

# **PAKISTAN: CYCLONE 2-A**

June 26, 2000

*Appeal no. 13/99*

*Final Situation Report*

*Period covered: 20 May - 1 September, 1999*

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*A violent cyclone on 20 May, 1999 affected over 600,000 people living along the Eastern coast line of Sindh Province. Over 82,000 houses were destroyed and nearly 68,000 were damaged. While 675 fishing boats were destroyed and 191 fishermen lost their lives. The cyclone caused widespread damage to agricultural land and the infrastructure of the region. The Pakistan Red Crescent was on the spot almost as soon as the storm made landfall. Based on data collected during a vulnerability and capacity assessment, an effective relief operation was planned and, with generous support from Participating National Societies, implemented as scheduled. This Final Report summarises the provision of essential relief assistance to the most vulnerable as well as early rehabilitation.*

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## ***The Disaster***

A tropical storm in the northern Arabian Sea developed into a cyclone (Cyclone 2-A) and made landfall on 20 May in the Indus delta area on the south-east coast of Pakistan. With winds of up to 170 miles per hour, its biggest impact was on the coastal towns and villages of the districts of Badin and Thatta in Sindh province, causing massive destruction to housing, infrastructure, agriculture and the fishing industry. At least 600,000 people in 5,200 villages were affected. 82,181 houses were destroyed and 67,285 damaged. Some 400,000 acres of agricultural land were inundated with salt water, and 28,000 livestock perished. 675 fishing boats were destroyed and 191 people, mostly fishermen, were reported killed.

Because most people in the area are farmers or fishermen, this cyclone damaged the livelihood of almost 30% of the estimated total population of 1,600,000 in the two districts. Since cyclones in this part of the Indian subcontinent are a rare occurrence, the disaster caught most people by surprise and overwhelmed normal coping mechanisms. Incessant rains and slow run-off created large areas of stagnant water, reducing the availability of clean drinking water and endangering further the already precarious health situation and poor sanitation in this generally under-served area. Damage to communication lines, limited road access due to flooding, and interrupted power supplies aggravated the situation.

## ***The immediate response***

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## ***The immediate response***

### **The Government •**

The Government of Pakistan mobilised the military, including the Navy, to assist in search and rescue operations with boats and helicopters and established relief camps providing food, water, and medical care for the homeless. Some 130 local survey teams conducted detailed village level surveys of damage and needs, but it later emerged that a number of remote and less accessible villages had been underserved. The Government also set up a Relief Co-ordinator, whose main impact was as a focal point for information. In an attempt to improve co-ordinating mechanisms, the PRCS Sindh Branch conducted one co-ordination meeting.

### **Pakistan Red Crescent / International Federation •**

Before the cyclone made landfall, PRCS Sindh Branch was liaising with the Provincial Government, but there was virtually no time to undertake any significant precautions. As soon as the cyclone hit, the Pakistan Red Crescent was among the first organisations responding to the emergency by mobilising its relief teams and relief supplies from Sindh and other parts of the country. As an immediate response by the Sindh Branch, some 45 MT. of family packages (including staple food) and a limited amount of kitchen utensils were distributed.

A preliminary appeal was issued by the Federation on 24 May, 1999. As soon as damaged communications and roads allowed, PRCS conducted a vulnerability and capacity assessment (26 May - 3 June) to determine the most vulnerable among the affected population. As a result, the initial appeal was amended on 9 June, to seek a total of CHF 1.3 million. Following the intervention of the Pakistan Government and military forces, as well as action by NGOs, the total needs were eventually cut back to CHF 600,000.

Based on the PRCS assessments, the appeal fixed the following objectives for assistance to 5,000 families (appr. 20,000 individuals):

- { to cover immediate food needs;
- { to provide basic start-up assistance to those who lost all their belongings;
- { to provide medical assistance to those affected by cyclone related injuries or diseases;
- { to offer health education focusing on hygiene and sanitation to those attending clinics;
- { to supply shelter material and tools to families whose homes had been destroyed;
- { to build upon the capacity of the Pakistan Red Crescent and the local community wherever possible.

While the PRCS made its provincial and headquarters staff and volunteers available, the International Federation supported this operation with a relief delegate (until 28 September, 1999) and provided technical assistance and follow up through its South Asia Regional Delegation. It also facilitated the initial assessment by making available the services of two Federation delegates from neighbouring Afghanistan.

