

# DREF operation



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## India: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRIN003  
GLIDE n° [FL-2008-000145-IND](#)  
11 September 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.



A man carries his child through a flooded area in the state of Bihar

**CHF 1,000,000 (USD 885,200 or EUR 626,350) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the national society in delivering immediate assistance to some 10,000 beneficiaries. Un-earmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** The two states of Bihar and Assam have been severely engulfed with floods, apart from other states that did experience flooding, but were able to cope with it. Though the two states are traditionally flood-prone, the real problem was encountered when unexpected areas were submerged and the community could not cope with the disaster. The government, Red Cross and other civil society organizations reacted immediately but due to the magnitude of the disaster, there is need for additional relief. The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) has been responding to needs in the wake of the disaster at every level, from a volunteer-district-state to national level. The national society has been gathering resources to support the community both internally and externally. A plan of action has been outlined to further support the national society in delivering much-needed relief items which aim at rehabilitating the affected rather than as initial relief. Relief items under the plan consist of shelter and

kitchen sets.

Isolated between the original course of the Kosi River and a new channel that formed when its banks were breached in Nepal, those affected struggle to survive as the Red Cross Red Crescent and other humanitarian organizations provide assistance in the face of massive logistics challenges. In Bihar alone, more than 300,000 homes have been destroyed.

In Assam state alone, at present, 24 deaths have been reported and about 1.6 million people have been affected. The flood now covers 1,518 villages in 14 districts. More than 4,000 hectares of crop land have been damaged with thousands of people left without shelter with the loss of more than 4,000 houses. Now, with over 20,000 people living in 184 relief camps, the situation continues to demand a response and while the IRCS Assam state branch has been able to do so, more national and international support is required to avoid exacerbation of the situation.

The proposed operation is to provide support to 50,000 beneficiaries (10,000 families) through the provision of shelter and household items. This operation is expected to be implemented over 60 days, and will be completed by 10 November 2008; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 10 February 2009).

[click for <the DREF budget>](#), [<contact details>](#), or [<a map of the affected areas>](#)

## The situation

On 18 August, the eastern embankment of Kosi near Kusaha in Nepal's Sunsari district was breached. The breach itself has caused colossal loss of life and property in the southeast *tarai* region of Nepal and in six districts of north Bihar, affecting more than 4.6 million people. Following the breach, the river has shifted its course nearly 100 kilometres eastward from its previous course which used to cross the districts of Supaul, Saharsa, Madhubani, Darbhanga and Khagaria.

Kosi, with its seven tributaries known as Saptkosi, drains the eastern part of Nepal and parts of Tibet. Some of the headstreams emerge beyond the Nepalese border in Tibet. Approximately 50 kilometres north of Indo-Nepal border, the Kosi is joined by its seven tributaries and breaks southwards through the Shivalik Hills at the narrow Barakhshetra gorge. The river then flows on the plains of northern Bihar on its way to Ganga meandering through a course of approximately 700 kilometres.

Originating from the glaciers of Tibet and Nepal, the river is exceptionally turbulent because of the steep gradient flow in Nepal. It has the history of changing its course every 50 to 100 years. The main cause of the Kosi changing its course is precisely the steepness and the consequent heavy silt it carries along with its swirling water. The river carries approximately 700 million kilograms of silt every year, almost five times the sediment load of any other river in Bihar.

According to the latest official reports, more than 4.6 million individuals have been directly impacted by unprecedented flooding in a region of India not normally prone to this kind of disaster. As many as 87 lives have been reported lost and aid efforts remain hampered by limited access to more than 2,349 impacted villages across 16 districts in Bihar state.

## Coordination and partnerships

The IRCS national headquarters along with the International Federation India office is closely monitoring the flood situation and is in regular contact with the affected state branch. The International Federation India office is closely following up with the IRCS national headquarters on the arising needs from the state branch on technical support request, in carrying out emergency assessments in the flood-affected areas.

