



American Red Cross

# International Connection

September/October 2009

News about the international work of the American Red Cross

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**Samoa Islands tsunami:** On September 29, an 8.0 earthquake in the Pacific Ocean generated tsunami waves in American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga, killing more than 170 people. The American Red Cross mobilized 90 volunteers in American Samoa to provide food, water and relief supplies, as well as tracing services for families separated during the disaster. In Samoa, the Red Cross mobilized 200 volunteers to distribute relief items, provide tracing services for separated families and support camps sheltering the homeless, with the goal of assisting 15,000 people; the American Red Cross committed \$100,000 in cash support.

## Red Cross Meets Disaster Needs Across Southeast Asia and the Pacific

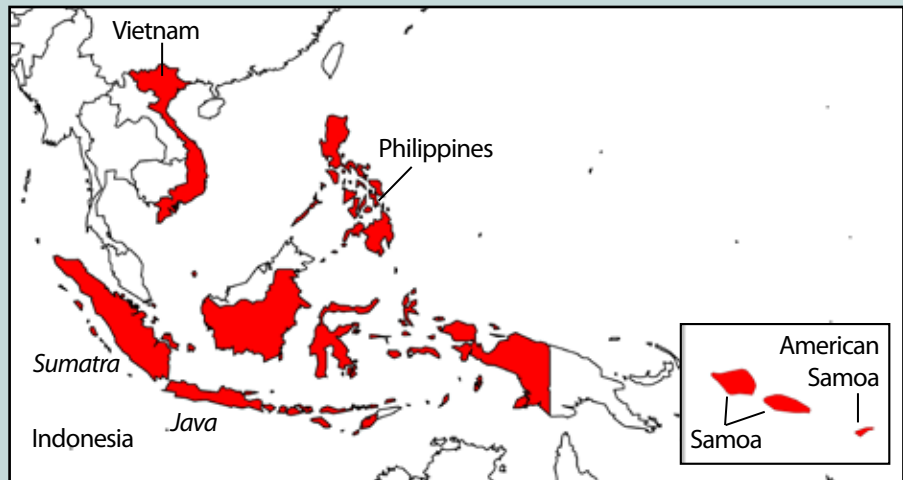
Recent weeks have seen typhoons, earthquakes and tsunamis taking a toll across Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The global Red Cross network has been on the ground meeting the needs of survivors.

**Indonesia earthquakes:** On September 2, a 7.3 earthquake hit western Java island killing 79 people. A month later, 7.6 and 6.6 earthquakes struck central Sumatra island, killing more than 1,100 people and extensively damaging infrastructure. The Red Cross mobilized over 600 volunteers to support evacuations, provide first aid and ambulance services, and distribute food, water and relief supplies, with a goal of helping 100,000 people. The American Red Cross deployed a disaster specialist and provided \$500,000 to meet emergency needs, including relief supplies from our regional warehouse in Malaysia.



Red Cross volunteers unload relief items in central Sumatra, Indonesia.

Ahmad Husein/IFRC



**Philippines and Vietnam typhoons:** From September 26 to 29, Typhoon Ketsana hit areas of the Philippines and Vietnam, causing nearly 400 deaths and affecting 7 million people in what was deemed the worst flooding in more than 40 years. On October 3, Typhoon Parma caused additional damage in the Philippines. Thousands of Red Cross volunteers worked in search and rescue operations and are providing shelter, food, relief items, psychosocial support and first aid to assist more than 300,000 people. The American Red Cross has deployed a disaster responder specializing in shelter and is providing more than \$500,000 to meet emergency needs, including mobilizing relief supplies from our regional warehouse in Malaysia.

## From the Field: Making a Difference in Indonesia

by Hortensia Vidauri

*Hortensia works for the American Red Cross Tsunami Recovery Program as Head of Office, in Calang, Indonesia. The American Red Cross received more than \$581 million from the public in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. Over the past five years, the American Red Cross has helped more than 3 million survivors recover and rebuild.*

Some weeks ago I was coming back from lunch and on the side of the road I saw three little girls playing in the water coming out of a fire hydrant. As I watched these girls playing, I had to smile and think to myself, this is what it's all about.

