

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

AFGHANISTAN: SEVERE WINTER

5 April 2005

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

In Brief

Appeal No. 05EA003; Operations Update no. 4; Period covered: 11 March to 31 March 2005; Appeal coverage: 49.7% ([click here to go directly to the Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

Appeal history:

- Launched on 21 February 2005 for CHF 812,000 (USD 686,330 or EUR 525,620) for three months to assist 17,542 beneficiaries.
- Plan of action and budget revised in Operations Update no.3 on 11 March. Budget increased to CHF 907,000 and, in this operation update, the number of beneficiaries has been increased from 17,542 to 22,656. The operational framework remains unchanged.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 100,000 has been reimbursed.

Outstanding needs: CHF 456,177 (USD 376,042 or EUR 293,393)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:

[Afghanistan Annual Appeal 05AA045](#),
[Afghanistan Spring Floods Emergency Appeal 05EA005](#)

Operational Summary: This operation was initiated to assist the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) respond to the severe winter conditions in Kabul by providing basic support to more than 17,000 persons whose vulnerability has been worsened by heavy snow and rainfall and freezing temperatures. There has been a positive response from donors and partners at the local level. The ARCS is receiving support from Afghanistan traders and other local private donors.

As outlined in Operations Update no.3 on 11 March, the appeal budget increased by CHF 95,000 to accommodate the scaling-up of some existing activities and the addition of new ones. The appeal objectives remain unaltered. Due to cost savings made on the procurement of locally sourced relief items, the number of beneficiaries has been increased to 22,656.

The exceptional snowfall and recent heavy rainfalls have already caused floods, avalanches and landslides with the onset of the spring melt. A new emergency appeal (05EA005) was launched on 31 March to assist 70,000 people across the country. This new appeal focuses on the response to the floods and emphasis is being put on further strengthening of the coordination, disaster management and logistics capacity of the national society as a logical continuation of the present appeal.

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

Afghanistan has been suffering from extremely severe winter conditions since mid-January with heavy snowfalls, rain and bitterly cold conditions, and hundreds of people have died nationwide as a result. The Afghanistan Red Crescent Society has been given a major role in assisting 3538¹ highly vulnerable, internally displaced families currently living in very basic conditions in Kabul. Some of them have been relocated to temporary settlements, and the ARCS has been able to rapidly respond to the crisis by distributing non-food items, heaters and fuel as well as providing appropriate water sanitation facilities, hygiene education and primary health care to the targeted beneficiaries.

Operational developments

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

Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)

Overall Objective: to improve the lives of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees in Kabul severely affected by the adverse winter weather and meet the urgent humanitarian needs of 3,538 unassisted families and strengthen the capacity of the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society through disaster preparedness and response. (This objective has been reviewed, with number of assisted families increased from 3,435 to 3,538.)

Specific objective 1: to distribute basic food items to 3,538 families and non-food items to 1,484 families covering a three month period and to replenish the disaster preparedness stocks used during this response. (This objective has been reviewed, with basic food item distribution expanded from 3,425 families to 3,538.)

Progress/Achievements

During the reporting period, the ARCS disaster management department has focused on conducting food and non-food distributions and liaising with other stakeholders.

The registration of beneficiaries has been completed in all selected settlements and a total number of 22,656 individuals are to be assisted. The low cost of relief items purchased locally has allowed for the number of beneficiaries to be increased from the original 17,452.

During the reporting period, a further 813 families received stoves, bringing the total families supplied with stoves to 1280. All families who have been given stoves have also received coal. In summary, at roughly the halfway stage of the emergency operation, 86 percent of targeted families have received a stove and supply of coal.

The first food distribution has occurred with rations supplied to 287 families in the district of Takhnikam. The second consignment of food is expected to be delivered on 5 April. Efforts are being made to proceed with distributions as soon as items are received to avoid any further delays.

Impact

In Kabul, 1280 families now have cooking stoves and fuel, which is providing much needed assistance in dealing with continued bleak conditions being experienced in the province.

Constraints:

¹ Figure amended from 3435 families. Subsequent to the launch of the appeal, beneficiary identification, along with savings on locally procured items, has led to a revision of the numbers of people/families being assisted.

The main constraint remains the low logistics/reporting capacity of the national society. The recent flooding elsewhere in the country has also stretched resources in the ARCS, impacting on staff availability for this operation.

Specific Objective 2: to construct community latrines, rehabilitate existing toilets facilities for women and children, provide hygiene and preventive health education to the selected communities.