The IRCS meets daily to review the situation and to discuss the next steps in the ongoing operation. This meeting includes the head of India office, while several other technical meetings are held daily between the IRCS and International Federation to best coordinate relief efforts to achieve the best results possible in the affected areas.

The International Federation country office has established twice daily meetings to discuss the most updated developments and to better coordinate the response given to the IRCS. Daily meetings held at 9.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m., are open to all Movement partners. Partner national societies in India have expressed their appreciation of this move.

The South Asia regional office has activated the South Asia floods task force to monitor, coordinate and report at the regional level on the floods in India, Nepal and Bangladesh during this 2008 monsoon season. The South Asia regional office will continue to keep in close communication with each country office/national society on their specific situations.

The IRCS has done various local assessments with help of state and disaster response teams and has been receiving current information from the field on the situation. The government has been supporting the Red Cross operation in both the states and vice-versa; the IRCS branches have been assisting the government in their various relief operations. This assistance has received acknowledgement through the government's public declaration of IRCS's official nomination as a partner in collecting in-kind donations for the state government.

Inter-agency (IAG) coordination is active in both the states, especially in Bihar where the IRCS is a very active participant of the IAG. In Assam, the IRCS state branch is working in tandem with the government and provides volunteer support in relief distribution and awareness generation among community members.

International companies have donated ready-to-eat food worth INR one million (CHF 25,200 or USD 22,300) to IRCS Bihar state branch through the ministry of health and family welfare. Similarly, Australian Red Cross supported the operation through the IRCS national headquarters by supplying one large water purification unit with an approximate capacity of 5,000 litres per hour along with other water and sanitation equipment.

With support from the International Federation, the IRCS has been coordinating information within and outside the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. This includes providing support in circulating daily information bulletins to in-country partners, the UNDMT (United Nations disaster management team) and the Sphere India inter-agency group.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) is playing an essential role in relief efforts throughout the affected region, supporting rescue and evacuation efforts, and distributing relief supplies such as kitchen sets, mosquito nets, and basic food supplies. They have also deployed water and sanitation units capable of producing 5,000 litres each per hour of clean water for drinking and hygiene purposes. Trained Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers have also been distributing basic medicines and leading health education discussions in temporary camps to help reduce the risk of disease among those displaced by the floods.

Following government instruction, all financial assistance for Bihar floods will be routed through the Chief Minister Relief Fund and all in-kind donations, through the IRCS Bihar state branch.

The Bihar branch is coordinating the response and distribution in close cooperation with the appointed special district magistrates, who report to the minister-in-charge. A relief committee of the IRCS Bihar state branch immediately dispatched relief packs to the six most affected districts as soon as it received information of the floods and the ongoing situation.

The affected district branch staff and volunteers are playing a vital role in providing first aid; rescue and evacuation services; awareness on the preparation of oral rehydration solutions (ORS); and in organizing free health check-up camps and distribution of medicines. In addition, they also use printed information, education and communication (IEC) materials to raise awareness on water and sanitation and hygiene promotion and preparation of ORS to the affected community members.

The Bihar state branch has been receiving in-kind goods, and the storage and distribution of these items is ongoing. A state flood control room, manned by 20 volunteers, is functioning in Patna. Three storage houses have been created at the Bihar state branch, one for medical items and two for general in-kind donations. According to the state branch, immediate needs include tarpaulin sheets, tents and jerry cans for storing clean drinking water.

The Purnia district has been the centre/base for flood relief and response operations for the government and other organizations.

The IRCS Assam state branch has distributed flood relief of the affected districts. Red Cross members and volunteers, community health workers, and first aid volunteers are working in coordination with the district authorities in the state. Due to extremely limited communication, the entire assessment process is disrupted. Trained Red Cross volunteers are taking precautionary measurements to avoid the spread of any post-flooding epidemic. Red Cross volunteers are working in a *war footing*<sup>1</sup> manner for the rehabilitation of those impacted by the floods.

