

# 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

## INDIA: FLOODS

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*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: 9 August to 9 September 2007.**

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

- CHF 250,000 (USD 207,641 or EUR 151,515) allocated from the Federation's DREF on 9 August 2007 to respond to the needs of this operation, and to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to the affected population.
- This operation is expected to be implemented for three months, and will be completed by 9 November 2007; a DREF Bulletin Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 8 February 2008).

**Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

#### **Programme summary:**

To date, 2,577 people have lost their lives and an estimated 47 million people<sup>1</sup> have been affected by the ongoing floods. New flooding was reported in Orissa in the second week of August, with 13 districts affected by riverine or flash floods. Flash floods in four districts have given rise to grave health risks including cholera, chikungunya and diarrhea.

The cholera outbreak in Orissa has been quite serious, with up to 83 people having lost their lives to the disease. The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) dispatched a joint assessment team including Federation technical staff to assess the flood situation and health emergency in Orissa. The cholera outbreak was a result of tribes' traditional practices concerning food and water, leading to contamination. IRCS has been actively distributing relief items since the start of the floods, providing for the daily needs of disaster hit families.



**Distributions in Andhra Pradesh**

*For further information specifically related to this operation please see contact details on last page.*

<sup>1</sup> Source: Ministry of home affairs, India

## Background and current situation

The South-west monsoon has been active in the whole of June and July across the country. The flood condition continues to prevail within the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghana river basin in the states of Orissa, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The ministry of home affairs states that a total of 2,577 lives have been lost in the country since the first wave of floods, and an estimated 47 million people affected. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported on 31 August 2007 that 226 districts across the country<sup>2</sup> were affected by the floods.

**Orissa:** The state faced riverine and flash floods in 13 districts in August. The severe damage to crops threatens to turn into a major crisis, particularly in the most vulnerable districts of Balasore and Raygada, where 87 per cent of the population are below poverty line. To address the longer-term issues beyond relief, the government is trying to organize cash-for-work programmes. Agencies like Concern Worldwide are taking up cash-for-work, but only in some areas. Health and hygiene vulnerability can be improved only with constant awareness programmes being taken up to complement the government efforts.

An outbreak of cholera is reported in the districts of Raygada, Koraput and Kalahandi, and the Disease Surveillance Cell in Bhubaneswar reported a total of 133 deaths due to severe diarrhoea in the same areas by 29 August. Official sources say the situation is under control, with doctors and medical vans being mobilized and senior medical staff on site to monitor the situation.

This outbreak was a result of the lifestyle of the tribal communities who depend largely on the land for their food. Their diet includes dry meat (beef) and mango kernel, which becomes infected by fungus and bacteria when stored under extreme humid conditions. This, and the consumption of contaminated water from streams, led to serious health risks.

**Assam:** The flood situation is improving as water levels recede below flood warning levels in 5,946 villages of the previous week's 26 affected districts. In Assam alone, the flood has affected 6.816 million people<sup>3</sup> over a geographical area of 882,000 hectares.

### Weather forecast

The monsoon is currently passing through eastern India and thus would be affecting eastern Uttar Pradesh to north-east Assam across Bihar, sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim. Widespread rainfall with scattered heavy to very heavy falls is likely over Bihar, West Bengal and Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh during next three to four days. Fairly widespread rainfall is also expected in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Gangetic West Bengal.

### Government response

A total of 1,425 relief camps are still running in four states of India, with 801 medical teams deployed in the affected states. Inter-agency coordination meetings have been taking place, and the government has started mapping the available resources of international non-government organizations in the country. In Assam, the government has further widened the reach of employment generation schemes, assisting through the distribution of paddy where replanting is feasible. Steps were also taken to assist farmers in growing crops during the *Khariff* (June–October) and *Rabi* (November–February) harvest seasons, and rehabilitation activities will also be carried out.

The government has also responded to the cholera situation by setting up treatment centres, mobilizing doctors and nurses as well as deploying medical teams to transport patients and arranging for adequate supplies of medicine.

