

INFORMATION 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/GUJARAT: FLOODS

4 August 2003

Information Bulletin N° 01/03

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: N/A

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 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

Monsoon rains, beginning during the final week of July, have caused flash flooding in the drought-stricken state of Gujarat. The rainfall, after five years of drought, is welcome relief for the agricultural sector. A large amount of the water, however, is not being absorbed into the ground. Incessant rain has led to flash floods in the northern part of the Kutch district including Khavada, Banni and some parts of Natkharana and Lakhpat. Several villages are still isolated due to the floods and there have been significant losses of livestock.

The flooding has left many people homeless. Some 4,500 people were evacuated from Khavda and Banni. Thirteen people were reported dead in the latest reports in the media.

Sixteen out of 20 dams in the Kutch district are flowing above the danger level, and a total of 10,000 people in 23 villages in sub-districts of Kutch are marooned as a result of the flooding. The Indian Meteorological Department has forecast heavy rains in next few days, which could potentially exacerbate the situation

The Chief Minister of State along with other ministers and officials made an aerial survey of the flood affected areas and sought the help of the Air Force to drop 8000 food packets and 6 tonnes of fodder by helicopter. The Government has also started distributing food grains but exact numbers are not yet available.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

During the last week of July, the Indian Red Cross Society's (IRCS) Bhuj Branch in cooperation with the Gujarat State Branch responded to the flooding by initiating and organising the distribution of ready-made food to those persons who had lost their homes due to the flooding. The branch elected to distribute ready-made food as people do not have access to cooking facilities, nor can they make fires due to the flooding and lack of shelter. The Bhuj Branch targeted their assistance to the area's poor, who ordinarily live in makeshift shelters, and now due to the flooding have had to seek alternative means of shelter.

This is the first time the IRCS Bhuj Branch, established at the end of 2002, is carrying out a relief operation. Bhuj Branch is working in close coordination with the State Branch coordinator at the IRCS Gujarat State Branch, the IRCS Gujarat State Capacity Building Organiser, and with local authorities.

India/Gujarat: Floods; Information Bulletin no. 01

During the final week of July, through funds raised locally by the Branch, the Bhuj Branch initially distributed 400 food-parcels containing rice, salad and boiled vegetables. The Branch procured the items for the food parcels locally. Red Cross Health Field Workers based in Bhuj, prepared the food and the parcels and worked with IRCS volunteers to distribute the items.

The IRCS Gujarat State Branch has issued INR 50,000 (CHF 1,465) to the IRCS Kutch District Branch.

Since the start of the flooding IRCS Bhuj branch has distributed some 5,000 food packets to flood affected persons. Food packets include: Sukhadi and Bundi (Sweets); and, traditional Gujarati items such as Ganthia, Puri and Potato Sabzi. Two hired cooks and IRCS Field workers and volunteers prepare the food. IRCS volunteers and Field workers were given space in the Bhuj field hospital to package the items prior to distributing them.

IRCS volunteers, trained in disaster preparedness, have been involved in rescue operations. In addition to 5,000 food packets, IRCS has distributed medicine and blankets.

Kutch District Red Cross officials met with the district administration to discuss a future action plan. The district administration is planning to set up relief camps, and the IRCS Bhuj branch has promised them voluntary support.

The IRCS national headquarters, through its Disaster Management Centre, is closely monitoring the situation.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact:

- *Indian Red Cross Society in New Delhi ; Secretary General Dr Vimala Ramalingam Phone 011 233 594 28; Fax 011 237 174 54; email vimalaramalingam@indianredcross.org*
- *Federation Delegation Azmat Ullah, HoD, HoRD Bob McKerrow, New Delhi; Phone 011 268 586 72; Fax 011 268 576 71; email; lifrcin01@ifrc.org*
- *Suzana Jekic, Federation Desk Officer, Phone 41 227304429; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email; suzana.jekic@ifrc.org*

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.