## ***The Operation***

The time frame for the operation was three months. All procurement was done within Pakistan, using established National Society and Federation procedures. This included an extensive tendering process and comparative bid analysis. However, in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, items were procured at Islamabad at a higher price than later purchases in Karachi. This led to a slightly higher initial budget and subsequent cost savings during the procurement. Detailed action included:

- { Purchase of **21,452 food parcels** (1,000 in Islamabad, 20,452 in Karachi). They contained wheat flour, rice, sugar, pulses, tea, salt, chilli/turmeric, and oil (total weight of food parcel 14 kgs).

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- { Procurement of **5,767 kitchen utensil sets** (500 in Islamabad, 5,267 in Karachi). They consisted of blankets, jerry cans, plates, spoons, tea kettle, cooking pot, frying pan, tumblers, ladle, water mugs, towel, and a coal stove.

Distribution started within a few days of the disaster and was initially done by helicopter and boats. The Federation format for distribution reports was shared with the Provincial Branch, which collected reports from its local branches..

Distribution date / period	Location	Food Parcels distributed	Family Packs distributed	Approximate number of beneficiaries
<b>22.05.99-15.08.99</b>	<b>Badin and Thatta Districts (helicopter /boat)</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>42,000</b>
25.08.99	9 villages / Badin	563	123	3,813
25.08.99	2 villages / Thatta	310	155	2,790
26.08.99	7 villages / Badin	431	158	4,368
26.08.99	1 village / Thatta	50	24	518
27.08.99	4 villages / Badin	232	50	1,616
27.08.99	3 villages / Thatta	340	79	2,618
28.08.99	5 villages / Badin	281	82	3,710
28.08.99	2 villages / Thatta	219	70	1,734
29.08.99	4 villages / Badin	245	72	2,675
29.08.99	2 villages / Thatta	224	44	1,706
30.08.99	6 villages / Badin	409	193	5,200
30.08.99	1 village / Thatta	90	18	756
31.08.99	4 villages / Badin	270	95	2,190
31.08.99	3 villages / Thatta	221	56	1,625
01.09.99	1 village / Badin	65	14	474
01.09.99	1 village / Thatta	52	28	560
02.09.99	5 villages / Badin	204	58	1,620
02.09.99	3 villages / Thatta	432	199	4,417
03.09.99	5 villages / Badin	232	44	1,604
03.09.99	1 village / Thatta	180	78	1,548
04.09.99	5 villages / Badin	271	90	2,808
04.09.99	1 village / Thatta	44	13	342
05.09.99	4 villages / Badin	249	103	2,097
05.09.99	4 villages / Thatta	320	112	2,974
06.09.99	3 villages / Badin	108	13	784
06.09.99	5 villages / Thatta	494	106	3,640
07.09.99	3 villages / Badin	132	67	1,952
07.09.00	6 villages / Thatta	406	133	3,598
08.09.99	5 villages / Badin	286	109	2,502
08.09.99	3 villages / Thatta	252	42	2,056
09.09.99	3 villages / Badin	207	89	2,468
09.09.99	1 village / Thatta	1,082	1,104	15,302
10.09.99	6 villages / Badin	382	89	3,376
10.09.99	3 villages / Thatta	130	30	876
11.09.99	4 villages / Badin	326	128	3,192
11.09.99	4 villages / Thatta	138	53	1,080
12.09.99	5 villages / Badin	334	161	3,126
12.09.99	1 village / Thatta	28	7	245
13.09.99	7 villages / Badin	499	223	4,601

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15.09.99	5 villages / Badin	414	167	3,492
15.09.99	1 village / Thatta	9	0	63
16. - 24..09.99	28 villages/Thatta	2,784	566	25,308
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104 villages / Badin 87 villages / Thatta</b>	<b>21,452</b>	<b>5,767</b>	<b>178,082</b>

PRCS identified 400 of the most vulnerable families, who had lost their livelihood and their home and provided them with essential domestic items, e.g. mats, bamboo, plastic sheeting, etc. Beneficiaries were 200 families in Thatta District and 200 families in Badin District. In Badin, families were located in one area to form a ‘Red Crescent Colony’ in which PRCS plans to establish a dispensary to supplement the meagre health services.

{ **Assorted medical supplies** with an approximate value of CHF 112,000 were procured.

Because the general health of the population in this remote area was already quite poor and health services were stretched to their limits, the effects of the cyclone, such as contaminated and stagnant water, created further health hazards. Water purification tablets, oral rehydration salts, and selected antibiotics and general medicines enabled PRCS to partly address the issue of contaminated water, and also to **conduct 27 medical camps** and provide free medical assistance to **19,438 patients** (6,864 male, 5,864 female, 6,710 children) between 16 June and 13 September, 1999 in Badin and Thatta. Those attending the medical camps also received health and sanitation information, in particular on making water safer for consumption. A total of 126 physicians volunteered free medical assistance, mainly for diarrhoeal and gastro-intestinal diseases, URTI, skin and eye infections.