The IRCS Assam state branch is supplying relief items to those who have lost everything in the flood. The state branch, together with the civil administration, has also started immediate flood relief operations among those affected in Rangia. Red Cross relief materials including water purifying tablets have already been released by the branch. Districts in which relief supplies are being distributed include Majuli, Morigaon, Lakhimpur, Dhakuwakhana, Kamrup, Mangaldoi (Darrang), Rangia, and Karbi Anglong. The IRCS Assam state branch has also entered remote areas to distribute relief goods to those affected there.

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<sup>1</sup> The condition or status of ... [an] organization when operating ... as if a state of war existed.

## The needs

Pressing needs, target beneficiaries and areas most affected have been identified and analyzed following various assessment reports and recommendations submitted by the IRCS Bihar and Assam state branches to the national headquarters.

Based on discussions between the International Federation and the IRCS, and subsequent conversations between the IRCS secretary-general and the secretary-general of the International Federation, the Federation will provide technical support to set up a joint detailed assessment with partner national societies and secretariat representatives to assess further needs of those impacted in the coming days.

This support will be provided through the International Federation country and regional offices in Delhi. An evaluation of the current and mid-term needs will take place in the coming days. The head of the India country office and the disaster manager of the IRCS are already in Bihar to conduct assessments.

## The proposed operation

The proposed operation is to provide support to 50,000 beneficiaries (10,000 families) through provision of shelter and household items.

### Relief distributions (basic non-food items)

**Objective: To distribute 10,000 kitchen sets and 25,000 blankets to the most affected people in the states of Bihar and Assam.**

**Activities planned:** The national society together with state authorities will identify the most vulnerable community members and ascertain the distribution of kitchen sets and blankets

- Kitchen sets and blankets to arrive through the Framework agreement mobilized by the regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur
- Transportation at the distribution site and in required numbers.
- Distribution of items in cooperation with state authorities

### Emergency shelter

**Objective: To distribute 1,250 tents to the most affected people in Bihar and Assam.**

**Activities planned:** The national society will identify shelter needs of the most vulnerable community members through its selection criteria and distribute the tents to them.

- Tents to be mobilized through in-country suppliers through the assistance of the regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur
- Transporting at the distribution site and in required numbers.
- Distribution of items in cooperation with state authorities

## Plan of Action

This plan of action is to provide support in rehabilitating the affected communities in both the states of Bihar and Assam. Both the state branches had pre-positioned stock, which was immediately made available to the affected people. The state branches then requested the IRCS national headquarters to further support them in serving the affected population, by catering to the immediate needs of those impacted, which include shelter and household items.

The IRCS through the International Federation office in Delhi will further procure and transport additional relief items for immediate dispatch and distribution to the targeted beneficiaries in the areas identified. The following non-food items will be procured through the existing stock and Framework Agreement of the International Federation by the regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur.

Items	Request #
Family tents	1,250
Kitchen sets A	10,000
Blankets (tonnes)	25,000

The procurement of the items is in urgent response to the needs identified by the state and district branches in the Bihar and Assam states. A [detailed budget](#) is attached below.

Work on procuring the relief items as mentioned has begun. Assistance is provided by the regional logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur and through the existing Framework Agreement, which takes into account production capacities in-country, kitchen sets and blankets will be mobilized. For the procurement of tents, several options are presently being discussed and taken into consideration, from which the best and most viable option will be selected.

The IRCS has the advantage of a long-standing agreement with the Indian Railways authorities whereby all relief items are transported free of cost.

The relief items supplied from the available stock through the framework agreements, i.e. kitchen sets and blankets, in Mumbai will be delivered to the IRCS Mumbai regional warehouse, before being shipped to the flooded areas. Distribution will be carried out by the IRCS state branch staff and volunteers in close consultation and cooperation with the state authorities.

