



ASIA: EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS

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The complexities of the shelter issue

Throughout the tsunami-affected region, delivering shelter and reconstruction programmes is enormously complex. The initial rapid deployment of shelter materials to tsunami-affected populations unquestionably alleviated suffering, however, it is important to understand the size of the challenge that lies ahead.

These complexities are apparent in many tsunami-affected countries, including Sri Lanka and the Maldives (see operational updates by country below). However, the clearest illustration of the difficulties governmental and humanitarian actors face can be found in the most severely affected region of northern Sumatra (Indonesia) where the scope and complexity of humanitarian operations has necessitated the expansion of relief and shelter programming, in preparation for the construction of permanent housing.

It is clear that the Indonesian Government is taking decisions over land title – and on the allocation of housing plots – as a matter of priority. This is taking time due to the massive volume of debris requiring clearance; the dramatically changed coastline, where in some cases land has become sea and vice-versa; and the destruction of land registry records, resulting in delays verifying land ownership.

Also constraining the speed of reconstruction are logistical limitations including destroyed roads, the approaching rainy season and uncertain security conditions in some areas. Acquiring and transporting the appropriate construction materials is also presenting environmental and logistic challenges.



Red Cross/Red Crescent is improving conditions in temporary living centres by providing water and sanitation services

Shelter action plan in Indonesia

The International Federation and its members are tackling these complexities with practical and tangible solutions. These include the construction of 'mini-flats' – one or two room extensions to existing houses – to alleviate overcrowding for an estimated 16,500 families who are sharing their houses with relatives or friends displaced by the tsunami. The United Nations estimates that people could be living with 'host' families for one to two years.

The International Federation will also help undertake the systematic replacement of some 33,000 tents, which have reached the end of their life-span. This distribution has commenced in preparation for the rainy season.

For the majority of displaced people, transitional housing represents the most suitable and comfortable shelter option until permanent houses for affected communities have been constructed. The International Federation will assist with the procurement of transitional housing. This will be done in consultation with affected communities, which will take an active role in the reconstruction of Aceh, with cash-for-work programmes being implemented. Where possible, temporary houses will be sourced locally with emphasis on using modular pre-fabricated units that can later be re-used as classrooms or add-ons to other civic structures. Decisions as to the locations of these dwellings are dependent on government land use decisions.



The number of permanent new homes that the International Federation and its members have committed to build as of 1 August stands at more than 27,000. In addition, more than 7,000 houses are to be repaired.

Presently, more than 65,000 people are estimated to be living in government built barracks. Over the coming months, many of these will need significant repair. While the Federation and its members are assisting with humanitarian needs at these barracks, such as improvement of water and sanitation facilities, they are not engaged in repair operations, which are primarily the responsibility of local authorities.

Operational updates by country

Indonesia

The Federation and Indonesian Red Cross ([Palang Merah Indonesia/PMI](#)) ration card relief programme, which currently has 437,445 registered beneficiaries, continues its expansion due to the continuing mobility of people moving between temporary camps and host families and some families returning to their land.

The water and sanitation programme in Meulaboh involves repairing the devastated town's water network, including the town hospital. Additionally, five temporary living centres in the district are benefiting from rehabilitation of their drainage systems, improvement of water distribution networks and sanitation facilities.

The overall water distribution figure for Aceh and North Sumatra currently stands at more than one million litres per day. Of this figure, some 35,000 litres is being allocated to the local water utility in Sigli and Samalanga districts for localized distribution as part of a gradual handover process. In total, water and sanitation activities continue to benefit some 113,000 beneficiaries in towns, villages and in 53 temporary living centres and 24 tent camps for people displaced by the tsunami.

The PMI/Federation community-based first aid programme has begun in the Sabang and Biruen branches. The first provision of 200 kits containing first aid supplies is being prepared and training of volunteers is underway. Each trainee will have sufficient first aid supplies in their kit to support 10-20 families.

