

Red Cross and Red Crescent Response in China

Immediately after the quake struck, the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) began to mobilize a relief operation for this disaster. The American Red Cross has been in touch with the RCSC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and stands prepared to provide including relief supplies, delegates or financial assistance, as needed.

The RCSC immediately mobilized its staff and volunteers, as well as relief supplies, such as tents, quilts and other materials. Already, volunteers and staff from the RCSC have been distributing food, water and tents to people in the affected area. Assessment teams are on the ground to determine the extent of the damage.

On May 12, the International Federation allocated nearly US \$240,000 from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) to help the RCSC deliver immediate assistance.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Response in Myanmar

Immediately following the storm, the Myanmar Red Cross began assessing the damage as well as caring for survivors' needs by distributing family kits, containing clothing, blankets, cookware and hygiene supplies, and drinking water to the schools and pagodas serving as emergency shelters.

The American Red Cross has contributed \$250,000 to relief efforts and is prepared assist the Myanmar Red Cross with additional aid and supplies, estimated at \$1.25 million.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has successfully shipped shelter kits, made up of tarps, ropes and hammers, and jerry cans for storing clean water to the Myanmar Red Cross, who is partnering with UNICEF to distribute to the hardest hit areas of the coastal delta region.

The American Red Cross and International Federation will continue to tap into their pre-stocked emergency supplies – such as tarps, hygiene kits and insecticide-treated bed nets – located in warehouses in Kuala Lumpur and Dubai as requested.

The American Red Cross is in close contact with its colleagues at the Myanmar Red Cross and the International Federation. We continue to monitor the situation, assess the needs of survivors and stand prepared to offer additional assistance as future needs are identified.

Restoring Family Links in China and Myanmar

Concerned family and friends in the United States may have difficulty contacting their loved ones as a result of telecommunication outages caused by this disaster.

If you are trying to reach relatives living in China or Myanmar who are citizens of China or Myanmar, the American Red Cross suggests you keep calling or try contacting other family members who live nearby.

Inquiries concerning U.S. citizens living or traveling in China or Myanmar should be referred to the U.S. Department of State at 1-888-407-4747.

How to Support the Relief Effort

Every day people around the world are suffering from disasters, like the cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in China. You can help those affected by this crisis and countless others around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster please do so at the time of your donation by either contacting 1-800-HELP NOW or mailing your donation, with the designation, to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Collection of Goods and Individual Items

Unsolicited, spontaneous donations of goods and services from individuals and community groups, though well intentioned, have hidden costs and pose a number of complications for relief efforts. For these reasons, *the Red Cross is unable to accept any large collections of items, such as used clothing, hygiene items, furniture, toys, and canned goods. Nor are we able to accept small, individual donations of these items.*

Why does the Red Cross discourage donations of collected goods and individual items for disaster relief?

- Collections of items require valuable and scarce resources such as time, money, and personnel to sort, clean, and distribute them, which come at the expense of the emergency activities relief workers are attempting to perform. The Red Cross has neither the resources, nor the logistical set-up, to properly handle these types of donations, and therefore cannot accept them.
- In addition, because we have no way of knowing what spontaneous individual donations or unsolicited collections of items will consist of, we cannot ensure there will be enough of a particular item to distribute it equitably, or if the donated products will even be appropriate for the relief effort.
- Shipping donated goods is also costly and particularly difficult in the aftermath of a disaster, as inroads into disaster sites are often damaged or impassable, and easily clogged with shipments of non-priority items. The Red Cross makes every

attempt to procure items locally to save money by minimizing transportation and storage costs. Local procurement also ensures that the items distributed to disaster victims are appropriate for their culture and diet.

Where can donations of collected goods and individual items be most effective?

Individual donations of goods and collections of items are put to their best possible use, and have the greatest impact economically, when they are donated to local charitable organizations within your own community. Donating locally eliminates transportation costs and ensures disaster workers are not overwhelmed with sorting unsolicited donations and are free to perform priority relief activities. Because these local agencies are not operating in the crisis environment that characterizes disaster relief, the charity will have the time sort, clean, and repair goods and identify how and where they can be most beneficial.