

## American Red Cross Increases Aid to Flood-Ravaged Pakistan

*Financial support and relief supplies totaling \$1 million sent*

**WASHINGTON, Thursday, August 19, 2010** — As flood waters threaten to engulf new communities in the south of Pakistan, the American Red Cross is increasing its support to \$1 million to help families affected by the worst flooding in that country in more than 80 years.

"The extent of the devastation is massive, with the Pakistan government now estimating 20 million people are significantly affected by the floods," says David Meltzer, senior vice president of international services for the American Red Cross. "With food supplies and crops destroyed, millions of people will need food aid, water and emergency relief for months to come."

Thousands of Pakistan Red Crescent volunteers continue to distribute relief items, reaching approximately 350,000 people since the flooding started. And all of their available mobile emergency units are out in flood-affected communities and have now provided medical care to more than 30,000 people across the country.

The global Red Cross and Red Crescent network estimates that, in the near term, at least 6 million people will need emergency humanitarian assistance, in the form of safe water, tents and shelter materials, and medical help.

According to the United Nations, waterborne diseases continue to pose a risk to millions of people, especially children, living in the flood-affected areas. Contaminated water and the lack of medication are causing some of the main flood-related illnesses, such as respiratory tract infections and diarrhea, to be potentially deadly. Snake bites have also become a major medical issue.

In the northwest of the country, where the flash floods first struck, the waters have receded in many places and the devastation resembles an earthquake more than a flood, with bridges collapsed and houses destroyed. In the south, much of the affected area is still underwater, but hundreds of villages and countless thousands of acres of standing crops are still submerged, and the waters may not recede fully for more than a year.

Until now the American Red Cross had already pledged \$250,000 for Pakistan relief – \$150,000 worth of tarps, blankets and kitchen items as well as \$100,000 in immediate financial support.

### **About the American Red Cross:**

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.*



A watch maker in Nowshera, Pakistan returns to find his home and shop destroyed by flood waters. **Olav A. Saltbones/Norwegian Red Cross**