### Response from other agencies

United Nations' (UN) response in Bihar includes nutrition, health, water and sanitation, while communication and social mobilization, education and child protection issues are addressed in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Orissa. The World Health Organization (WHO), in association with the ministry of health and family welfare, has been closely monitoring the situation.

The state of Bihar has established a disease surveillance cell in Patna, with the centre being linked with medical teams in the field. Currently, 57 teams have been mobilized in the state. The WHO also provided technical advice

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP (India)'s situation report - [click here](#) for full document.

<sup>3</sup> Source: UNDP (India) situation report

and promoted the use of a recently modified reporting format under the integrated disease surveillance programme. The teams also held discussions with the state government to initiate the measles vaccination programme in selected flood areas.

A coordination meeting of members representing UN agencies was held on 27 August to discuss on the cholera outbreak in three tribal-dominated districts of Orissa – Kalahandi, Rayagada and Koraput. The outcome of this meeting is a technical team that will support the government health system for treatment protocol in managing cases, which includes members from United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), WHO and the UNDP. Information, education and communication activities would also be carried out in the three districts. On 29 August, two members of the UN agencies visited Koraput and Rayagada, and conducted meetings with local and international non-government organizations to assess the situation.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

The IRCS formed a national task force under the leadership of the Secretary General on 27 June. Furthermore, the IRCS released approximately 40,000 non-food family packs worth INR 54.55 million (an estimated CHF 1,594,144) from its warehouses to the branches in the 12 affected states from its own resources. Approximately one-third of this stock has been distributed by the branches so far. The delay in distribution has been due to the strict beneficiary selection and distribution system adopted by IRCS branches.

In order to review the recent development in floods the IRCS commissioned a joint-review team to visit Orissa on 1 September, comprising representatives from IRCS state branches, the national headquarters and the Federation. The team met the chief UN representative for Orissa, the managing director of the Orissa disaster mitigation authority and inter agency group forum members, and received valuable feedback on the situation in Balasore. The team also visited Rayagada district, where a cholera outbreak has been reported after the flash floods (see operational developments above). The review team suggested a few steps including a strong hygiene awareness campaign to combat the long term health vulnerability of the state.

The IRCS Secretary General also visited Orissa during 4 and 5 September, to review and monitor the situation, assess the cholera outbreak and support branch efforts in responding to both emergencies simultaneously, in close coordination with other stakeholders including government authorities.

### **Developments of the DREF plan of action**

In the initial DREF bulletin, the IRCS had budgeted for dry rations, replenishment of non-food family packs and operational costs. Following the return of the review team and the Secretary General from Orissa, a meeting was called by the national society on 7 September for all in-country partner national societies, the Federation and the IRCS.

It was discussed that the latest feedback from state branches and other sources stated that dry rations are no longer needed as these needs have been addressed by the government and the other agencies. The state branches together identified 35,500 targeted beneficiaries, including 5,100 families in need of non-food family packs and 10,000 in need of drinking water and bleaching powder.

It was decided that the DREF resources should therefore be used primarily for the procurement of non-food family kits<sup>4</sup> to replenish some of the stocks already been distributed by the IRCS as described above, and cover other relevant operational costs, including transport of water purification units.

This is to ensure sufficient stocks of relief goods both for the current and future emergencies, as most of the disaster preparedness stock in the warehouses of the IRCS has been exhausted and there is presently further need of family packs in the flood affected areas, which is being reviewed by the IRCS national headquarters.

The table below indicates the breakdown of items proposed for procurement as disaster preparedness stock replenishment and other operational costs associated with the current floods response:

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<sup>4</sup> A regular non-food family kit consists of tarpaulins or plastic sheets as well as eight other items. Due to the laboratory test required for Federation procurement procedure (quality check) for this particular item, it will not be included in these kits at this time, as the process will take longer than the three months of the DREF-funded operation.

