

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: COMMUNAL UNREST IN GUJARAT

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 56,180

This operation has been concluded and reported through the quarterly DREF update. However, if any evolving circumstances demand, information bulletins and/or the regular updates in the India earthquake rehabilitation operation (appeal no 20/01) will be published.

The Situation

The communal violence that ripped through quake-stricken Gujarat may appear to have ended, but the ruin it brought to thousands continues. The violence, sparked by a train attack in Gujarat in February in which 58 people were killed, has claimed at least 1,000 lives and rendered 100,000 homeless. According to the authorities, 377 people are still missing.

Six months of rioting have not only disrupted the livelihoods of the people and business activities in the state, but at the same time substantially hampered the rehabilitation efforts for the quake-hit population. Reconstruction projects have been the worst affected. The state has begun to return to normal, including the commercial hub of Ahmedabad which witnessed the worst of the violence. Nonetheless, at least four communal clashes were reported this month, even on the night before the newly elected president of the country started his two day visit in Gujarat on 12 August. With the ongoing discussions over early elections in the state, a constant fear of a communal backlash among people in Gujarat is being reported. The situation remains volatile. In the meantime, a number of relief camps remain open to the displaced, such as the Shah Alam in Ahmedabad which had housed some 10,000 person at its peak. Many are returning to rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

As previously reported, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) Gujarat state and district branches responded quickly since the communal unrest erupted. Hundreds of Red Cross volunteers were mobilized to provide immediate relief and medical assistance to the riot victims in the temporary shelters. The operation was greatly extended with resources from the IRCS national headquarters and the release of CHF 56,180 from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The emergency phase of the operation effectively concluded on 20 March 2002.

Meanwhile, in recognition of the IRCS's responsiveness and unique capacity to provide relief in such extreme ethnic-sensitive circumstances, the government of India sanctioned a grant of 10 million India rupees (CHF 370,000) from the prime minister's office in March, followed by another 10 million in April to address the growing needs of the riot victims to rebuild their lives and livelihood.

The IRCS programme implementation committee composed of representatives from the national headquarters, Gujarat state and Ahmedabad district branches, visited various camps and assessed the needs of the victims. Two phases of the operation have been decided for implementation.

Phase one of the rehabilitation operation immediately extended from the emergency operation and started with the distribution of clothes, bed sheets, towels, hygiene kits, emergency rations and some household items to 12,247 families in 38 camps in Ahmedabad. Medicines, bleaching powder, water tanks, recreational items and books were also provided to the relief camps. The first phase ended on 19 April while the second phase provided household and livelihood kits as well as roofing material to the displaced families who were leaving the camps in an effort to rebuild their homes in the riot stricken districts of Panchmahal, Dahood, Anand, Kheda, Sabarjantha, Mehsana, Vadodra and Bhawanagar.

Household kits, including hygiene items, bed sheets, basic kitchen utensils, buckets and stoves were distributed to 6,192 families in the eight districts during May and June. As the procurement of the livelihood kits is time-consuming, the distribution started only in August. The same families were provided with roofing material as well as a livelihood kits varying from a sewing machine, bicycle repair kit, electrician kit, carpenter kit, automobile kit, food or pickle making machine. 56 first aid boxes were also distributed to the district branches. The entire operation for the riot victims came to an end on 27 August.

Since the emergency phase, Red Cross volunteers including those recruited and trained from the relief camps as well as the IRCS field workers under the Gujarat earthquake program were actively involved in the selection of beneficiaries and distribution of relief materials. Moreover, teams of government doctors had continued to provide medical assistance to the camp residents under the banner of Red Cross until mid June with medicines, paramedical staff and transport facilities from the IRCS.

Despite subsequent delays caused to the existing earthquake programmes, the successful implementation of the relief operation, benefited particularly from the earthquake operation, has earned IRCS good respect from the communities of various ethnic background and strengthened the society's mobilization capacity to cope with future disturbances through matured community approaches and good prospect of volunteer development.

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

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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](http://www.ifrc.org)

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

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