



CHINA: FLOODS

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Focus on Anhui, Hubei, and Sichuan provinces

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: 17 July to 23 July 2007.

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

- CHF 240,000 (USD 199,551 or EUR 144,781) allocated from the Federation's DREF on 16 July 2007 to respond to the needs of this operation.
- This operation is expected to be implemented over three and a half months and will be completed by 31 October 2007. A Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation by January 2007. This is a correction from the DREF Bulletin.

The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) is using the DREF allocation for emergency relief activities in China's Anhui, Sichuan and Hubei provinces to provide 200 MT rice; 15,000 blankets and water purification materials to the affected populace.

This DREF Bulletin Update is being issued to update the scope of support and provide information on current activities being carried out by the RCSC.

In the past week, continued heavy rains have caused another 150 deaths and the evacuation of additional thousands within a dozen provinces and municipalities. Thousands more have been affected in other areas of the country as flash flooding overwhelms urban areas. Thousands of homes have collapsed and another 133,000 hectares have been affected, bringing the total to more than 254,000 hectares of farmland damaged or destroyed.



Local residents walk through the rubble left after unprecedented floods hit Chongqing and its surrounding areas. Red Cross Society of China.

The Huai river continues to stay at dangerous levels with threats of weakening dykes and cofferdams. Sluices have been opened to flood buffer zones¹ to combat flood peaks.

The distribution of relief items is expected to continue over the next four weeks and will be completed by 31 August 2007. The RCSC is effectively responding to the needs on the provincial and national levels issuing appeals to support flood relief activities. Following a discussion between RCSC and the Federation's East Asia regional delegation, the Federation will issue an international appeal to support RCSC relief and recovery activities.

¹ Flood buffer zones are pieces of land that can serve as water storage areas; these are often used to divert flood waters. Some economic losses can result as these flood buffer zones can sometimes house cropland.

Background and current situation

Rains have continued to inundate the hardest-hit areas in this year's flood season. Record breaking torrential downpours have caused flooding and landslides that are responsible for more than 450 deaths thus far in 2007. Over the past week alone, more than 150 people have been killed and millions have been evacuated from their homes seeking safety from the rapidly rising rivers. Additionally, many areas of China experienced severe weather that brought concerns of dyke breaches, flash flooding and disease.



Flooded villages in Anhui have collapsed thousands of homes and submerged hectares of land. Millions have been evacuated. International Federation/Oinghui Gu.

Thunder storms brought unprecedented rainfall to Chongqing, where more than 266 mm of rain dumped onto the city within hours caused more than 40 deaths. More people are missing. Jinan, in Shandong province, also received record rainfall when the city was flooded with 188 mm of rain in a three hour period on 18 July. More than 34 people died in collapsing buildings, submerged vehicles or by electrocution. Poor drainage systems within the city were cited as cause for many of the deaths, which is a common risk in other large cities throughout China. Up to 59 have died in Yunnan province, along the border of Myanmar, where mudslides threaten mountainous villages. And in Xinjiang province, 11 coal workers have been lost when flooding submerged their mine.

Flooding in these areas of Xinjiang and Yunnan, which are predominantly populated by poor minorities groups, has destroyed thousands of homes, livestock, and tens of thousands of hectares of land. Vehicles have been stranded and transportation routes halted in Tibet due to landslides caused by heavy rains.

Waters continue to rise along the major rivers of China. The Three Rivers Gorge dam saw its highest water level of the season on 20 July 2007, posing a threat to the safety of boats and neighboring farmland. Sluices have been opened to flood buffer zones to relieve some of the pressure down river. However, concerns mount as the economic toll rises from both affected transportation along the river and flooded farmland.

This past week, Hubei endured its seventh storm to hit this season. More than 13 million people have been affected and at least another two have been killed in the past few days. Hubei, along with other provinces and municipalities along the Yangtze, has been warned to expect continued heavy rains and further flooding.

The Huai river basin has experienced its worst flooding in over 50 years. Over one million people have been evacuated and another 133,000 hectares have been affected, bringing the total to more than 254,000 hectares of farmland. The water remains at dangerously high levels and concerns over weaknesses in the dykes that have been soaked for more than 20 days compound the risks to the area. By Friday of last week, more than 517 high-risk weaknesses in the dykes had been identified and patched. In Anhui, another 67,000 villagers were evacuated using more than 15,000 trucks and tractors to haul their most critical belongings and livestock to safety. Fortunately, the evacuations came just prior to a cofferdam bursting and flooding another five villages.

