommodations.

Over half of Bihar's districts were inundated by flood waters while all 27 districts of Assam were affected. 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 situation in both Assam and Bihar continues to improve with no further heavy rainfalls in the past month. In Assam, all districts and sub-divisional headquarters are accessible to the IRCS Assam state branch, except some low lying areas. The security situation in Assam is stabilising following a series of bomb explosions and civil disturbances in the latter half of August.

With the monsoon season approaching its conclusion, the threat of further flooding is diminishing. However the post-flood situation is still an extremely difficult and challenging one for the affected populations with homes destroyed or unlivable, crops damaged and destroyed, and the loss of basic necessities.

Flood waters in the states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Punjab have receded and the situation continues to return to normal. The threatened overflow of a large artificial lake in the Himalayan mountain range in China over the border from the northern state of Himachal Pradesh did not eventuate. Hundreds of villages had been under threat. The situation was continuously monitored by the IRCS-Federation disaster management team.

Operational developments

As outlined in Operation Update 3, 1000 (non-food) family packs with the required food baskets were distributed in Bihar while the food component was locally mobilised by the state branch. Positioning, packaging etc for the remainder of the distribution is continuing. Procurement procedures in respect to 30,000 family packages of food items and 15,000 family packets of non-food items have since been completed. Additionally, procurement of 10,000 packets of non-food items has been finalised under the disaster management programme. Purchase orders for all the items have been issued and delivery of goods has commenced. The entire supply is expected to be completed within October. Simultaneously, the packaging of family packs in high density polythene (HDPE) bags and distribution will continue.

Vendors for medical kits for the mobile medical units in Assam under the health, hygiene and water sanitation objective have been identified. However, the process was put on hold due to the 26 August bomb blasts and ensuing disturbances in some parts of the state. The national society has not made progress on this objective due to, firstly, access problems caused by the flooding and secondly, the deterioration in the security situation in the wake of the bombings. During this reporting period the security situation has improved, the flood waters have receded and the displaced population has started going back to their respective communities.

In view of these delays the IRCS national headquarters (NHQ) is proposing a quick review of the situation to investigate whether the planned medical intervention in the form of mobile medical units (MMU) is relevant to the current scenario. If there is a decision to cancel this activity, the funds would be utilised to cover more families for family packs in Assam and Bihar. This would require a budget revision, which would be undertaken as soon as national society decides on the MMU operation in Assam.

The Bihar state branch has to date raised CHF 171,485 (CHF 5485 in the latest reporting period) in cash and mobilised medicines worth CHF 75,000 from the medical association and various pharmacies. To date over 300,000 people have received some form of assistance from the various Red Cross branches in Bihar.

The Assam state branch, in addition to distribution of food and non-food items outlined in the previous Operations Updates, has continued to run several relief camps.

Due to non-application status for ECHO funds by the national society the funds kept aside for an ECHO reporting officer will be diverted towards family pack procurement.

The Federation secretariat in Geneva has continued to mobilise international resources for assistance. The India delegation is supporting the Indian Red Cross in the current floods operation. NHQ continues to liaise with state branches regarding all issues related to the operation.

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 with the support from the Federation intends 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

During the reporting period, suppliers for 10,000 non-food family packs (including shelter materials) for Bihar have been organised and delivery is expected within a week to the Patna warehouse. The state branch has distributed 4,400 tarpaulin sheets in the emergency phase out of the 10,000 tarpaulin sheets sent previously by NHQ, while 1,000 tarpaulin sheets were distributed with family packs earlier.

Impact

A total of 5,400 families to date have benefited from receiving shelter materials. All these beneficiaries were in dire need and had little or no other option for finding shelter.

Constraints

Delays in food procurement (outlined later in this Operations Update) have held up the distribution of shelter materials. This is due to the decision that the family packs had to include both the food and non-food items.

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 sari (women's clothing), 1 cotton blanket, 1 towel, 1 bed sheet, 2 mosquito nets (single bed), 6 candles, 2 match boxes, 2 HDPE bags for packing.

Progress/Achievements

Packaging of the 10,000 (non-food) family packs which arrived in Bihar (as outlined in Operations Update 2) has almost been completed. The packs were released from disaster preparedness stocks in regional warehouses in Kolkata. The procurement process for the other non-food items (excluding tarpaulins) has been completed and part delivery of 10,000 non-food family packs has been dispatched to Patna which is based on the purchase order issued on 27 August.

The food pack procurement process is near completion. A purchase order was issued on 10 September following technical approval. Delivery of the food items has begun and should be completed by the end of the month. The total distribution of 30,000 family packs will be concluded within the four-month emergency phase i.e. by November 2004.

To date as outlined in Operations Update 4, the Bihar state branch distributed 1,000 family packs along with 1,000 locally sourced food packs in the Muzaffarpur district. Each family pack contains the following:

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

The beneficiary selection process has been completed in all targeted nine districts. The distribution cards are being accordingly printed by the state branch.

Impact

The 1,000 family packs which have been distributed to the beneficiaries have helped them to cope up with the situation. The full extent of the impact will become more apparent as the distribution continues and the ability of communities to rebuild their lives is monitored. This will be reflected in future reports.

Constraint

The food procurement process was delayed by two weeks due to the need to re-tender due to price hikes as outlined in Operations Update 4. This subsequently delayed technical approval of the 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 sari (women's clothing), one cotton blanket, one towel, one bed sheet, two mosquito nets (single bed).

Progress/Achievements

A total of 5,000 family kits have been packed by the Assam state branch and this process is continuing. A delay in the arrival of packaging material has slowed this process (outlined further under constraints.). These family packs have been sourced from disaster preparedness stock pre-positioned in regional warehouses in Kolkata.

