

# 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: SPRING FLOODS

9 September 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. 05EA005; Operations Update no. 3; Period covered: 23 May to 28 August, 2005; Appeal coverage: 109.4%;** ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

#### Appeal history:

- Launched on 31 March 2005 for CHF 2,235,000 (USD 1,925,894 or EUR 1,451,770) for 6 months to assist 70,000 beneficiaries.
- Operations Update No. 2 revised the appeal budget down to CHF 1,648,032 due to the low appeal coverage at that time.
- This Operations Update No. 3 extends the operation to 15 January 2006 in order to complete the assistance provided to the Afghan Red Crescent Society, especially in building its logistics capacities. The extension is also to allow for the completion of the procurement and pre-positioning of non-food relief items for 70,000 people.
- Final report is due by 15 April 2006.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 200,000 has been reimbursed.

**Outstanding needs: Nil.**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:** [Afghanistan Annual Appeal 05AA045](#), [Severe Winter Emergency Appeal 05EA003](#)

#### Operational Summary:

In mid-January 2005, Afghanistan experienced severe winter conditions including record snowfalls which were followed by heavy flooding throughout the country. A joint operation was established by the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), the Federation, and the ICRC in order to support the National Society in assisting 70,000 beneficiaries across the country.

An agreement has been reached during this reporting period with European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) to support the procurement, transportation and positioning of blankets, plastic tarpaulins, jerry cans, kitchen sets and kerosene stoves in Kabul, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar and Herat (positioning for 2,000 families in each region) in an operation running from June. Due to relocation of most of the Federation's personnel as a security precaution ahead of September's parliamentary elections, this objective required an extension and is now expected to complete by the end of the year.

The magnitude of the task in strengthening the capacity of the National Society in disaster management, including logistics, is significant. The ARCS warehousing facilities have been enhanced in the regions, non-food items have been dispatched, and distributions are ongoing based on the needs assessments professionally conducted by ARCS staff and volunteers. While some progress is being made, it will take a longer time to see the impact. Together with the delay in the second phase of the procurement of non-food items, an extension of at least three months is needed.

In addition to the organization of the response, the ARCS will assume the coordination role of relief distributions at national and provincial levels, with continuous technical support from the Federation delegation and the ICRC. A regional disaster response team (RDRT) member from the Pakistan Red Crescent Society was deployed in April to

provide support to the operation.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Afghanistan: Afghanistan Red Crescent Society: Fatima Gailani (Secretary General), mobile: +93 79 38 55 33
- In Afghanistan: Afghanistan Federation Delegation contact (Jamila Ibrohim, Head of Delegation, email; [jamila.ibrohim@ifrc.org](mailto:jamila.ibrohim@ifrc.org), phone: +882 168 980 2643, (Sat phone) or +93 70 278 372 and +92 300 850 6861 (mobile)
- In Geneva: Asia and Pacific Department, Jagan Chapgain, email: [jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org](mailto:jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org), phone: +41 22 7304316; fax: +41 22 733 0395

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 experienced severe winter conditions in early 2005, resulting in heavy snowfalls, avalanches, and landslides throughout the country. On 21 February, the Federation launched the Severe [Winter Emergency Appeal \(05EA003\)](#) in order to support the ARCS in assisting internally displaced population in Kabul, which was particularly affected by the cold weather conditions.

The harsh winter was followed by spring rains which, together with melting snow, created the potential for flooding throughout most of the provinces in the country. The ARCS, the Federation and the ICRC jointly designed a floods contingency plan to map and further mobilise all available resources and to be prepared to respond as flooding occurred in a rapid and effective manner. Subsequently, the present emergency appeal was launched on 31 March 2005, focusing on the pre-positioning of non-food items for 2,000 families in each of the five regions – Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif and Kandahar – targeting a total number of 70,000 potential beneficiaries.