Reducing disaster related health risks are now of highest priority for the ministry of health, as drinking water sources are under great threat and temperatures across the nation are rising. In many areas, rains have been interspersed by heat waves that settle over the flooded areas and invite the growth of algae and mosquitoes. Insect bites are common in the evenings, and those living in temporary shelters have little relief from the pests that can spread dangerous diseases. Furthermore, without an adequate water supply in the shelter areas, people are dipping their washcloths or bathing in the polluted water to cool off.

At the same time, millions of rats have taken to high ground, causing panic and disgust as whole villages are overwhelmed by the rodent infestations. It is estimated that more than 1.6 million hectares of land spared by the

floods have been utterly destroyed by the rodents, leaving yet another swath of land indirectly affected by the floods.



Along the Huai river in central China, millions have been evacuated and are taking shelter in temporary tents. Drinkable water, food sources and disease are of major concern. International Federation /Qinghui Gu

This past week, the ministry of civil affairs released statistics showing that natural disasters have had an inordinately heavy impact thus far this year. As of July 16th, natural disasters accounted for the deaths of 715 people with another 129 still missing. This does not include the additional 150 killed in the past week. More than 200 million people have been seriously affected by natural disasters, and at least 4.5 million had been evacuated to safety. It was reported that, up to that time, more than 533,000 homes have been destroyed and 26 million hectares of land had been damaged. Estimated economic losses were well above RMB 70 billion (nearing USD 10 billion), and the government had already set aside more than RMB 800 million to respond to the floods alone.

While the government has been responding quite rapidly and effectively in the emergency phase of disaster response, the 10 per cent commitment towards reducing the economic loss will not go far. Millions of people are stranded in temporary shelters for what could be months until waters recede. Lack of water and food as well as the spread of disease and illness are of immediate concern. Adequate protection from the damp and mosquitoes is of critical importance. Those who lost everything are most concerned about how they will survive in the long-term period of rebuilding their livelihoods and homes.

Natural disasters take the hardest toll on those already in or near impoverished conditions. Many have lost their houses to flooding due to inadequate construction using mud-based brick sealant, and substandard construction techniques. Unable to afford to hire construction teams and buy better quality materials, these families live in fear that a flood may sweep away their homes and all the possessions they have worked so hard to earn.

With more than 600 million of China's population living on USD 2 or less per day and 23.65 million of those living below China's own poverty benchmark of RMB 683 per year, poverty is already a great challenge for many farmers living in these regions. Anhui is one of China's poorest provinces with the average annual income around RMB 2600 (USD 340). The costs to recover losses for these millions of people affected will far exceed the abilities of local and national governments.

2007 Natural Disaster Statistics 1 January to 16 July
(Source: Ministry of Civil Affairs)

	Affected (Million)	Dead (Person)	Missing (Person)	Injured (Person)	Evacuated (Person)	Damaged Farmland (Hectare)	Collapsed Rooms**	Damaged Rooms**	Direct Eco. Loss (Million)
China	200	715	129		4,456,000	26,182,100	533,000	1,020,000	73,580
10 most affected provinces flood related to date									
Anhui	17.271	30	9	1200	585,000	1,445,600	70,000	186,000	9,380
Hubei	15.42	62	26	2840	394,000	1,071,400	43,000	159,000	4,200
Sichuan	19.419	87	37	2148	524,000	395,800	44,000	122,000	2,330
Chongqing	9.178	49	7	1031	368,000	375,600	30,000	96,000	1,520
Hunan	7.588	20	2	697	317,000	372,900	38,000	88,000	2,530
Jiangxi	8.216	20		473	144,000	339,100	21,000	44,000	1,380

Jiangsu	8.826	23		769	92,000	1,183,100	16,000	47,000	4,550
Guangdong	2.614	27	2	280	201,000	157,400	25,000	32,000	1,880
Guizhou	3.388	56	20	14	162,000	116,600	4,000	29,000	540
Guangxi	4.898	23	2		267,000	221,300	13,000	32,000	950
<i>sub-total</i>	<i>96.818</i>	<i>374</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>9452</i>	<i>3,054,000</i>	<i>5,678,800</i>	<i>304,000</i>	<i>835,000</i>	<i>29,260</i>

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

To date, the RCSC has provided funds and relief materials worth USD 1.5 million to affected provinces and regions including Anhui, Sichuan, Hubei, Henan and Chongqing. The RCSC headquarters in Beijing allocated tents, quilts and disinfectants to the affected areas where many local people are currently living in temporary shelters. Provincial branches of the RCSC have been actively responding to the disasters providing relief materials and funds to the affected areas, with the Red Cross branches in Hong Kong and Macao also having contributed USD 650,000 to the flood-affected regions.