Distribution will commence once packing is completed for the initial distribution of 10,000 family packs. The state branch has almost completed beneficiary identification in accordance with the selection criteria outlined in the request for assistance.

The logistics and administrative issues such as printing of distribution cards and identification of distribution points with the help of district branches is nearing completion. These have been done according to the guidelines issued by NHQ as outlined in Operations Update 2.

All the targeted districts under the request for assistance have been claimed as accessible by the Assam state branch except some low lying areas which still are inundated and are difficult to approach.

Impact

Whilst there is no direct impact as such with the distribution yet to occur, identified beneficiaries are now aware of the nature of support which is imminent.

Constraints

A truck drivers strike from 21-27 August delayed the delivery of HDPE bags from Kolkata to be used to package the family kits, effectively delaying the process by a week. Beneficiary identification has taken longer than anticipated due to the unforeseen deterioration in the security situation from 22 August and continued access problems due to flooding. Both these constraints have now diminished.

Whilst the security situation has improved since the disturbances in late August, IRCS is monitoring the situation.

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 MMUs in Assam for a period of four months in the worst affected districts. In Bihar, the existing Red Cross clinics/material and child health care centre capacity will be strengthened through emergency medical supplies.

Progress/Achievements

Quotations from potential suppliers for medical kits for the MMUs in Assam were received and the vendor finalised. As stated in the operational development summary, the national society has not progressed further in this activity due to access issues as a result of the flooding and security concerns following the bomb blasts on 22 August. IRCS is currently reviewing the situation in terms of implementing the medical component in Assam. If a decision is made to not mobilise the MMUs, there will be a budget revision with funds redirected to procuring further family packs.

The Bihar state branch has mobilised locally-procured medicines worth CHF 75,000 from the Medical Association and various pharmacies. This has met the medical supply requirements under this objective.

Two water purification plants were dispatched to Bihar by NHQ in August and are operational. Each plant has the capacity to provide clean drinking water for 10,000 people. Previously it had been stated one plant each had been dispatched to Assam and Bihar. This was stated in error.

Impact

The health situation of affected people has been improved through Indian 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

Access issues due to the flooding and the security situation in Assam have stymied the planned deployment of the MMUs in Assam. As outlined above, the situation is currently being reviewed on whether to proceed with this activity.

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

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 (DM) programme as two of the targeted 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 ongoing disaster management programme for 2004 as planned.

Progress/Achievements

A participatory action learning process has been initiated. With key partners' support, the IRCS and International Federation are focusing on learning how previous investments in disaster preparedness (DP) have increased Red Cross and community capacity to cope with disasters. The India floods operation 2004 provides a good opportunity for real time learning at times of emergencies.

The main objectives of the learning study include:-

1. Assess the extent to which previous investments in disaster preparedness have increased Indian Red Cross and community capacity to respond to and cope with disasters and how the added value of the Federation and other partner's assistance can best be used to complement IRCS investments.
2. Capture lessons learned and good examples from the findings above and develop recommendations for development of future community level DP programmes with integrated branch development component to reduce vulnerability.
3. Gather material suitable for external promotion and fund-raising, and to feed best practises to the broader stakeholders.

The team composes of IRCS, Federation and other key partners. The outputs of the participatory action learning process will include:

- Country and regional lessons learning review reports;
- Promotional materials including "human-interest" stories, pictures, and videos;
- Final India report; and
- Final regional report.

Impact

NA

Constraints

N/A

Federation Coordination

As outlined in previous Operations Updates, the DM team at the India delegation and 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 the Indian Red Cross deputy secretary met the resident commissioner of Bihar along with other organisations such as UNICEF, World Health Organisation, World Food Programme, UNDP, Medecin Sans Frontiers (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. IRCS 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.

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 centers 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 British Department For International Development (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 non-governmental organisations 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 and Assam both in local newspapers and national television.

The IRCS information focal point is currently involved in the participatory action learning process. He is currently travelling through Assam and Bihar (as well as Orissa) along with other team members. Part of his brief is to produce articles on the current situation and how the IRCS assistance is making a difference for beneficiaries. The Indian Red Cross website also is featuring information about the current flood operation.

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

India - floods

ANNEX 1

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE No. 16/2004

PLEDGES RECEIVED

29/09/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					TOTAL COVERAGE	
					2,982,000	58.8%
AMERICAN - GOVT/USAID		150,000	USD	189,675	23.08.04	PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES, TRANSPORTATION
AUSTRIAN - RC		35,000	EUR	53,935	30.07.04	
BELGIAN - RC		220,000	EUR	339,020	03.09.04	NON-FOOD ITEMS (7000 FAMILY PACKS), FIELD ADMINISTRATION COSTS
BRITISH - RC		25,000	GBP	57,150	29.07.04	RELIEF NEEDS (75%), OPERATION NEEDS (25%)
BRITISH - RC		24,510	GBP	56,030	23.08.04	RELIEF NEEDS (75%), OPERATION NEEDS (25%)
CANADIAN - RC		25,000	CAD	23,450	03.08.04	
CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/IHA		250,000	CAD	234,500	03.08.04	
CHINA - HONG KONG - RC		132,376	HKD	21,418	30.07.04	PROCUREMENT OF FOOD ITEMS F/1500 FAMILIES FOR 1.5MONTHS
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	
PRIVATE DONORS				193	16.09.04	
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				1,754,252	CHF	58.8%

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

India - floods

ANNEX 1

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE No. 16/2004

PLEDGES RECEIVED

29/09/2004

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