## Operational developments

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

#### Emergency relief

**Overall objective:** To alleviate the suffering of populations affected by floods, provide immediate assistance to 10,000 targeted families and to improve the capacity of the ARCS in disaster management and logistics.

**Specific objective 1:** To pre-position non-food items for 10,000 families at the five regional ARCS branches (Kabul, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar, and Herat), organize continuous assessments of the situation, carry out distributions accordingly and procure goods for replenishment.

#### Progress/ Achievements

The ARCS, the Federation and the ICRC responded to flooding affecting the northern, central and north-eastern regions of Afghanistan. Since the beginning of June, floods severely affected almost 3,000 families across 38 districts in 12 provinces, with 81 people killed.

During the reporting period, targeted support from ECHO for this specific objective has been finalized. With ECHO support, non-food items will be procured, transported and positioned in the five districts outlined above for 10,000 families (2,000 families per region). The items will consist of 10,000 blankets, 10,000 plastic tarpaulins, 10,000 jerry cans, 10,000 kitchen sets and 10,000 kerosene stoves to be divided up equally among the regions.

This ECHO-funded component of the operation was originally scheduled for five months from June to October. However, factors such as a reduced capacity of the Federation due to security precautions for the upcoming

parliamentary elections in September, and a general deterioration in the security situation has meant an extension to 15 January 2006 will be required to complete the planned activities.

The schedule of activities to complete the pre-positioning of non-food relief items sufficient for 10,000 families in five districts is as follows.

- 15 August - September 2005: Tendering and procurement of non-food relief items.
- 15 August - September 2005: Organisation of storage facilities at regional level and securing of the goods.
- October 2005- December 2005: Transport of goods to the regional warehouses.

A sub-hall (storage facility) has been erected at the ARCS national headquarters in Kabul to increase relief stock capacity. This has enhanced the National Society's ability to more quickly assist branches in flood-affected areas. As outlined in [Operations Update 2](#), sub-halls have been erected in Kandahar, Jalalabad and Mazar-i-Sharif to complement the existing regional warehouses in those locations.

The situation of the flood-affected communities is being assessed in joint weekly coordination meetings between the Federation, ICRC, and ARCS. The current status of relief stocks and all aspects of the operation implementation are constantly monitored and all information is shared.

As outlined previously, the ARCS has been given the leading role in the government's joint operation commission to coordinate the relief distribution. Provincial branches along with other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, UNAMA, the World Food Programme, and other INGO/NGO are coordinating and sharing information to help in the identification of the beneficiaries and in the organization of the response.

The ARCS disaster response unit was deployed to the badly affected province of Badakhshan in the northern region, and assessed the situation for relief distribution. The information was shared with the Federation and the ICRC and fed into the relief distribution mechanism.

The ARCS is mobilizing its volunteers trained in community-based disaster preparedness to reinforce the relief teams. These volunteers have proved to be very effective in carrying out assessment surveys and relief distributions. In the northern region, 2,702 families lost their houses, and are being provided with non-food items.

The Federation is assisting the ARCS in establishing a database for flood information by developing and providing standardized damage assessments and food and non-food items distribution formats. These formats are being used and the information flow has been streamlined. ARCS staff have been trained to use these information tools.

### **Impact**

Needs assessments have been conducted quickly, followed by ongoing successful relief distributions in the most affected areas. There have been improvements in data collection within the ARCS disaster management department which should further improve the implementation of such operations in the future.

### **Constraints**

Slow and limited communication between the branches and the national headquarters are the major constraints in achieving the objectives and responding to the issues in a timely manner. In addition, it has an important impact on the data collection and preparation of reports to donors. While volunteers at provincial level are participating in various activities, there is no database within the regional offices or the national headquarters disaster management department compiling overall information on the occurrence of the disaster and on the organized response. A database format is being designed at headquarters level and will be replicated at provincial levels at a later stage.

The capacity of the Federation country delegation has been reduced temporarily as a security precaution for the upcoming parliamentary elections. Along with an anticipated deterioration in the security environment, the operation, during September in particular, is expected to slow down.