I have been working for the American Red Cross, on and off, for 10 years. Since 2007, I have been the Head of Office in Calang, Indonesia. The Calang office is part of the American Red Cross Indonesia delegation, which was set up to respond to the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004. Leading a team of 124 local and international staff, I oversee the implementation of five projects in Aceh Jaya District, Indonesia.

The fire hydrant I passed that day after lunch is one of the most tangible results of the work the American Red Cross has carried out in Calang. Our Urban Water Supply and Sanitation Project is building new infrastructure which is bringing water to more than 6,000 Calang residents from a spring source more than 30 kilometers away. In order to ensure sustainability of this major infrastructure project, the American Red Cross also helped government authorities create a body that will operate and maintain the system going forward.

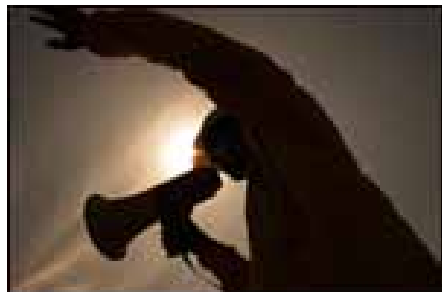


Hortensia Vidauri/American Red Cross

*On a hot day in Calang, Indonesia, three young girls play in water that has travelled more than 30 km to reach them. Prior to the Indian Ocean Tsunami, Calang did not have this type of water system. Today, water flows from a spring source through a transmission pipeline and distribution network, both built by the American Red Cross, directly to households in Calang.*

To me, the hard work of our Water and Sanitation Teams and all the support staff was represented in the smiles of these three little girls playing blissfully in water that had traveled more than 30 kilometers to reach them. At times, I get so absorbed by day to day work, the technicalities of the projects, and the challenges of implementation, but seeing something like this makes it all worth it. As I drive around Calang and observe scenes like this, it is proof to me that the Red Cross is impacting lives.

For more information on the Tsunami Recovery Program, go to [Redcross.org/tsunami](http://Redcross.org/tsunami).



### October 14: International Day for Risk Reduction

Every year on October 11th, the world marks the International Day for Risk Reduction.

Reducing disaster risk is a priority for everyone in the global Red Cross network. By tackling vulnerability, the risk of disaster can significantly be reduced, and safer and more resilient communities can be built.

The Red Cross does this through a combination of disaster preparedness and community-led mitigation measures. To read about American Red Cross international work in disaster preparedness, go to [Redcross.org/international](http://Redcross.org/international). To read stories of

how Red Cross disaster preparedness programs have reduced risk and saved lives in countries around the world, visit the International Federation's website at [www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/reducing/day.asp](http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/reducing/day.asp).

## Asia: Where Disasters Are a Fact of Life



Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

Children in Calang, Indonesia practice a disaster simulation so they know what to do in an emergency. Calang lost approximately 70 percent of its population when the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami struck.

### American Red Cross Joins Partnership in Asia to Prepare Communities for Disasters

Since 1998, the Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response, or PEER, has strengthened disaster response institutions in Asia's most disaster-prone regions to save lives and property. The American Red Cross recently joined the PEER partnership as a new partner, and through the network of Red Cross societies in Asia will be bringing PEER's disaster preparedness training and support directly to community volunteers for the first time. This builds on the disaster preparedness work the American Red Cross is doing with the Tsunami Recovery Program. Read more about this new partnership on [Redcross.org](http://Redcross.org).

International Federation

#### Fast Fact: American Red Cross in Asia

Did you know that the American Red Cross works in 19 countries in Asia supporting disaster management and disease prevention?

Learn more about our Asia programs on our Asia region overview page at [RedCross.org/international](http://RedCross.org/international).

Asia is an intensely disaster-prone region, faced with tremendous risk from sudden-onset natural disasters, including cyclones, earthquakes, flooding and volcanic eruptions. In 2008, out of 354 disasters around the globe, 40% were in Asia. Compounding this risk is the vulnerability of large, densely-packed populations, many of them living in rapidly urbanizing areas, or near large bodies of water, fault lines or volcanic areas.