A major reconstruction initiative by PMI, the Federation and its members is underway for Aceh Jaya district. It is a holistic plan that encompasses construction of housing, schools and health facilities; water and sanitation infrastructure; livelihoods programming and coastal mangrove plantation.

In order to better provide assistance to those whose lives have been impacted by the tsunami and to enable the national society to carry out its humanitarian tasks, the Federation and its members are working to re-establish destroyed PMI branches. Computers, office equipment and furniture have already been delivered to nine PMI branches, including the provincial chapter office in Banda Aceh and on Nias Island. The Federation continues to support PMI branches with equipment and financial support for rented office space until land has been secured to construct PMI-owned buildings.

Sri Lanka

The Federation and the [Sri Lanka Red Cross Society](#) is discussing its involvement in transitional shelter in Sri Lanka, in particular the care, maintenance and upgrading of existing shelters to meet uniform standards. Needs assessments will be undertaken to decide what action is required by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Federation now has sites confirmed for over 2,800 permanent houses, on 23 plots of land. On 11 August, foundations will be laid in Matara, south Sri Lanka. In total the Federation and its members have pledged to build up to 15,000 houses in Sri Lanka.

Federation water purification units continue to produce and distribute over three million litres of water a week benefiting up to 50,000 people. In addition, the Federation is funding water tank transportation in nine districts of Sri Lanka.



The recovery distribution of hygiene kits (including soap, laundry soap, towels, toothpaste, toothbrush, razors, etc. is ongoing in the south, east and north east. This distribution is targeting 65,000 families and is expected to finish in October 2005. Each family receives one hygiene kit per month.

Maldives

The relocation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in temporary shelters has, in many cases, significantly increased the population of certain islands, putting pressure on existing infrastructure and services. Water supplies have been adversely affected and sewerage systems need improvement to cope with additional effluent. Working with UN partners, community facilitators are being trained among the IDPs to strengthen community participation and information flow.

With the completion of the first phase of temporary shelter accommodating 7,488 people at the end of June, the second phase began in July. Extra accommodation blocks are being built to provide additional space to residents, and to house IDPs presently living with host families or in converted buildings, such as unused factories. This phase will include the upgrading of water, sewerage and living conditions.

Contracts have been signed for 36 permanent houses on Guraidhoo and 50 houses on Kudahuvadhoo islands. Site clearance and the mobilization of building materials have been done prior to building commencing in August.

The first of 20 desalination units is being installed on Thulusdhoo Island and a water distribution network has been established. The provision of purified water on each island will take a planned three weeks to put in place, using community labour wherever possible.

East Africa region

In order to build a regional disaster preparedness stock, the Federation rented a large capacity warehouse in Nairobi to store relief goods for 10,000 families. Procurement was initiated for 20,000 treated mosquito nets, 20,000 sleeping mats, 10,000 collapsible jerry cans, 5,000 kitchen sets and 10,000 tarpaulins.

Seychelles

Emergency equipment including stretchers and neck collar splints have been positioned in 23 districts as part of a contingency stock built up with the Federation's support.

Some 150 families were assisted on Mahe and Praslin Islands, including 12 families on Cerf Island, who also received relief items such as mattresses, bed sheets and pillowcases. About 20 fishermen have been assisted on Mahe and Praslin Islands to repair their boats and purchase fishing equipment.

The [Seychelles Red Cross Society](#) purchased water and sanitation materials (such as toilet seats and water pipes) to support families on Mahe Island with reconstruction of their homes.

Somalia

The Federation undertook a review of the surgical ward in Garowe hospital in June 2005 with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This will help prepare and equip the hospital, which is the only referral facility of several health clinics in the tsunami-affected areas.

In recent months, more than 18,200 consultations, 1,387 inoculations and 2,657 growth monitoring activities were carried out. Outreach plans for similar activities were completed in Nugal and Mudug regions.

For more details and news stories, photos and all operational updates related to the tsunami visit:
<http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/response/tsunamis/index.asp>