

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

17 October 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. 4; Period covered: 8 July to 22 August 2005; Appeal coverage: 109.7%; ([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.
- 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 Appeal 05EA003](#)

Operational Summary: In mid-January 2005, Afghanistan experienced severe winter conditions that included 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, which provided assistance to 70,000 beneficiaries across the country. The initial plan was to pre-position basic non-food items for 2,000 families in each of the regions – Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad, Herat and Kandahar – for a total of 10,000 families.

In addition to the organization of the response, ARCS was given the role of coordinating relief distributions, which the Federation delegation disaster management (DM) department continues to provide technical support. A regional disaster response team (RDRT) member from the Pakistan Red Crescent Society was deployed for three months in April to provide support to the operation.

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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 ARCS in assisting internally displaced people (IDP) in Kabul city, 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. ARCS, the Federation and ICRC jointly designed a floods contingency plan to map and further mobilize 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, 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.

The floods response, initiated through a joint Movement initiative, has been satisfactory since the beginning of the operation. The ARCS warehousing facilities have been enhanced in the regions, non-food items have been dispatched, and distributions have been organized based on needs assessments carried out in the affected regions by ARCS staff and volunteers. It should be mentioned progress during the reporting period has been concentrated and emphasized on strengthening the ARCS capacity in regard to DM and logistics.

The strengthening of the national society DM and logistics departments is continuing, showing increasingly positive results. The procurement of non-food items is now entering its second phase. Blankets and tents have been already received and the remaining items are expected to be received by mid-November. The ARCS is still officially the coordinating body for the overall relief distributions. Despite the lack of progress in the floods operations, a few coordination meetings have taken place.

Operational developments

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

Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)

Overall objective: To alleviate the suffering of the populations affected by the floods, provide immediate assistance to 10,000 targeted families and to improve the capacity of 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

At the time of reporting, heavy rainfall from the beginning of July resulted in flash floods across the northern and eastern parts of the country affecting hundreds of families. Through its network of branches and volunteers, the ARCS DM department has been at the forefront of disaster response activities assisting 3,582 families in three provinces. Outlined below are some of the response activities in different affected provinces.

ARCS Disaster response activities during July 2005 supported by the Federation

Affected province	Date of disaster	No. of families assisted	Type and source of assistance
Balkh Province	11-13 July 2005	529	130 tents, 450 blankets, 530 tarpaulins, 149 kitchen sets, 149 hygiene kits – ARCS
Samangan	11-13 July 2005	703	750 blankets, 500 tarpaulins, 200 kitchen sets, food rations – WFP
Kunar	03-07 July 2005	2,350	400 tarpaulins, 400 tents, 34.5 tonnes food – WFP
Total		3,582	

The ARCS, with support from the Federation, is currently proceeding with its ongoing distribution of non-food items. The ARCS aims to distribute 10,000 kitchen sets, 10,000 jerry cans, 10,000 tarpaulins, 500 plastic rolls and 10,000 blankets as well as 150 tents.

No distribution activities took place during the course of August.

Impact

Needs assessments have been conducted on time and followed by quick and successful relief distributions in the most affected areas. As a result, a total of 3,582 families benefited from the distribution of food and non-food items in different regions of Afghanistan.

Many of the indigenous people of Afghanistan are living in great poverty, with much of their stock destroyed due to the severity of the flooding. The distribution of non-food items proved to be essential to those people affected by the floods.

Constraints

The slow and limited communication between the branches and the national headquarters remains a major constraint in achieving the objectives. The limited flow of communication also causes great delays in meeting the objectives. To date, the ARCS DM capacity is still not fully satisfactory and needs further development and guidance. This has been caused by several changes in the staffing of the department, as well as by overwhelming activities to be conducted.

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

Progress/Achievements

Community-based first aid (CBFA) volunteers are still mobilized and are being trained for a possible deployment to the affected flood areas in the future. During the reporting period, the Federation is still missing information regarding the deployment of these volunteers. Progress cannot be reported on at this time as data and information of the active participation of the volunteers in the recent flood operations in Badakhshan, Samangan, Baghlan, and Kapisa provinces have yet to be received.

The procurement for the replenishment of the first aid kits used during the first phase of the operation has been completed. The refilling material, which is expected to last for a period of four months, for the mentioned kits has been procured for 500 volunteers. This order has arrived and further procurement has been placed so that the volunteers in the rest of the country will have restocking material. The Mazar-i-Sharif emergency mobile unit (EMU) team actively participated in the flood-affected area in different districts of Badakhshan province. A total number of 383 patients were seen. Most of the cases were waterborne and epidemic diseases. However, as the EMU team is not especially required in Kabul or any other parts of Afghanistan in the post-emergency period, they have resumed with their routine work.

Impact

The people of Afghanistan, as well as the authorities, acknowledge the great and important work of the ARCS CBFA volunteers. Their routine work consists of saving lives every day, especially through first aid activities on site. It is also important to mention that the EMU activities during the disaster have proven to be very efficient.

