

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

5 November 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. 6; Period covered: 17 September – 25 October, 2004; Appeal coverage: 62.1%; ([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 1,129,317 (USD 943,540 or EUR 738,244)

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

Operational Summary: In Bihar, the state branch has completed the assessment, procurement, and beneficiary identification process along with packaging of 10,000 family packs. The state branch has initiated distribution of 1,000 family packs in Muzaffarpur district in which the food component was locally mobilised and has also distributed 4,400 additional shelter materials from the current request for assistance. For Bihar, all procurement procedures have been completed and distribution is ongoing.

Assam has completed the assessment phase and the procurement of non-food items and the beneficiary selection processes are nearing completion. The mobile medical unit (MMU) component under 'Health, Hygiene and Water Sanitation' for Assam was initially postponed due to civil disturbances and inaccessibility due to the flooding. The situation has been reviewed by the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) in terms of launching the mobile medical units and it has been decided to cancel the operation. The funds allocated to this aspect of the programme will be redirected for procurement of additional family packs.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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 flooding, approximately 1.3 million people were forced to take refuge in relief camps while many others fled to temporary accommodation on higher ground.

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 since August apart from the Goalpara district in Assam (see below). 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 has stabilised following a series of bomb explosions and civil disturbances in the latter half of August.

The monsoon season is almost over and the threat of further flooding is diminishing. However, there were flash floods as a result of heavy rain on 5 October in the Goalpara district in Assam which caused widespread damage in 182 villages, affecting 100,000 people.

The post-flood situation is still extremely difficult and challenging for the affected populations with homes destroyed or unlivable, crops damaged and destroyed, and the loss of basic necessities.

A participatory action learning (PAL) team of four members comprising of one external team leader, one staff member from the Federation-India delegation, an IRCS national headquarters (NHQ) staff member and a state branch disaster management (DM) coordinator (also a member of the national disaster response (NDR) team) visited flood-affected areas of Bihar and Assam in October. This was to conduct a real-time PAL study of the IRCS ongoing flood relief operation. Utilising a wide range of information gathering techniques such as interviews, workshops and focus groups, the team talked with IRCS NHQ, state and district branches leadership, volunteers and staff. The team held meetings with diverse groups of people in 19 different communities of the flood-affected districts in both the states. The PAL team also met with state and district officials and representatives from agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs) involved in the emergency flood operations in the two states.

Operational developments

As outlined in Operations Update 3, 1,000 (non-food) family packs with the required food baskets were distributed in Bihar with the food component mobilised locally by the state branch. Positioning, packaging, etc. for the remainder of the distribution is continuing. As outlined in Operations Update 5, procurement procedures for 30,000 family packages of food items and 15,000 family packets of non-food items have been completed. Also as previously reported, the procurement of 10,000 packets of non-food items has been finalised under the DM programme. All the relief items of the 30,000 family packs (food and non-food items) are in place in Bihar. After packaging, the family packs are being pre-positioned with the districts branches and distribution is going on in the targeted districts of Bihar. No medicine is required in Bihar as the state branch has mobilised local resources and raised enough funds and received in-kind donations to meet the medicine requirement.

The Danish Red Cross has made a contribution of CHF 146,750 for the procurement of family packs (under bilateral agreement with IRCS). The national society has procured 4,150 family packs with these funds and distribution is being made in the districts of East Champaran and West Champaran in Bihar.

IRCS had received 10 Zodiac boats from USAID, donated by the American Red Cross, for relief and rescue operations. Five of these Zodiac boats have been kept in Bihar while the remaining five were sent to the Salt Lake warehouse, Kolkata.