The RCSC has dispatched a number of assessment teams to various parts of the country to better assess the situation and need. This past weekend, the vice president visited Sichuan and Chongqing after those areas experienced the worst flooding in recorded history. The assessment teams have found that the local Red Cross branches are responding quickly and effectively to the needs of those left vulnerable after the disaster. The local governments are appreciative of Red Cross support and eager to ensure continued involvement in relief efforts.

Since the release of DREF funding on 16th July, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has been supporting the relief activities in Anhui, Hubei and Sichuan provinces with rice (200 MT); blankets (15,000 pcs) and water purification materials. Through the posting of a story on the Federations website and the issuing of regular information bulletins since the start of the flood season, the Federation's regional delegation has supported the RCSC in raising public awareness about the developing flood situation, its socio-economic implications and the RCSC's response. The RCSC through its own resources is providing information about the society's national appeal issued on Friday 20 July on the Society's website.



Assessment teams have been visiting many disaster areas around the country. The vice president listens to the plight of a farming family in Sichuan province over the weekend. The RCSC.



The RCSC has delivered USD 1.5 million worth of relief supplies to five provinces hit by floods. The DREF-supported relief will focus on the three hardest-hit provinces, including Sichuan, where this farm family is picking up their quilts and food supplies. The RCSC.

**RCSC HQ Emergency Response Distribution
January-Present 2007**

As of 16th July 2007

Province	Month	Type of Disasters	Types of Relief Supplies	Value(RMB)	Value in CHF
Liao Ning	March	Snowstorm	Quilts	153,600	24,420
Inner Mongolia	March	Snowstorm	Quilts	76,800	12,190
Chongqing	April	Hailstorm	Warm clothes, quilts	188,200	29,873
Sichuan	April	Hailstorms(2)	Quilts, tents	289,692	45,983
Hunan	April	Hailstorm	Quilts	79,500	12,619
Guizhou	April	Hailstone	Quilts, tents	191,232	30,354
Chongqing	May	Heavy rain	Summer family kits, tents, water purification tablets	318,991	50,633
Hunan	May	Heavy rain	Water purification tablets, disinfectant, quilts	137,000	21,746
Chongqing	June	Flood	Water purification tablets, disinfectant, coat	226,200	35,905
Sichuan	June	Flood	Water purification tablets, disinfectant, quilts, summer family kits	325,000	51,587
Hunan	June	Floods, landslides	quilts, disinfectants, rice	496,620	78,829
Guizhou	June	Floods, landslides	Quilts, tents	298,464	27,027
Yunnan	June	Earthquake	Tents, quilts, summer family kits, cash, water purification tablets, rice, mobile lavatories, medicine (1,003,750 yuan)	2,070,906	328,715
Guangxi	June	Floods, landslides	tents, quilts, mosquito net, water purification tablets	345,164	28,775
Guangdong	June	Floods, landslides	water purification tablets, disinfectant	168,000	26,709
Hubei	June	Floods, landslides	water purification tablets, disinfectant, clothes	162,800	25,882
Hubei	June	Floods, landslides	quilts, family kits, water purification tablets	302,000	47,937
Jiangxi	June	Flood	Tents, mosquito net	91,204	14,477
Chongqing	July	Flood	Rice, water purification tablets, family kits, quilts	450,590	20,094
Sichuan	July	Flood	Quilts, water purification tablets, disinfectant, cash, rice	1,130,310	179,414
Guizhou	July		rice	100,000	15,873
Guangxi	July	Typhoon	Water purification tablets	144,000	28,775
Hubei	July	Floods	Disinfectant, family kits, water purification tablets, quilts	660,600	104,857
Hubei	July		rice	100,000	15,873

Jiangxi	July	Flood	Quilts, disinfectant	299,800	47,587
Jiangsu	July	Tornado	Water purification tablets, tents, quilts	351,343	55,769
Anhui	July	Flood	Water purification tablets, tents, quilts, family kits	702,491	111,506
Henan	July	Flood	Water purification tablets, tents	196,972	31,265
Shaanxi	July	Flood	Quilts	153,600	24,381
			Total	10,211,079	1,529,056

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.

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

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