

# DREF Bulletin



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

## BANGLADESH: COLD WAVE

**DREF Bulletin no.**  
**MDRBD001**  
**Update no. 1**  
**15 February 2007**  
**Glide no. CW-2007-**  
**000001-BGD**

*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 185 countries.*

### In Brief

Period covered by this update: 09-30 January 2007.

#### History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 150,000 allocated from the Federations DREF in January 2007, to respond to the needs of this operation, targeting 30,000 beneficiaries in 64 districts of Bangladesh.
- This operation is expected to be implemented for one month, and will be completed by February 2007; a DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by mid-May, 2007). Development of this operation is reported in this update with detailed information and plan distribution as outlined below.

### Background and current situation

Since early January 2007, Bangladesh has been reeling under a cold wave that has caused a lot of suffering for approximately 1.9 million vulnerable people across the country (source: ministry of food and disaster management, government of Bangladesh), especially for low income groups in the northern, southern and central parts of the country. According to the meteorological office, these areas saw a sharp fall in daytime temperatures but a smaller drop in night temperatures, during the few weeks preceding the date of reporting. Cool winds from the north and north-western Himalayan region, along with thick fog, worsened the situation and affected the normal life of people in these areas. It also resulted in massive damage to the agricultural sector and disrupted communication.

People who are poorly resourced to cope with colder weather and unable to buy warm clothing, quilts and blankets, have been heavily impacted by the cold. Those in the far northern districts have been struggling due to a shortage of food. The death toll across the country has gone up to 141 (as recorded on 24 January). The number of patients suffering from cold-related diseases like pneumonia, fever, cold, diarrhoea, asthma and respiratory problems has seen a sharp rise. Children, women and the elderly are the worst affected.

To deal with this situation, the government and aid agencies have been distributing blankets and warm clothes in the affected areas of the country. According to information (as of 28 January), provided by the disaster emergency response group<sup>1</sup>, the government has distributed 127,000 blankets in different parts of the country. However, the relief is not sufficient considering the huge number of vulnerable people affected.

<sup>1</sup> An in-country body coordinating during disasters, jointly chaired by the UN and the ministry of disaster management and relief.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) and the Federation's Bangladesh delegation immediately responded to the situation by distributing 8,700 blankets from the BDRCS headquarters warehouse emergency stock of 9,315. Subsequently, based on a growing need, 30,000 blankets were procured through the allocated DREF funds, for further distribution and for replenishment of the stock. The bold italic headings in this report are related to the comments in the original DREF bulletin.

### *Regular detailed reporting on the distribution*

Responding to requests from the BDRCS units, the national headquarters of the BDRCS has so far dispatched 16,101 of the 30,000 blankets (making a total of 24,801) to branches all over the country, using the BDRCS fleet. It was possible to keep 13,275 blankets for buffer stock for future emergencies, since some of the districts in the northern part of Bangladesh have already been covered by the government and other agencies.

Up to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007 17,951 blankets have been distributed in 52 districts throughout the country (see table on the right). The Federation through BDRCS is in the process of receiving further reports and confirmation regarding the rest of the districts on the status of blanket distribution.

Blankets distributed in 52 districts			
BDRCS District Branch	Blankets	BDRCS District Branch	Blankets
Bhola	300	Khagrachari	100
Bogra	600	Laxmipur	300
B.Baria	300	Lalmonirhat	450
Bandarban	300	Mymensing	300
Bagerhat	300	Manikganj	100
Barisal	100	Madaripur	300
Chapai Nawabganj	450	Moulavibazar	450
Chandpur	450	Munshiganj	300
Cox's Bazar	300	Meherpur	100
Chuadanga	300	Naogaon	450
Dinajpur	450	Nilphamari	450
Dhaka Dist.	300	Narsindi	300
Faridpur	151	Noakhali	450
Feni	450	Narayanganj	450
Gaibandha	450	Pabna	450
Gazipur	300	Panchagar	450
Gopalganj	450	Rajbari	300
Hobiganj	600	Rangamati	300
Joypurhat	450	Sunamganj	450
Jhalokathi	300	Sirajganj	450
Jessore	300	Sylhet	470
Jhenaidah	100	Satkhira	300
Jamalpur	300	Sherpur	300
Kurigram	480	Shariatpur	300
Khulna Dist.	150	Tangail	300
Kustia	300	Thakurgaon	450
Sub-total	8931	Sub-total	9020
<b>Total</b>			<b>17,951</b>

The distribution of blankets among 67 of the 68 BDRCS units within the hardest hit 64 districts is an ongoing process. Based on the severity of the cold spell in these areas, the districts in the north and south have been prioritized in receiving this support. It has also been reported that, in addition to blankets, some branches are also distributing warm clothes, jackets and family kits, by gathering local resources.

### *Quality control*

In an effort to ensure the procurement of quality blankets, the Bangladesh delegation engaged 'Crown Agents' (an international development company providing direct assistance/consultancy in procurement) for quality inspection. There has been a constraint in collecting information on the distribution from the branches, but it is hoped that this would be solved by the next bulletin.

### *Distribution of blankets to pre-determined beneficiaries using the BDRCS Disaster Relief Manual*

Red Crescent youth (RCY) volunteers and branch executive committee members pre-selected most vulnerable sections of people in their respective communities, to provide them with blankets to resist the cold wave. Beneficiary pre-selection was consistent with the BDRCS *Disaster Relief Manual* prioritizing people with disability, widows, orphans and other most vulnerable groups.

The BDRCS and the Bangladesh delegation are closely monitoring the relief operation. Several officials from BDRCS national headquarters have visited a number of units to monitor the distribution of blankets. In addition, the health delegate from the delegation visited the Chittagong unit to monitor and support the distribution process. A joint monitoring team, from the BDRCS and the delegation, is visiting the worst affected districts during the first week of February, to ensure quality distribution in these areas.

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The BDRCS and the delegation continue to maintain contact with others within the Movement, as well as with various external agencies like the UK Department of International Development (DFID), ECHO, and the World Food Programme (WFP), to gather and share information and coordinate response. The delegation and the Swiss Red Cross are maintaining contact and sharing information regarding the distribution of blankets. The local DFID office has been in contact with the delegation to gather information regarding the distribution and enquired about the requirement of DFID support for this. In addition, the British high commissioner has been enquiring about the possibility of distribution through the DFID office. The delegation also continues to receive and share information with the disaster emergency response group.

### *Provision of assistance to the BDRCS for strengthening its management of distribution structures, especially at the branch level*

The Bangladesh Federation delegation disaster management team is working to develop the skills of national headquarters, branch squad members and community volunteer response teams to better manage any distribution with regard to emergency response.

International Federation disaster management team members are closely monitoring the distribution of blankets with the support of the BDRCS relief and response department. An updated distribution report format has also been provided to all the blanket recipient units, following the BDRCS *Disaster Relief Manual*.

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## How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

### The Federation's Global Agenda

The International Federation's activities are aligned with under a Global Agenda, which sets out **four broad goals** to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

#### Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

## Contact information

### For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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