

# 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 183 countries.*

### In Brief

*This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.*

Hundreds of thousands of people in a total of nine provinces across southern and central China have been displaced by severe floods which have consumed entire villages since the final week of May. Floods and typhoons are frequent and annual occurrences in China, as such the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has developed established response mechanisms to ensure delivery of assistance to affected individuals. With provincial branches already responding locally to the needs, RCSC headquarters is providing technical and material support to branches in the affected areas.

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### The Situation

Hundreds of thousands of people across southern and central China have been displaced by severe floods which have consumed entire villages since the final week of May, while river overflow and flash floods down mountains stripped of trees due to farming and logging are causing deadly landslides. China's National Disaster Reduction Centre of the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) is reporting flood damage in: Chongqing, Fujian, Hunan, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Guizhou, Guangdong, Sichuan and Zhejiang.

According to the latest available statistics from the country's ministry of Civil Affairs, the number of flood related deaths has risen from 96 as of 31 May to 155 due to the unusually turbulent weather. According to the Office of State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters, although the country is only in its second week of what is regarded as the traditional flood season, natural disasters have already caused RMB 13 billion (USD 1.6 billion; EUR 1.26 billion) in direct economic loss. As China's rural poor struggles with the discomfort, disruption and emotional upset of coping with the floods, the impact of the floods on China's rural poor and those who are struggling to emerge from poverty will remain long after the waters recede. For those people living on the edge,

who lack the resources for recovery the loss of their homes or crops can easily cause them to slide back into poverty.

The UNDP's 2005 China Human Development Report identified natural disasters, such as floods, as an important cause of poverty in China's central and western areas, as well as the country's mountainous and minority-inhabited regions. For subsistence farmers, the loss of a season's crops means a season of borrowing food from neighbours and friends, while damage to walls or a hole in the roof means a colder winter. A majority of the thousands of families who have lost their homes or crops, and are camped on the floors of schools or in tents face a number of unknowns as they will have to overcome a number of daunting factors which accompany poverty to rebuild their homes.

Details surrounding the extent of damage in the most severely affected provinces to date are provided below.

### **Fujian**

According to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, a series of severe rain storms which have struck Fujian since late May have left hundreds of thousands homeless. As of Friday 10 June severe floods in Fujian have left 25 people dead and 5 missing. Approximately three million people have been affected by the storms, due to factors such as the destruction of property and the loss of crops. Since the end of May, at least 45 people have been killed by floods, landslides and mud/rock flows there. Heavy rains have led to the heaviest floods in thirty years along Fujian's Min river, a major route for trade and transport in eastern China

The floods come as a particularly severe blow for the province where it was only under a month ago that 300,000 people were evacuated in Fujian and 320,000 people were evacuated along the coast of Guangdong Province in response to typhoon Chanchu which struck China on 18 May.

### **Guangxi**

Some 220,000 people in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region have been relocated following severe rainstorms in 16 cities and counties, during the first two weeks of June. 14 people have died and many more have been injured due to the floods which have destroyed 1,795 homes. Heavy rains in Wuzhou on Thursday 9 June triggered landslides, mud flows and flash floods in the hilly area leaving 14 people dead and 27 others injured. A total of 877 residents were evacuated from their homes on Saturday 11 June bringing the number of evacuees from the city's flood-affected areas to 100,000. According to the latest reports from the Wuzhou municipal government, those people displaced by the floods are living in local schools or temporary shelters on high ground.

### **Guangdong**

In Guangdong Province, more than 7,000 residents were evacuated after landslides damaged homes a. At the same time, Leizhou Peninsula in the southwestern part of the province is reporting the worst drought in the area in 60 years. According to the director of the Leizhou Meteorological Bureau, "the drought has greatly affected water use for farms and led to insufficient drinking water supplies."

### **Guizhou**

The state media is reporting that flash floods and landslides on 12 and 13 June left at least 17 dead and 25 missing after torrential rain caused flash floods and landslides in Guizhou province.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs declared a state of emergency in Guizhou's mountainous Qianxinan prefecture late Tuesday afternoon and is still trying to get reports from outlying areas. Reports released by the Xinhua news agency said at least 17 people died and 25 were missing in the worst-hit county of Wangmo.