This combination of risk and vulnerability magnifies the effects of disasters in Asia, and requires larger and more complex disaster responses. As one example, in May 2008, Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and the powerful earthquake in China's Sichuan province affected more than 45 million people in a two-week period.

With natural disasters a fact of life in Asia, Red Cross national societies have a lot of experience with disasters and tend to have strong response capacities. Beyond that, the frequency and magnitude of disasters and the growing awareness of the impact that climate change has made Asian governments, Red Cross national societies, and communities increasingly aware of the need to combine strong risk reduction and preparedness measures with strong response. The American Red Cross stands ready to assist Asian Red Cross national societies on a moment's notice, and is increasingly involved in supporting risk reduction and preparedness (see left).



Volunteers from the Myanmar Red Cross provide relief supplies by boat following Cyclone Nargis in 2008.

## New Web Site Makes Teaching Exploring Humanitarian Law Easier

We are thrilled to invite you to visit the redesigned Web site for the American Red Cross Exploring Humanitarian Law (EHL) curriculum at [Redcross.org/ehl](http://Redcross.org/ehl). The site features more than 30 hours of activities that will help middle and high school teachers challenge students to explore complicated issues related to war and the rights and protections of those impacted.

Designed to fit into a wide range of courses, such as social studies, history, world literature and civics, the toolkit on the new EHL website provides an array of primary source materials that help students understand the rules governing war, and their impact on human life and dignity. The modular format allows teachers to use the curriculum in whole or in part and integrate resources seamlessly into current lesson plans, including news accounts, testimonials, photos, videos and case studies that bring real events and people to life in the classroom.

Explore the newly launched EHL Web site and get started – it's free! Please let teachers and others know about this important resource, and contact us with any comments, questions or suggestions at [ehl@usa.redcross.org](mailto:ehl@usa.redcross.org).



## American Red Cross Expands First Aid Courses in the Americas



Participants practice first aid skills during a recent training.

At the request of our Red Cross partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, the American Red Cross recently offered a series of first aid and CPR trainings for instructors in neighboring hurricane-prone countries.

Based on our U.S. curriculum, the trainings were adjusted to make the information relevant in each local community. For example, while we advise people in the U.S. to call 911 for an ambulance, instructors elsewhere recommend summoning a taxi to take the injured to the hospital where ambulance services are not available.

In more than a dozen countries, the local Red Cross societies are now using the curriculum and donated equipment to train hundreds of volunteers, families and businesses before the next hurricane strikes. This is part of a larger coordinated disaster preparedness partnership between the American Red Cross and its Latin American and Caribbean Red Cross partners, with the goal of safeguarding vulnerable communities during future disasters.

# Latest International Stories from Redcross.org

## International Aid Flows to Indonesia Following Quakes

The global Red Cross network is scaling up its relief operation as more cargo flights arrive daily in Padang, Indonesia following last week's devastating earthquakes. [Read more.](#)

## American Red Cross Responds to Silent Crises Around the World

While many global emergencies never make the headlines, the American Red Cross continuously works to alleviate the suffering caused by these forgotten disasters. [Read more.](#)

## Mexican Red Cross Responds to Hurricane Jimena

The Mexican Red Cross is on the ground after Hurricane Jimena, assisting local residents affected by the powerful storm. [Read more.](#)

## Indonesia: Red Cross Volunteers Respond to West Java Earthquake

In the wake of the strong earthquake that struck western Java on the afternoon of September 2, staff and volunteers of the Indonesian Red Cross were deployed. [Read more.](#)

## Dispatches from Sri Lanka: Disaster Preparedness Efforts Prove Valuable after Conflict

Whether a natural or manmade disaster strikes – or both, Red Cross volunteers and staff are among the first to help community members respond, and often stay the longest. [Read more.](#)

## Dispatches from Peru

Two years after a major earthquake, the Red Cross highlights the country's progress, new challenges. [Read more.](#)



Kate Wade/American Red Cross

Local Red Cross volunteers pay a visit to beneficiaries of the American Red Cross transitional shelter program two years after the Peru earthquake.