**Specific Objective 2: To carry out first aid activities and provide primary health care as an immediate response to the crisis**

### **Progress/Achievements**

Volunteers trained in community-based first aid (CBFA) were mobilized and briefed for possible deployment to the flood-affected areas in Badakhshan, Samangan, Baghlan and Kapisa provinces. However, details of deployment and assistance activities are yet to be received and will be reported in the next operations update.

As outlined in the previous operation update, CBFA volunteers participated in a survey under the coordination of the local government floods response unit in Ghazni and Loghar provinces. In Ghazni province, the national society's CBFA volunteers rescued 30 families by transferring the affected people from the flooded areas to safe places.

During the period under review, the procurement for the replenishment of the first aid kits used during the first phase of the operation has been completed. Replacement materials for first aid kits have been procured for 500 volunteers. These materials should be sufficient for four months. The emergency medical unit (EMU) teams remain on standby and will only be deployed when deemed necessary.

### **Impact**

The beneficiaries and the Afghan government representatives acknowledge the work of the ARCS CBFA volunteers, especially in assessing and transferring the affected people to safer places and providing first aid on site. Data is still to be received on the number of beneficiaries assisted and numbers of patients referred to clinics or hospitals.

### **Constraints**

One of the main constraints remains in the lack of efficient communication, resulting in difficulties in gathering accurate information, especially in relation to the provision of activity reports. Information from ARCS and the field have been slow and sporadic, resulting in the difficulties to Federation receiving accurate figures for the activities reports.

Prior to the floods operation, the National Society's CBFA department moved from Health to the Youth and Volunteer department which altered reporting lines. Changes with the head of CBFA caused delays in getting the information from ARCS to the delegation as it took time for the new head to adapt to the context of an emergency operation. Both these issues have been addressed with ARCS. Discussions are now ongoing in order to define whether the CBFA volunteers should be brought back within the health department or not.

A deterioration of the security situation throughout the country, especially in southern and north-eastern provinces has hampered the operation.

### **Specific Objective 3: To provide basic sanitation facilities when appropriate and carry out hygiene promotion sessions to the beneficiaries at community levels**

#### **Progress/Achievements**

In early July, a joint commission (ARCS, UN agencies, international organizations) surveyed the affected families. According to the report, a total of 13,637 families were affected up to the end of July all over the country. Due to funding limitations, only 10,000 hygiene kits were procured. Based on the available stock and assessments findings, hygiene kits were to be distributed to the 10,000 most affected families. Each of the five regions has been supplied with 2,000 kits each and distributions have started in some affected areas. The current appeal response will allow the delegation to purchase more hygiene kits. The total number to be purchased will be indicated in the next report. Each kit is composed of five toothbrushes, two tubes of toothpaste, a nail cutter, two towels, two hair combs and a bar of soap.

In the north, 530 hygiene kits were distributed in Samangan, Jawzjan and Balkh provinces. Distribution is ongoing as the flood operation continues.

In western and south-eastern regions, 4,000 hygiene kits have been distributed. The table below shows the distribution per province:

Province	Hygiene kits distributed
Heart	800
Ghor	400
Farah	400
Nimrooz	400
Uruzgan	1,050
Zabul	950
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,000</b>

**Impact**

Distribution of the hygiene kits will improve the overall health situation of the affected populations. The most important task is to change the behaviour of the community and improves the environmental and personnel health situation of the beneficiaries. In order to sensitize the targeted communities, hygiene education messages and posters have been included within the hygiene kits in local and simple language.

**Constraints**

The main constraint is the security instability as well as the poor communications systems available.