Progress/Achievements

All sanitation facilities have now been constructed/rehabilitated according to plan in the targeted settlements. A total of 87 latrines and 42 bathing facilities constructed or rehabilitated. Using a participatory approach, the garbage disposal system has been improved by distributing 75 public rubbish bins and organising regular collection. Cleaning campaigns and sensitisation sessions on the importance of a clean environment have been organised.

Within the beneficiary communities, 46 volunteers (men and women) have been identified and trained in providing hygiene promotion sessions to peers. A total of 500 hygiene promotion kits have been distributed during these sessions and more kits are being procured. Culturally appropriate and understandable hygiene promotion material has also been requested as support to the sensitisation sessions.

The emergency medical unit teams present in Kabul have visited 900 individuals during the reporting period. The main illnesses being dealt with relate to respiratory infections, flu, diarrhoea and tuberculosis. Some sexually transmitted diseases have also been identified and necessary measures are being taken by the ARCS health department. The medical teams are constantly monitoring the health situation in all the settlements but unfortunately data has not been entered on computer yet.

Impact

The main impact is the prevention of waterborne diseases and the improvement of the hygiene situation among the beneficiaries by providing water and sanitation facilities and improving the garbage collection system. Inappropriate customs of the targeted population is being influenced and changed through hygiene education and preventive health awareness.

Constraints:

The national society lacks water and sanitation expertise. The recent departure of a water and sanitation officer has exacerbated the situation. The ARCS resources are also stretched due to the flood relief operations.

Specific Objective 3: to improve the capacity of the ARCS in disaster preparedness, response and strengthen its logistics capacity.

Progress/Achievements

The Federation delegation is providing constant technical support to the national society in the planning and implementation of the operation. Regular meetings are being held and daily support is being provided to the ARCS disaster management department and programmes coordinator.

The logistics capacity of national society is being enhanced through intensive on-the-job training of the logistics officer by the delegation. In addition, the vehicle fleet of the ARCS will be upgraded with repairs to non-functional vehicles. Re-establishing the ARCS mechanics workshop is also being explored.

National society staff will receive training on the erection/dismantling of rubbishhalls.

Impact

The ARCS through the implementation of the programme is gaining confidence and expertise in the fields of disaster management and logistics. Quality of services delivered has noticeably improved since the beginning of the operation.

Constraints

A constraint is the pressure on resources, both in the delegation and the national society, used to respond to this operation and the larger, more widespread floods relief operation (see Emergency Appeal 05EA005). That new appeal also contains a national society capacity-building component. It would be useful, in pursuit of this objective, if a logistics workshop organised by the Federation at international or regional level was available.

Federation Coordination

The Federation is continuing to maintain close cooperation with United Nations (UN) agencies and other stakeholders together with the ARCS. Institutional donors have been approached locally and have given a positive response. The coverage of the appeal and the expenses to date reflect a great improvement in the overall response and management of the operation by the national society. The DREF allocation has also been rapidly reimbursed.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives

Awareness and dissemination of the Red Cross Principles is conducted within targeted affected populations/government/military forces, emphasising neutrality and independence.

The close cooperation between the Movement partners has been positive and has led to the preparation of the response to the floods, which are now occurring.

National Society Capacity Building

As mentioned above, the capacity building of the national society is still ongoing through the implementation of this emergency operation and is being pursued through the implementation of the Afghanistan: Spring Floods (05EA005) emergency operation. Support is also being provided to the national society's national headquarters by the Federation delegation's organisational development programme, the finance department and the programme coordinator.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

There is continued positive national news media coverage of the ARCS response to this emergency and the wider floods emergency. Information support is being sought at a regional level.

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

Afghanistan - Severe Winter

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

29/03/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

					TOTAL COVERAGE	
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				907,000	49.7%	
CHINA - HONG KONG - RC BRANCH		6,100	HKD	902	24.02.05	
CHINA - HONG KONG - RC BRANCH		46,840	HKD	6,928	21.03.05	
ICELAND - RC		7,000,000	ISK	126,700	24.02.05	
JAPAN - RC		34,300	USD	38,828	08.03.05	
NETHERLANDS - RC/GOVT		32,086	EUR	49,396	07.03.05	
SWEDISH - GOVT		1,000,000	SEK	171,000	22.02.05	
USA GOVT		50,000	USD	56,600	03.03.05	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				450,354	CHF	49.7%

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	