In Assam, the distribution process of the 10,000 family packs has been ongoing since 24 September. To date, around 4,000 packs have been distributed. As a result of the flash flooding in Goalpara district in early October and the number of people affected, the Assam state branch relief committee has revised the number of the districts covered under the current flood relief operation. Originally 12 out of 27 districts were identified, but the state branch has recommended extending the flood relief to 18 districts. The revised list of the districts covered under the current relief operation is as follows:

	District	Family Packs
1	Dhubri	1000
2	Nagaon	750
3	Kamrup	950
4	Barpeta	500
5.	Cachar	500
6	Morigaon	500
7	Goalpara	500
8	Darrang	500
9	Bongaigaon	500
10	Nalbari	500
11	Lakhimpura	500
12	Hailakandi	1000
13	Dhemaji	700
14	Majuli	350
15	Dibrugarh	300
16	Golaghat	350
17	Sivsagar	400
18	Tinsukia	200
Total		10,000

Following a review of the flood situation in Assam, the IRCS NHQ decided the planned medical intervention, in the form of MMU, was not relevant in the current scenario.

The security situation has stabilised in Assam following civil disturbances and bomb blasts in the latter half of August.

As outlined in Operations Update 5, the Bihar state branch raised CHF 171,485 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 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)

Objective: 30,000 flood-affected families to receive supplementary food items and non-food family packs in Bihar over a period of one and a half months. A total of 20,000 flood-affected families to receive non-food family kits in Assam over a period of one-and-a-half months. Providing 50,000 flood-affected families with shelter material during the emergency phase is part of this objective. This would benefit approximately 250,000 persons in the 18 most affected districts of Assam and the nine most affected districts of Bihar.

This objective is a combination of the emergency relief objectives as originally outlined in the Request for Assistance and Operations Updates 1-5.

Basic food to each family in Bihar: 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 high density polythene (HDPE) bag for packing.

The family kits to be distributed in Assam 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

Shelter for 50,000 in states of Bihar and Assam

A total of 21,500 tarpaulins have now been distributed to date. In Bihar, the state branch distributed 4,400 tarpaulin sheets in the emergency phase out of the 10,000 sent by NHQ, while 1,000 tarpaulin sheets were distributed with family packs earlier. A total of 15,550 tarpaulin sheets have been distributed in Bihar, of which the Danish Red Cross contributed 4,150 sheets. A total of 6,000 tarpaulin sheets have been distributed in Assam.

Food and non-food items to be distributed in Bihar

Procurement procedures in respect of food packages for 30,000 families and non-food items for 15,000 families have been completed. Additionally, procurement of 10,000 packets of non-food items has been finalised under the DM programme. All the relief items for the 20,000 family packs (non-food items) and 30,000 (food items) are in place in Bihar.

Following packaging, the family packs are being pre-positioned at the district branches and distribution is ongoing in the targeted districts of Bihar. This follows the completion of beneficiary identification in the nine targeted districts and the printing and distribution of distribution cards. To date, 6,000 family packs have been distributed in Bihar. Another 4,150 family packs (from the Danish Red Cross contribution) have also been distributed.

Packaging of the 10,000 non-food items which arrived in Bihar has been completed. The packs were released from disaster preparedness stocks in regional warehouses at Bahadurgarh. The delivery of the remaining 10,000 non-food items for Bihar has been completed.

The total distribution of 30,000 family packs will be concluded within the emergency phase, i.e. mid-November 2004.

Non-food items to be distributed in Assam

The delivery of the remaining 5,000 non-food items for Assam has been completed. Packaging of 10,000 (non - food) family packs have now been completed (following earlier delays due to a truck drivers strike) and 6,000 family packs have been distributed by the Assam state branch. The security situation in Assam has returned to normal after bomb blasts and civil disturbances erupted in the latter half of August.

Impact

The most vulnerable have been targeted for distribution of relief items. Those beneficiaries receiving shelter materials were people with little or no option to find cover otherwise. Family packs containing some of the basic necessities are being distributed to people who have lost most, if not all, of their possessions.

Constraints

A variety of factors has led to delays in the procurement, transportation, packaging and distribution of relief items. These issues have been outlined in previous Operations Updates and the constraints have largely dissipated during this reporting period.

As reported earlier, procurement of food items was set back two weeks due to price-gouging in Bihar by suppliers forcing the decision to source the foodstuffs elsewhere.

Packaging materials for family kits were delayed by a week-long widespread truck drivers strike in late August. Beneficiary identification in Assam took longer than expected due to the sudden deterioration in the security situation in that state during the latter half of August.

