

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

AFGHANISTAN: WINTER AND 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 (no. 01/2006) 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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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations \(NGO's\) 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>

The situation

There has been widespread heavy snowfall in Kabul and across many other areas of Afghanistan since 1 January. Temperatures have plummeted to as low as -22 degrees Celsius. To date, 18 centimetres of snow has fallen around Kabul city, while an estimated metre of snow has fallen in the surrounding mountains as well as in the northern regions, such as Badakhshan Baghlan and other provinces.

Additionally, 25 houses in the Dehdadi district of Balkh province and the Imam Shaib Khurd district of Sur-i-Pul province have been completely destroyed by heavy rains and the melting of the snow on 27 and 29 December respectively. An estimated 130 families are believed to be affected by the rain and flood.

Red Cross Red Crescent action

The Afghan Red Crescent Society's (ARCS) recent emergency development, based on the lessons learnt from experiences of the past two emergency operations ([severe winter 05EA003](#) and [spring flood 05EA005](#)), is focusing on strengthening the capacity of communities to prepare for and respond to disasters. To support this process, the



A boy stands next to a partially destroyed building as Kabul experiences its first snow fall in winter. Photo: Reuters/Ahmad Masood, courtesy of www.alertnet.org.

national society is improving its planning, procedures and coordination of its programmes, as well as identifying the risks and raising community awareness of potential hazards, such as winterization (snowfall), floods and earthquakes, and explaining how to mitigate them. The national society is also pre-positioning relief stocks in high risk areas.

The ARCS is recognized at all levels, from national to grass-root (local communities, Shura, national, provincial and district level), and is fully recognized and is represented in the national commission on disaster management (NCDM). The NCDM is the coordination cell where the national society has the opportunity to play a productive role in national disaster preparedness planning as well as coordination and advocacy, in particular the inter-ministerial forum which meets on ad-hoc basis during emergency situations.

In the central region, the ARCS is currently participating in national working groups formed for the national winterization contingency plan and implementation for 2006. This process is led by the office of the second vice-president of the country, with support from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the ministries. However, cooperation and coordination with the different disaster management stakeholders, in particular with the department for disaster management (DDP), the ministry of rural rehabilitation and development (MRRD) and the ministry for repatriation and returnees (MRR), as well as UNAMA, UN agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs) are equally vital.

Currently, the ARCS has been in coordination with MRRD, MRR, UNAMA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the winterization programme for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and repatriates for the next three months.

The ARCS plan is to provide non-food items to 2,509 families settled in the different camps in Kabul city. The national society will also provide non-food items to another 2,400 vulnerable families, including 800 families in Kabul city and another 1,600 families in various districts of Kabul province. For the 11 high-risk provinces in the southern region, non-food items will be provided for 7,491 affected and vulnerable families. These non-food items will be provided by the UNDP and UNAMA, and ARCS will be implementing the programme.

ARCS, with support from the Federation, have distributed 25 tents as well as non-food items to the families affected by the floods in Balkh and Sur-i-Pul provinces.

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