

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

CHINA: 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 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 03/2005) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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The Situation

On Friday 11 June, dramatic flash floods and landslides in Ning'an city, Heilongjiang province in Northeast of China have killed 92 people, including 87 students who were trapped as the floods swept over their primary school. These recent floods, caused by torrential rains that overflowed a local river, have damaged seven out of 18 villages in Ning'an city, devastating 1,333 hectares of farm land, causing 55 houses to collapse and affecting 1,800 villagers.

A rescue team of 1,400 people, made up of 1,000 military officers and soldiers as well as 400 government officials, have arrived in the flood-hit area and have been joined by local Red Cross representatives. Seventeen medical experts from Harbin medical school in the provincial capital have been dispatched to help disaster relief efforts.

Meanwhile, floods and landslides continue to affect 9.7 million people in southern and central of China, forcing 300,000 locals to evacuate their farms so far. The Ministry of Civil Affairs' disaster preparedness division has reported that total damages have reached a record RMB 3.17 billion (USD 381.9 million). In addition, 510,000 hectares of farmland have been flooded.

The floods season in China has therefore officially started. According to the state flood control and drought relief division, weather forecasts predict this season's floods will be much bigger than previous years. This has increasingly burdened the farmers living in the remote mountain areas of Hunan and Guizhou provinces. Millions of farmers in these two provinces living under the poverty level have difficulty coping with daily life, which is now aggravated by floods that have damaged their livestock and houses.

Floods however are not the only disasters unsettling the country, as two tornadoes ripped through northeast China's Liaoning province over the last weekend. The first tornado on 10 June ravaged Chaoyang county, killing eight and injuring 31. A consecutive one on 11 June left a trail of damage in Wulanheshuo township, also of Chaoyang county, leaving 450 people affected, 200 houses devastated and 400 heads of domestic animals dead.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In Ning'an city, Heilongjiang province, the local branch of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has begun relief operations to provide rice, quilts, clothes, disinfectant and clean water to the affected people. The provincial Red Cross branch is conducting local fundraising for the affected population, and more relief items are on the way to the disaster areas. The head of the Heilongjiang Red Cross branch arrived in the affected area on the same day as the disaster and is working with the local Red Cross team to provide relief support to beneficiaries.



Photo: A RCSC branch representative looks on at the devastation caused by floods in Taizimiao, the most affected township in Hunan.

The RCSC headquarters has sent a team with Federation field representatives to visit the flood-affected areas in Hunan province. It has been reported that communication and electricity and transportation systems have been temporarily re-established in Taizimiao township, the most affected township in Hunan, from 9 June. Some bridges were under construction and roads were temporarily diverted. New electricity and telephones poles with new wires were visible, symbolizing the government of China's crucial role in responding to the immediate needs of the flood-affected people. The re-establishment of such facilities ensures adequate and timely rescue and relief by RCSC and other authorities. According to the flood-affected, they are happy with the support and services provided by RCSC and the local government. The victims, especially those who have lost their houses, have been relocated to a school building, while some who have been hospitalized for health problems are staying with their families in the local hospital in Taizimiao. Medical teams have been mobilized by the RCSC, with the support of the local public health authorities. To ensure proper hygiene and environmental safety, disinfectant is being sprayed on a daily basis. The RCSC has also distributed quilts, blankets, clothes, tents and medicines, based on the needs and the degree to which the families are affected.

The Federation's regional delegation and RCSC headquarters in Beijing are monitoring the situation closely and will continue to provide updates on the situation as it evolves.

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

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