American Red Cross Relief ERU team members at work in Senegal helping the Senegalese Red Cross Society respond to recent floods. They are performing damage assessments on housing and infrastructure, speaking with survivors about their needs and supporting relief distribution.

Photos by Steve McAndrew and Luis Matnog

## American Red Cross Deploys Relief Emergency Response Unit Volunteers to Senegal

The American Red Cross recently deployed three international disaster response volunteers to Senegal to work with members of the Danish Red Cross in a joint Relief Emergency Response Unit (ERU).

In the field are: Shinko Mondori from the American Red Cross Serving King and Kitsap Counties (Washington State) chapter, Luis Matnog from the Massachusetts Bay chapter, and team leader Steve McAndrew from the American Red Cross of Santa Monica, California.

The ERU is helping the Senegalese Red Cross Society respond to recent flooding that has affected 156,000 people and left 7,000 homeless. Their work includes performing disaster assessments and assisting in the distribution of relief supplies.

## Voices from the Field

Hear what the Red Cross Head of Operations is saying about the flooding situation in West Africa. Download 'Cross the Globe' #10' at the Red Cross Blog: [www.blog.redcross.org](http://www.blog.redcross.org).

# Recent American Red Cross International Disaster Responses

Though disasters in Asia have recently grabbed the headlines, the American Red Cross International Response Operations Center has also been busy responding to disasters in other regions. Below is a summary of other recent other disaster responses.



Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan

## Tajikistan – Mudslides and Floods

*Situation:* Heavy rainfall in April and May flooded various parts of Tajikistan, killing 26 and affecting 12,000 people. It also significantly affected the national economy.

*Response:* The **Tajikistan Red Crescent Society** responded with relief items, supported by two Regional Disaster Response Teams of volunteers from neighboring countries, which are conducting field assessments and distributing relief supplies. The **American Red Cross** supported the Tajikistan Red Crescent Society response with \$11,500 for home construction tool kits.



Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society

## Syria – Drought

*Situation:* A three-year drought has worsened in Syria, with high temperatures and low rainfall destroying much of the seasonal grain crop. Currently 1.3 million people are affected and 800,000 have lost most of their income. Faced with extreme hardship, many are migrating from their homes in villages to urban centers.

*Response:* The **Syrian Arab Red Crescent** has responded by providing food items, healthcare, hygiene kits, and water and sanitation services to those affected by the drought. The global Red Cross network has appealed for \$3 million to respond. The **American Red Cross** has committed \$50,000.



Steve Madanaw/American Red Cross

## West and Central Africa – Floods

*Situation:* A heavier than normal rainy season in West and Central Africa has caused serious flooding in 17 countries, affecting more than 600,000 people. The rains have caused 159 deaths and considerable damage, leaving thousands homeless. The number of people affected is expected to climb as rains continue.

*Response:* Red Cross national societies in the 17 affected countries are responding. Working with government disaster authorities and the global Red Cross network, they are providing food and relief items, emergency health care and psychosocial support, water and sanitation services and livelihoods assistance. The **American Red Cross** has provided three delegates for a Relief Emergency Response Unit to support the **Senegalese Red Cross Society** in coordinating and distributing relief supplies in Senegal. The American Red Cross has also sent a delegate for a Red Cross field assessment team to determine relief needs in Burkina Faso.



Mexican Red Cross

## Mexico – Hurricane Jimena

*Situation:* Hurricane Jimena hit Mexico's Baja California peninsula as a category two hurricane on September 3, affecting the states of Baja California Sur and Sonora. It affected 120,000 people, causing damage to homes, businesses, electricity infrastructure, and water and transportation systems.

*Response:* The **Mexican Red Cross** responded by performing needs and damage assessments, and mobilizing volunteers and staff to provide food and relief items to those affected. The **American Red Cross** is providing 7,800 relief items, including hygiene kits, kitchen sets and reconstruction kits for distribution to those affected by the storm.