

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: TAMIL NADU FLASH FLOODS

28 November 2005

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 Bulletin (no. 01/2005) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

The southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu is experiencing widespread flooding following heavy rain over the past two weeks. Over 2 million people have been affected and the official death toll currently stands at 162. Low lying areas in the south coastal districts of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry have been affected. The Tamil Nadu state capital, Chennai, has also been hit by floods.

Two of the worst affected districts in the state are Cuddalore and Nagapattinam. In Cuddalore, 100 villages have been inundated, affecting some 200,000 people. In Nagapattinam, which was hard hit by the tsunami of 26 December 2004, 42 villages have been severely affected.

Officials report that nearly 750,000 people remain marooned by the flood waters, while approximately 100,000 dwellings have either been destroyed or damaged.

The main bridge connecting Chidambaram in Cuddalore district and Sirkali in Nagapattinam has been submerged. Many roads within the district have been breached by the flood waters, disrupting the flow of traffic. Several rail routes have been shut down or diverted, exacerbating the situation of the public transportation system.

There has been significant damage to agriculture with more than 500,000 ha of rice crops affected, of which 280,000 ha have been severely damaged.

The following are details of known damaged structures :

- 3,692 km of highway roads;
- 589 km of municipality roads;
- 5,506 km of rural roads; and
- 2,279 culverts and bridges.

The Indian government has launched a rescue and relief operation, announcing a relief package of approximately CHF 141 million (USD 108 million or EUR 91 million). In Cuddalore, the military has been deployed for relief and rescue operations. Evacuees are being given shelter in government and public buildings which are now operating as relief camps.

Across the state, more than 960,000 people have been evacuated and are living in 1,227 shelters or centres (these include public buildings, halls etc).

In Nagapattinam some 50,000 people have been evacuated and are currently staying in schools, community halls and other public buildings. The government is providing food and relief items, while operating 17 relief camps in the district. The largest relief centre is located in Puthur Polytechnic, housing around 5,000 people.

Tamil Nadu is still experiencing bad weather and further showers were forecast for this week.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Indian Red Cross district branches of Madurai, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam have been responding to the situation for the past two weeks. The volunteers in these districts have been mobilized and are assisting local authorities in running camps by providing cooked food and maintaining hygiene. In some of the camps, the volunteers are also providing dry food packets.

The Indian Red Cross chairperson visited the affected areas where the branches are operating and oversaw relief item distributions. The relief items distributed were mobilized from the national society regional warehouse in the neighbouring state of Maharashtra. The relief items distributed are as follows:

Item	Amount
Rice	8 tonnes
Blankets	1,000 pieces
Saris (women's clothing)	1,000 pieces
Dhotis (men's clothing)	1,000 pieces
Towels	1,000 pieces
Candles	200 sticks
Soap	400 bars
Detergent	1,000 packets
Torches	500 units (including 1,000 batteries)

The Indian Red Cross district and state teams are sharing information and coordinating with the government to help the affected people.

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