No.	Items	Total cost (CHF)
1	Procurement of family packs (5,100 packs, at approx. CHF 39.39 each)	200,889
2	Operational cost for relief distribution	24,252
3	Local purchase of bleaching powder in Andhra Pradesh	(INR 24,800) 708
4	Loading and unloading of 2 water and sanitation units to Bihar	1,666
5	Inspection cost	3,182
	Visibility material (banners/ flags)	300
6	Flood review visit to Orissa and future review visits.	2,753
	Sub-total	233,750
	Programme service recovery (6.5% total)	16,250
	Total	<b>250,000</b>

1. Work has begun on the procurement of family packs. The IRCS has requested the partner national societies to procure for these floods, coordinated if possible by the Federation, to provide better rates and quality (based on experience). The request for quotations will be sent out on Wednesday, 12 September.
2. On 13 July an initial sum of INR 500,000 (approximately CHF 15,150) was released to Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar to meet their operational cost for volunteers' support, packing and distribution of the stock. This amount was transferred to them for distribution by the national headquarters, and was originally allocated from the Federations' India office disaster management budget. However, this amount is now incorporated into the DREF amount. The additional operational costs of CHF 9,102 relate to the volunteers support, packing and distribution of the increase amount of family packs and bleaching powder.
3. Some of these funds are also being used to procure bleaching powder. The exact details of bleaching powder procured will be available in the next update to be provided in October.
4. The original DREF budget included mobilization of water purification units (incorporated in the operational cost). Two units were deployed in Bihar in the last week of August, but while transporting these units to the site, they broke due to the bad condition of the road. These units are now in the process of being replaced. Further to the review on Orissa, initial plans to deploy water purification units there have been reconsidered, as the scattered nature of the population means that the units would not be effective.
5. The overall inspection of the disaster preparedness stock will begin once the procurement order is placed. Further on the review visits, one visit was undertaken in Orissa after the recent flash floods leading to the Cholera outbreak. See the
6. As described above in some detail, a joint review team visited Orissa from 31 August to 4 September, which gave a good view of the overall flood situation in Balasore and Rayagada.

### Coordination

The Federation's India office has been closely liaising with the IRCS national headquarters since the beginning of the disaster and has been playing a crucial role in coordinating with various components of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.

Following the meeting with IRCS on 7 September, a coordination meeting was called by the Federation and attended by American, German, British, Spanish and Canadian Red Cross representatives, to clarify which items would be procured by each organization in support of the IRCS floods response. It was emphasized during the meeting at the IRCS national headquarters that the Federation should coordinate the procurement to ensure quality and better price, and to provide technical support in procurement and logistics.

The IRCS has been coordinating at a national level with government authorities and the UN through various forums and exchanges of information at national and state levels. Furthermore, the IRCS disaster management centre has been consistently sharing information within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement at regular intervals. The IRCS has also been updating the society's response to the flooding on its website, [www.indianredcross.org](http://www.indianredcross.org).

All branches in the affected states have been working round the clock to provide service to the most vulnerable in their respective states, including Assam, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. All the district branches in the affected states have been active; this has been reported in the DMIS entries and subsequent information bulletin.

### Other developments not directly related to DREF funds

IRCS secured a donation from the Steel Authorities of India Limited (SAIL) of INR 50,000,000 (approximately 1.4 million CHF). A part of the donation has been used by IRCS Bihar branch which enabled them to provide local food rations to the affected families which includes jaggery, black gram, matchboxes, biscuits and other items.

The IRCS-trained volunteers in Bihar managed to evacuate 2,500 people while the first aid-trained volunteers have provided medical services to nearly 3,000 people. In Assam, over 1,000 Red Cross volunteers, together with the members of the state disaster response team, have been involved in coordinating search and rescue activities. Similar activities were organized by the Gujarat branch. Furthermore, the Orissa state branch is taking the lead in coordinating humanitarian activities with various organizations and the concerned authorities in the state.

In response to the cholera outbreak in Kashipur block of the Raygada district, the IRCS Orissa branch has responded by deploying six volunteers and vehicles on 22 August to transport patients to nearby health facilities.

## 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

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

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