#### Time frame

<i>Procurement</i>	<i>Reception of goods</i>	<i>Dispatch</i>	<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Monitoring</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Report</i>	<i>Final Report</i>
Process initiated 10 September onwards	15 September onwards	18 September onwards	Ongoing	22 September onwards	18 September onwards	30 September	10 February 2009

## 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 \(NGOs\) 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 International Federation's activities are aligned with its 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:

- Indian Red Cross Society: Dr. S.P. Agarwal, secretary-general, email: [spagarwalsg@indianredcross.org](mailto:spagarwalsg@indianredcross.org); phone: +91.11.2371.6424; fax: +91.11.23711.7454
- Federation country office in India: Peter Ophoff, head of country office, email: [peter.ophoff@ifrc.org](mailto:peter.ophoff@ifrc.org); phone: +91.11.2332.4203; fax: +91.11.233.4235
- Federation South Asia regional office: Al Panico, head of regional office, email: [al.panico@ifrc.org](mailto:al.panico@ifrc.org); phone: +91.11.2411.1125; fax: +91.11.2411.1128
- Federation Asia Pacific zone in Malaysia:
  - Amy Gaver, head of disaster management unit; email: [amy.gaver@ifrc.org](mailto:amy.gaver@ifrc.org); phone: +603.9207.5724; fax: +603.2161.0670
  - Jeremy Francis, regional logistics coordinator, email: [jeremy.francis@ifrc.org](mailto:jeremy.francis@ifrc.org), phone: +60 12 298 9752, fax: +60 3 2168 8573

- Penny Elghady, resource mobilization and PMER coordinator,  
email: [penny.elghady@ifrc.org](mailto:penny.elghady@ifrc.org), phone: +603 9207 5775
- Federation Secretariat in Geneva, Asia Pacific department:
  - Christine South, operations coordinator  
email: [christine.south@ifrc.org](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org), phone: +41.22.730.4529, fax: +41.22.733.0395

**[<DREF budget and map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)**

## **APPEAL BUDGET SUMMARY**

Annex 1

**INDIA : FLOODS**

**MDRIN003**

### **RELIEF NEEDS**

Shelter	380,000
Clothing & Textiles	101,000
Utensils & Tools	276,000
<b>Total Relief Needs</b>	<b>757,000</b>

### **TRANSPORT, STORAGE & VEHICLES**

Distribution & Monitoring	40,000
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### **GENERAL EXPENSES**

Travel	78,000
Office running costs	20,000
Communication Costs	13,820

### **PROGRAMME SUPPORT**

Programme Support - PSR (6.5% of total)	91,180
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<b>Total Operational Needs</b>	<b>243,000</b>
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<b>Total Appeal Budget (Cash &amp; Kind)</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>
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**Less : Available Resources**