Constraints

The lack of efficient communication means remains one of the most serious constraints in achieving the objectives. This leads to the lack of efficient communication and information gathering, sometimes bringing confusion, which makes writing activities reports difficult. After some consideration, it was decided to provide the CBFA department with a Kodan high frequency radio in order to allow them to communicate directly with the regions. However, this has yet to be installed.

The security situation still represents a problem in carrying out first-aid activities. This is materialized by the resumption of anti-government activities, especially in the southern and north-eastern provinces. ARCS and the Federation are still facing major access problems, resulting in making monitoring and evaluation of the activities very difficult and in numerous places, even impossible.

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

Progress/Achievements

The DM department together with the CBFA volunteers continue to distribute the hygiene kits to the beneficiaries. The distribution information is listed in the table below. As explained in the last operation update, no more hygiene kits have been procured and no water and sanitation activities have been conducted.

Table showing distribution of hygiene kits for floods to date

Region	Province	August	September	Total distributed in each region
Herat	Herat	800		2,000
	Ghor	400		
	Farah	400		
	Nimroz	400		
Kandahar	Zabul	950		2,000
	Uruzgan	1,050		
Jalalabad	Ningarhar		1,200	2,000
	Laghman		400	
	Kunar		400	
Mazar-i-Sharif	Samagan, Jawzjan and Balkh	530	149	679
Kabul		0	1,000	1,000

Each kit contained five toothbrushes, two tubes of toothpaste, a nail cutter, two towels, two hair combs and a bar of soap.

Impact

The distributions of hygiene kits are obviously improving the overall health situation of the affected people. Among other things, it will help reduce incidences of infections and disease. The main goal is to introduce the beneficiaries to new ways and routines in order to improve their environmental and personal health situation. It has been decided to include posters and information on health issues within the hygiene kits.

Constraints

The main constraint is still the security instability throughout Afghanistan. Federation staff members have been very restricted in travelling to the communities in order to supervise and monitor the distributions.

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

Progress/Achievements:

In the recent spring floods operation, the national society DM team participated in regular coordination meetings with the national flood task force (NFTF). In March, ARCS became a member of the Joint Operation Centre (JOP), which brings together various disaster preparedness/response players from the government as well as non-government organization (NGO) and UN agencies. Furthermore, the national society has been given the responsibility for coordination of damage assessments and distributions of relief items at national level

The ARCS emergency operation centre both at national and regional levels plays a key role in coordinating emergencies throughout the country. In Kabul, a Movement task force which included ARCS, the Federation and ICRC met regularly and was set up to draw up plans of actions as well as allocate the necessary logistic al needs in response to the floods when they occur. The national society coordinates with other NGOs, UN agencies, and government DM unit, amongst many others.

ARCS provincial branches in the affected region have increased their disaster preparedness capacity networks and as a result, staff members and volunteers from the affected communities and branches gained extensive trainings which enhanced their experiences.

The upgrade of the ARCS vehicle fleet is still one of the Federation's main tasks. The upgrade is meant to improve the logistic s capacity of the national society. During the last reporting period, USD 12,000 (CHF 15,471 or EUR 9,986) was used to repair three trucks and partially repair ten different light vehicles. During the reporting period, no activities have taken place in regards to this objective. The logistic department is planning to conduct several trainings in managing and erecting rubble halls, as well as in warehousing management. These trainings will be conducted during the second part of September and the first part of October.

Impact

Though a lot more needs to be done, the national society DM staff members have noticeably gained significant confidence in carrying out DM activities and shown an increasing ability to coordinate. It has also gained recognition from the different stakeholders such as government ministries, NGOs and UN agencies, as well as institutional donors such as Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO).

Constraints

There still is a severe lack of sound transportation facilities to carry out the emergency operation, even after upgrading the national society's vehicle fleet. The strengthening of its logistics capacity is a long-term activity.

Federation coordination

The Federation, through 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. ARCS has a permanent seat in the National Floods Operation Centre (NFOP) and actively participates in national coordination efforts and planning.

The Movement floods response task force 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 logistics and relief support in response to the floods. The national society coordinates with other organizations, UN agencies, the government's DM unit, and several others actors.

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 ARCS, the Federation, and the ICRC are closely cooperating, sharing available material, human and financial resources, as well as information.

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

National Society capacity building

The capacity building of the national society is one of the main activities of the present appeal, concentrating on strengthening its capacity in DM and logistics. All the efforts put in 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 the Severe Winter Emergency Appeal, and due to a very positive impact on the vulnerable populations, ARCS now benefits from a very positive image among the government authorities, the different stakeholders and the Afghan public. Close contacts are being maintained with the major Afghan media organizations and a wide and positive coverage is still occurring.

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

Afghanistan - floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA005

PLEDGES RECEIVED

14/10/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					TOTAL COVERAGE	
					1,648,032	109.7%
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	
ICELANDIC - RC		250,000	ISK	4,900	26.08.05	
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				1,807,603	CHF	109.7%

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	