## Hunan

On Thursday 15 June, 44,000 people were evacuated following torrential rains which commenced on 11 June in Hunan Province. Latest reports indicate that two people have died and one is missing following the floods. According to the Hunan Provincial Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters rains which have covered 198,000 square kilometers in the province caused a rise in the water level of many sections of the Xiangjiang River, the largest in the province, leading to flooding in 204 townships in nine counties.

## Hubei and Jiangxi

Thousands of homes in central China have been destroyed, 37,000 people have been displaced and 21 people have died due to overwhelming floods in Hubei and Jiangxi.

Heavy rains during the first week of June completely destroyed or substantially damaged rooms in 16,000 homes in Jiangxi province and 11,000 homes in neighbouring Hubei province, where the Ministry of Civil Affairs reports that 37,000 people were evacuated.

In Jiangxi 345 townships were affected by the floods over the previous week. Floods also affected Hubei's capital city Wuhan resulting in 2 deaths while destroying 518 homes and damaging 6,811 others with local government agencies distributing bedding and other emergency supplies in the most affected areas of the two provinces.

## Drought

The impact that this year's floods is having on the rural poor in these provinces is exacerbated by the sad irony that while many are losing their livelihoods due to too much water, many are suffering a sustained drought which has affected 10.4 million hectares of cropland nationwide. According to the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters the drought has created a shortage of drinking water for 7.34 million people and 6.75 million heads of livestock. 8.6 million hectares of land in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces in North China have been affected, accounting for 83 percent of the total area suffering drought leading to the drying up of 370 reservoirs. Other seasonal hazards include severe winds and hail which destroyed 608 houses in Anhui Province's Tongshan Township on 11 June.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Floods and typhoons are frequent and annual occurrences in China, as such the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has developed established response mechanisms to ensure delivery of assistance to affected individuals. When disaster strikes RCSC branches at the provincial and local levels immediately launch local appeals for funding and items such as warm clothing to assist flood victims. With provincial branches already responding locally to the needs, RCSC headquarters is providing technical and material support to the branches in the affected areas.

Responding to the exceptionally destructive floods in Fujian, a joint assessment team led by the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, representatives from six government ministries, and representatives from RCSC headquarters conducted a field visit to the most heavily affected areas in Fujian province on 8 June. The RCSC has provided RMB 300,000 (USD 37,500) worth of relief items (clothes, mosquito nets, disinfectants, water purification tablets) for distribution by the RCSC's Fujian provincial branch in the affected areas.

The increasing impact of seasonal floods, such as has been seen thus far in 2006, has been incorporated into the RCSC's overall approach to disaster management. The RCSC in partnership with the Federation is currently building on existing vulnerability reduction projects and introducing new community based disaster preparedness activities into vulnerable villages in Guangxi and Hunan. Partner Red Cross national societies, such as the British Red Cross are working with the RCSC in 2006 to expand the number of villages in Hunan which are vested with proper mitigation skills and resources at the community level. There is no doubt that the increasing frequency and scale of floods in China has confirmed an urgent need to increase preparedness activities, as highlighted in a

statement about the importance of prevention activities made this week by the country's Vice-Premier and director of the Country's State Flood Control who also underscored the importance of the special needs in China's numerous mountainous areas.

Both floods and drought inhibit communities' access to potable water. Ongoing RCSC water and sanitation projects initiated in cooperation with Red Cross partners such as the American, Netherlands and Norwegian Red Cross as well as the Federation, which work with communities in: drought affected provinces such as Heilongjiang, Jilin, Ningxia, Liaoning and Shanxi; provinces facing floods and droughts such as Guangxi; and, flood prone areas in Chongqing and Sichuan are all contributing to strengthening the capacity of poor rural communities to have access to clean water.

In 2005, the International Federation supported the RCSC with providing relief assistance to five provinces of which three out of those five provinces (Jiangxi, Guangxi and Chongqing) are as described above already reporting heavy losses in 2006. Recognising the critical need to supplement short-term relief assistance and continue to develop the capacity of these branches, disaster managers from provincial, prefecture and county level branches in five provinces which over the past decade have been repeatedly hit by floods, such as Jiangxi, Chongqing and Guangxi will participate in a concentrated training course that incorporates the Federation's existing disaster response tools.

Over the past week, an interview with the Director of the RCSC's Project Management Office was broadcast on CNN international highlighting the RCSC's disaster response activities and approach, while on 9 June the Federation's Head of Regional Delegation conducted a live interview on BBC world.

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*The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve 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.

*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 \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

***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>***