**Specific Objective 4: To improve the capacity of the ARCS in coordination, disaster preparedness, and response and strengthen its logistics capacity**

**Progress/Achievements**

Federation technical support is aimed at strengthening the disaster preparedness and response capacity at both national and regional levels. The RDRT member from the Pakistan Red Crescent Society has been assisting the ARCS disaster management department in improving its internal information sharing systems as well as seeking to establish effective communication links with the regional offices in order to enhance the output of the disaster management activities. This is a significant task and priority has been given to first strengthening national headquarters capacity. The extended appeal timeframe is to allow for the regional component of this objective to be carried out.

In addition to the use of the damage assessment and relief distribution formats, the ARCS disaster management staff are also being trained to make effective use of the vulnerability assessment formats that are being developed and introduced. All mentioned formats are being introduced as an integrated component of future CBFA trainings manuals and curriculum.

According to the memorandum of understanding signed between the ARCS and the Federation for strengthening the logistics capacity and upgrading the ARCS fleet capacity, three trucks have been completely repaired and ten vehicles have been partially repaired. According to the memorandum, a total of 23 vehicles will be repaired. Spare parts have been purchased and will be used to enhance the transport capacity of the ARCS.

**Impact**

The communication and internal coordination of the National Society is improving, but it is an ongoing process. It is difficult to measure the impact at this point in relation to this area. The Federation will also continue to support, develop, and improve the logistic capacity of the ARCS. The overall storage capacity of the National Society, the fleet capabilities and the personnel competencies have improved.

**Constraints**

Restructuring in the National Society has reflected the need to induct new members of staff. This has led to a general slow-down in programme implementation. The separation of the National Society’s logistics and transport departments has led to inefficiencies. This issue is being looked at and in the meantime both departments are being supported by the Federation.

**Federation coordination**

The Federation, through the ARCS maintains close and regular contacts with the national and local government departments as well as with other humanitarian organizations on various sectors of relief activities. The ARCS has a permanent sit in the national flood operation centre (NFOP) and actively participates in national coordination efforts and planning.

The Movement flood response task groups, both at national and regional levels, play a key role in coordinating emergency responses throughout the country in drawing up plans of actions and allocating the necessary logistic support in response to the floods. The National Society coordinates with other organizations, UN agencies, government disaster management unit and several others.

**Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – principles and initiatives**

As mentioned above, the response to this emergency crisis is being organized from a Movement perspective where the ARCS, the ICRC, and the Federation are closely cooperating, sharing available material, human and financial resources.

Dissemination of Red Cross principles and humanitarian values is being provided during the response phase through ARCS volunteers as well as mine awareness.

**National Society capacity building**

Capacity building of the National Society is one of the main activities of the present appeal, concentrating on strengthening its capacity in disaster management and logistics. All the efforts put on the creation and strengthening of the ARCS logistics department became very promising and benefit from a great commitment from the National Society at all levels. Regular trainings and refreshers are being organized at this crucial stage of the development of the ARCS logistics structure and promising achievements should be reached by the end of the implementation of this appeal.

**Communications – advocacy and public information**

Since the beginning of the implementation of this operation as well as the [Severe Winter emergency operation \(05EA003\)](#), and due to a very positive impact on the vulnerable populations, the ARCS does now benefit from a positive image among the government authorities, the different stakeholders and the public. Close contacts are being maintained with the major Afghan media organizations and a wide and positive coverage is occurring.

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

# Afghanistan - floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA005

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

05/09/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					<b>TOTAL COVERAGE</b>	
				<b>1,648,032</b>		<b>109.4%</b>
BRITISH - RC		50,000	GBP	109,050	31.03.05	RELIEF NEEDS AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS
ECHO		570,000	EUR	889,485	30.08.05	
FINNISH - RC		40,000	EUR	61,500	13.05.05	
JAPANESE - RC		96,300	USD	109,012	14.04.05	
MONACO - RC		30,000	EUR	46,470	21.04.05	
NETHERLANDS - RC		128,342	EUR	198,802	07.04.05	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		878,749	NOK	166,084	24.05.05	
SWEDISH - RC		1,300,000	SEK	222,300	12.04.05	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,802,703	CHF	109.4%

### 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	