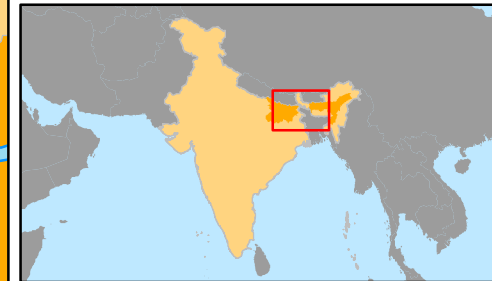
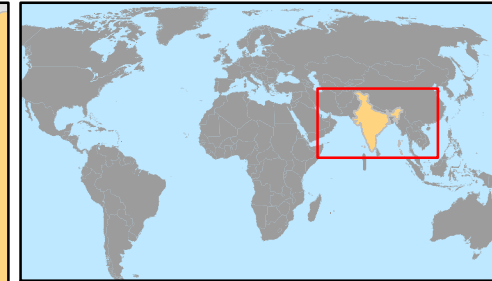
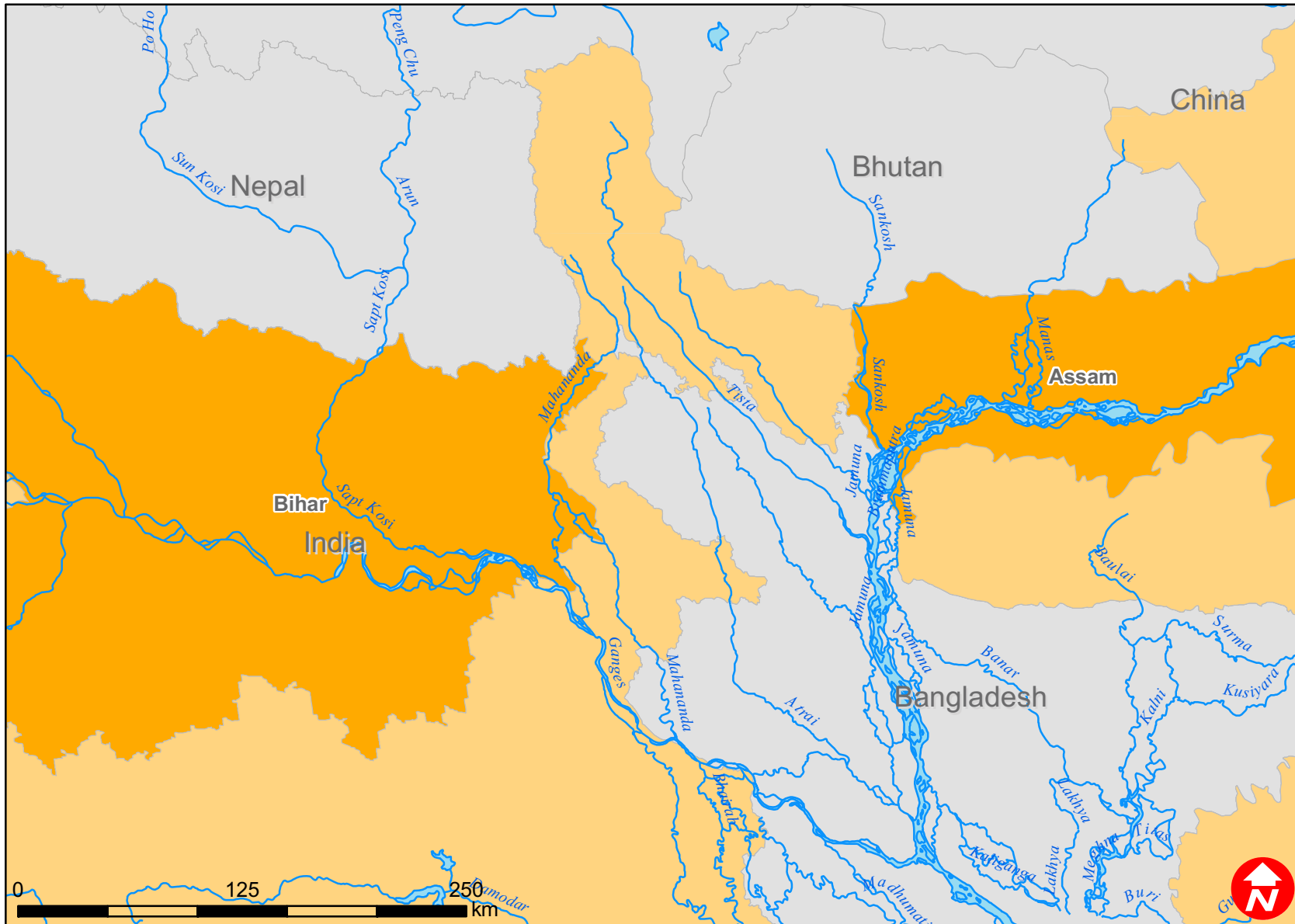
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<b>Net Request</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>
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# India: Floods



 Affected states

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

Map data sources: ESRI, DEVINFO, International Federation - MDRIN003.mxd