{ **Tents**

The initial plan included the provision of tents as emergency shelters, and 200 tents were purchased to replenish national stocks that were utilised in the immediate aftermath of the cyclone. However, due to the army’s involvement, these tents were not required and so not distributed. They were eventually added to the National Society’s disaster preparedness stocks and 50 of them were used in the emergency response to flash floods in Balochistan on 26 July, 1999.

{ **Other items**

A total of 500 hurricane lamps, 500 kerosene stoves, and 200 shovels were purchased. However, due to the unforeseen involvement of other NGOs these items turned out to be surplus to needs. In addition, kerosene required for lamps and stoves had become scarce. For these reasons, this material was incorporated into the National Society’s disaster preparedness stock.

{ **Operational details**

The entire distribution of supplies was the responsibility of the Pakistan Red Crescent. The provincial and district branches carried out field level distribution with guidance and support from National Headquarters field co-ordinators, volunteers and youth members, with overall monitoring by PRCS and the Federation.

Warehousing was kept to an absolute minimum to reduce costs, and goods were transported directly to the nearest distribution point.

PRCS Sindh Provincial Branch mobilised its volunteer corps of more than 120 individuals. This corps is based in Karachi and consists mainly of young men; it provided much of the ‘hands on’ support for the operation. The Sindh Provincial branch has one volunteer member in each of its 14 districts and these volunteers in Badin and Thatta helped co-ordinate the relief efforts in their respective areas. PRCS also made extensive use of NGO resources, including personnel and transport, thanks to the good

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relationships among the organisations. Furthermore, through a newspaper advertisement PRCS invited a substantial number of NGOs to a meeting in the immediate aftermath of the cyclone. During this meeting the 16 NGOs present requested PRCS to provide leadership in the relief operation. Another highly successful activity by the Sindh Branch was the recruitment of medical doctors for voluntary service in the medical camps. A total of 126 physicians provided services free of charge.

## *Contributions*

Contributions were received from nine National Societies or governments totalling CHF 707,764.36 (see Financial Report). Some Societies placed considerable restrictions on their donations. As a result, when the assessments were concluded and changes had to be made in the operation, the use of these funds had to be renegotiated. While donors were very flexible, the limits placed on the use of funds put additional operational pressure on a Society that was trying to handle an unprecedented disaster.

Funds were reallocated from contributions to this appeal to cover costs incurred by the Regional and Pakistan delegations in response to this disaster, (see attached table).

## *Analysis*

The initial plan of action, to provide food, domestic items, shelter and some medical assistance for approximately 20,000 people, was a realistic assessment of needs. However, it overestimated to a certain extent the capacity of the PRCS and underestimated the response capacity of the population and the Government. While the extent of the Government's response could not have been foreseen in the days immediately following the cyclone, PRCS had only limited personnel resources in the affected districts, and limited operational capacity at both provincial and national level. This caused some minor delays. By August, when most of the Government and the NGO relief efforts had come to an end, PRCS relief distributions were peaking. This finally proved to be a significant operational bonus since PRCS/Federation were able to identify all those communities and persons who had been missed in the initial rush of relief efforts. They were mostly in areas away from the main road, or in isolated areas, or people who, for bureaucratic or operational reasons, had not received any assistance whatsoever. PRCS not only helped those who had not been helped before, but also achieved a high level of awareness in the affected communities.

PRCS made excellent use of the personnel resources of NGOs who had fewer material assets. This co-operation is a major asset and a particular strength of PRCS at the local level. Another valuable asset was the fact that a number of PRCS staff and volunteers had undergone community-based disaster preparedness training.

The tendering process of the National Society was thorough and meticulous, ensuring the highest quality for the lowest price. The same high standard was maintained at provincial level, but was a time consuming undertaking.

In the absence of any permanent Federation representation in Pakistan, the PRCS took a cautious approach to outside operational support and limited its response to local and available resources. Efforts to improve operational responsiveness and possibly achieve greater response speed should take into account the experience of this operation in assigning staff from neighbouring countries.

## *Conclusion*

This unprecedented cyclone struck a community with a low disaster coping and preparedness level, rendering them even more vulnerable. While the Pakistan Red Crescent in general and Sindh Provincial Branch in particular were experienced in rendering emergency assistance during the annual monsoon flood, the scope of this sudden disaster and the interruption of important communication lines caught them off guard. Nevertheless, the National Society was one of the first organisations at the disaster

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scene. The operational plan of action identified approximately 20,000 target beneficiaries, and the relief operation finally provided help to 178,000, thus vastly exceeding the initial target.

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