The festive season began in India from 18 October which has added to delays in distribution by a couple of days. However, the distribution is now ongoing.

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

The Bihar state branch raised CHF 171,485 in cash and mobilised medicines worth CHF 75,000 from the medical association and various pharmacies. This excellent local response has been sufficient in meeting the capacity strengthening requirements of the Red Cross clinics.

Upon review of the needs in Assam, IRCS has decided to cancel the planned activity of running six MMUs in Assam. The planned deployment of the MMUs had already been delayed (see constraints below). Indicators collected by the Ministry of Health show that the health situation has improved to the point that mobilisation of the units are not required.

Impact

To date, over 300,000 people have received some form of assistance from the various Red Cross branches in Bihar.

Constraints

The planned deployment of the MMUs in Assam was initially delayed due to inaccessibility to large major parts of the state due to continued inundation as a result of the flooding. In the latter half of August, the security situation deteriorated with several bomb blasts and subsequent civil disturbances. This further delayed deployment. IRCS assessed the health requirements once these constraints had cleared and at that point decided to cancel the 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.

Capacity building of the state branches of Assam and Bihar are already being addressed through the India DM programme. Assam and Bihar are included among targeted eight 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 will be covered under the ongoing DM programme for 2004 as planned.

Progress/Achievements

A PAL team of four members visited the flood affected areas of Bihar and Assam to conduct a real-time study of the IRCS ongoing flood relief operation. The team was comprised of an external team leader, a Federation-India Delegation staff member, an IRCS NHQ staff member and a state branch DM coordinator (who is also a member of the NDR team). Utilising a wide range of information gathering techniques such as interviews, workshops and focus groups, the team talked with IRCS NHQ, state and district branch leadership, volunteers and staff, and held meetings with diverse groups of people in 19 different communities of the flood-affected districts in both the states. The team also met with state and district officials and representatives from agencies and NGOs involved in the emergency flood operations.

The main objectives of the study are to assess the extent to which previous investments in disaster preparedness have increased IRCS and community capacity to respond and cope with disasters; to capture lessons learned and to develop recommendations for the development of future community-level disaster preparedness programmes with integrated branch development components to reduce vulnerability. The study will also gather material suitable for external promotion and fund-raising, and to feed best practises to the broader stakeholders.

Lessons learned workshops were carried out at the state and national levels in which over 100 people from the IRCS HQ, state and district branches participated. Findings of these meetings are available to partners on request to IRCS.

Impact

PAL findings are to be made available in the near future.

Constraints

N/A

Federation Coordination

The DM team at the India delegation and the national society briefed the partner national societies on the progress in distribution of relief goods at sectoral meetings held on the 30 September and 1 October. Formal and informal communication is continuing with the other DM agencies.

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.

National Society Capacity Building

IRCS is focused on developing its disaster preparedness and management, organisational training and development, and administrative structures. With 654 branches and over 12 million members, it is one of the largest humanitarian organisations in the country. The national society is now being perceived as a leading humanitarian agency in India by many stakeholders. IRCS has committed leadership, a dedicated DM department, an established DM centre, mobile disaster units, a fully equipped NDR 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/Red Cross youth 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 the year 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 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 prominent local media coverage of operations in Bihar and Assam.

The national society information focal point staff has been associated with the PAL team. He travelled to Assam, Bihar and Orissa along with other team members and is producing material on the situation and how IRCS activities have helped the vulnerable.

IRCS flags and banners have been put up at distribution centres in Assam and Bihar.

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

India - floods

ANNEX 1

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE No. 16/2004

PLEDGES RECEIVED

03/11/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					TOTAL COVERAGE	
					2,982,000	62.1%
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 - RC		60,086	EUR	93,284	04.10.04	
IRISH - GOVT		75,000	EUR	114,675	28.07.04	
JAPANESE - RC		114,700	USD	145,035	06.08.04	
MONACO - RC		3,000	EUR	4,658	12.10.04	
PRIVATE DONORS				683	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				1,852,683	CHF	62.1%

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	