

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

PAKISTAN: STORM

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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 185 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin (no. 01/2007) 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.

Summary: A severe storm in the city of Karachi, in Sindh province of southern Pakistan, over the weekend has reportedly claimed about 200 lives. The majority of fatalities and injuries were due to flying debris, collapsed walls and electrocution due to fallen power lines. Further bad weather is forecasted and the rural areas of Sindh and the neighbouring province of Baluchistan are preparing for heavy rain. Fishermen have been warned not to venture out to sea.

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society's provincial branch in Sindh has so far responded with ambulance services in Karachi. With a focus to assist vulnerable rural communities to prepare for further bad weather, the provincial branch has deployed four branch disaster response teams, as a precautionary measure, to areas in the districts of Thatta and Badin. The Baluchistan provincial branch is also mobilising staff and volunteers in coastal areas.

For further information specifically related to this operation please see [contact details](#) on the last page.

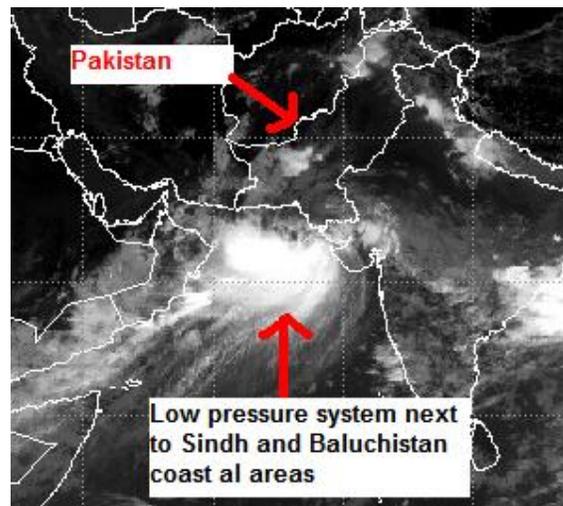
The Situation

About 200 people have reportedly been killed as a result of a severe storm that hit the city of Karachi, in Sindh province of southern Pakistan, over the weekend.

Government officials confirm at least 65 deaths in Karachi, as a result of the storm. However, private ambulance services report that many more bodies are being collected, which would push the death toll to more than 200 people.

Heavy rain and high winds began lashing the city on Saturday, 23rd June (at around 1700 hours local time), and continued through to Sunday, 24th June. On the day of reporting, conditions had eased and the rain has stopped, though more bad weather is forecasted by the Pakistan meteorological department.

Many of the deaths and injuries resulted from collapsed roofs, flying debris such as billboards, uprooted trees and electrocution due to fallen power lines. There was power failure in the central city for 12 hours and a number of suburbs were still without electricity on the day of reporting.



Courtesy: Pakistan meteorological department

Further bad weather is forecasted and the rural areas of Sindh and the neighbouring province of Baluchistan, to the west, are expected to be hit by heavy rains. According to the Pakistan meteorological department, Karachi can also expect further moderate-to-heavy rainfall over the next few days and fishermen have been warned not to venture out to sea until after 27th June. The forecast for Baluchistan is for scattered heavy-to-very heavy rainfall, especially in coastal areas and, as sea conditions are expected to be rough, fishermen are being advised not to venture out to sea between 25th and 28th June.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Sindh provincial branch of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in Karachi was already involved in responding to a large fire in a commercial building in the central part of the city, when the storm hit. The six ambulances with attending medical staff that assisted local authorities in the fire response and transported 18 injured people and four bodies to local hospitals, on Sunday were dispatched to various locations in the city to assist people affected by the storm and transported 12 injured persons and two bodies to hospitals.

The focus of the Sindh provincial branch headquarters now is on assisting vulnerable rural communities to prepare for further bad weather. Three teams consisting of 12 persons (including six provincial headquarters staff members and 30 local volunteers) are already in place in the district of Thatta. Disaster preparedness stocks of non-food items (such as tents, tarpaulins and kitchen sets) for up to 400 families have been put on standby. Another team of four provincial headquarters staff members and 30 volunteers has been deployed to the district of Badin.

In both Badin and Thatta districts, the PRCS is capitalizing on community based disaster preparedness training conducted with communities there late last year. The community volunteers are informing local people of how to prepare in the event of bad weather, and will also coordinate evacuations if required.

The PRCS's provincial branch in Baluchistan is also preparing for the forecasted bad weather. It has alerted its' disaster management cell in the coastal town of Hub Chauki in the south-east of the province. The Hub Chauki branch disaster management officer and 30 volunteers, on Sunday, began alerting local fishermen about the bad weather, urging them not to go to sea and remain in their homes. There is no evacuation order from local authorities at this stage.

The Baluchistan provincial branch headquarters in Quetta have disaster preparedness stocks for 2,000 families ready to be dispatched, if required. Alternatively, stocks can be accessed from the Sindh provincial branch in Karachi, which is geographically closer. The district branches of Sibi and Jafarabad, further to the north in Baluchistan, have been put on alert to be ready to provide assistance to coastal areas, if required.

Coordination

The secretary of the Sindh provincial branch is coordinating with the local authorities in Karachi, and the branch has set up a 24-hour control room to assist in this process. The Sindh local government has established a control room headed by the district coordination officer.

The Baluchistan provincial branch headquarters in Quetta is liaising with the provincial relief commissioner while the Hub Chauki branch is in touch with the local authorities there.

The PRCS national headquarters and the Federation's Pakistan delegation are liaising with the Sindh and Baluchistan branches and monitoring the situation.

How we work

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.

<p>The Federation's Global Agenda</p> <p>The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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