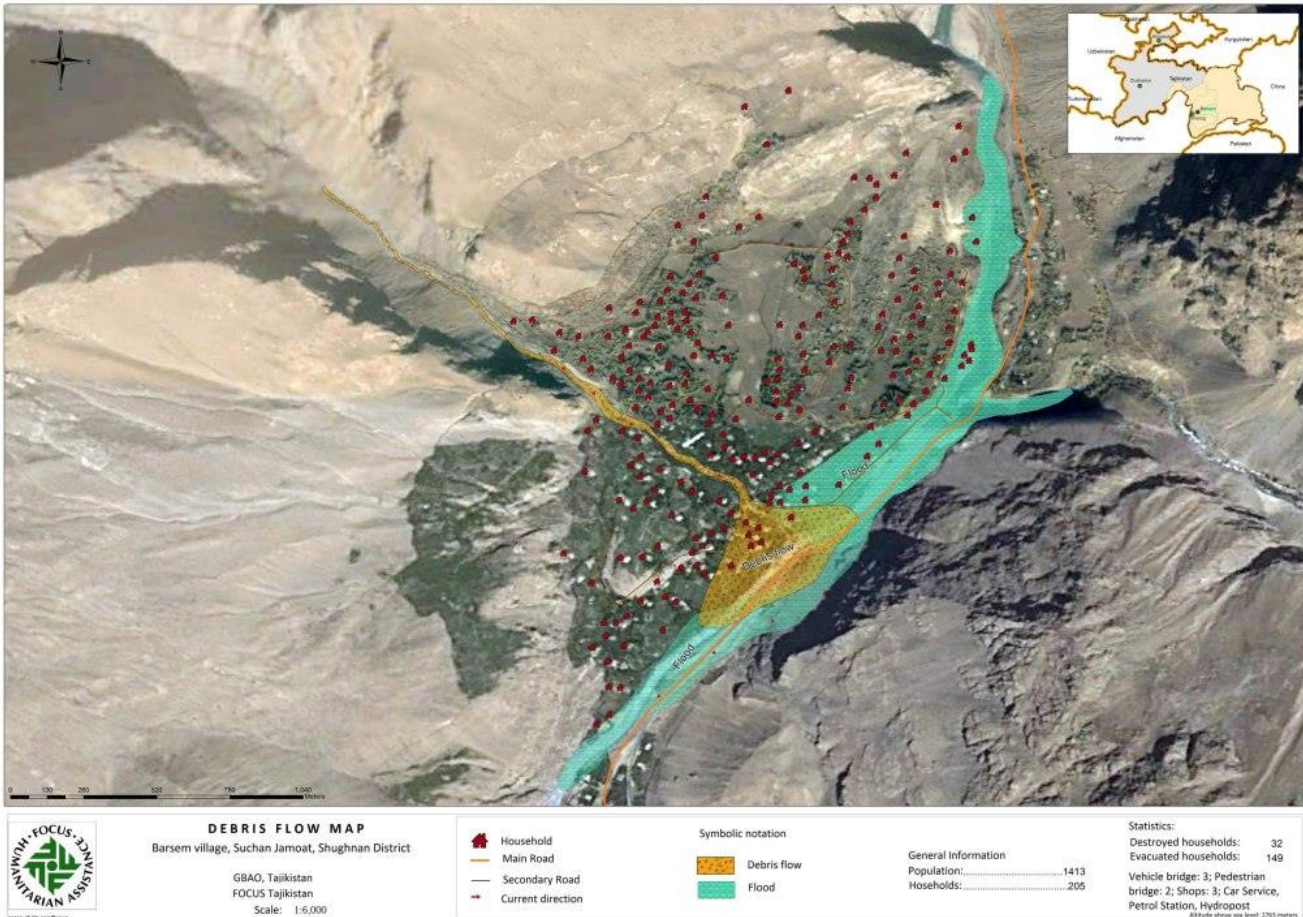


**Mudflow in Shughnan District,
Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO), Tajikistan
Situation Report # 2
18 July 2015**



Key Highlights:

- A16 July mudflow as a result of snow melting due to high temperatures blocked the current of Gund River creating an artificial lake.
- No casualties or human loss reported as of 18 July 2015. Water, food and non-food items are among the highest priority needs for about 1,100 affected people.
- Over 80% of the communities in whole of GBAO do not have electricity due to infrastructure damages.
- Reports suggest more 56 houses in nearby communities destroyed with about 10,000 evacuated to safer sites. Schools, local stores, roads and electricity lines damaged.
- High risk for outburst of artificial lake as a result of blockage of Gund River with potential for devastating floods in Khorog and nearby communities, including three districts of Khatlon Oblast.

Situation Overview

High temperature and rapid snow and glacier melting from 1 – 15 July 2015 triggered mudflows in Barsem and Kolkhozobod villages of Shughnan District, GBAO. The mudflow that occurred on 16 July 2015 caused significant damage to infrastructure and households in the

above villages. It blocked the current of Gund River and created an artificial lake in Kolkhozobod village. This lake is about 16 km from the main administrative town of the Oblast, Khorog – with an approximate of more than 30,000 inhabitants and other nearby communities. The flow of mud from the mountains as a result of high temperature and melting of snow has not stopped since 16 July and threatens to burst and accumulated lake and flood the town of Khorog and other nearby communities, triggering increase of levels of water in Pyanj River and posing significant threat to additional downstream districts of GBAO and Khatlon Oblast.

The Government of Tajikistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister and CoES Senior Management, has formed a State Commission for Emergencies, which includes relevant state ministries and agencies with International Organizations that are on the ground (Focus Humanitarian Assistance (FOCUS) and UN World Food Programme (WFP)) and Tajik Red Crescent Society. The Commission jointly with the international organizations is undertaking rapid assessment of the damage and develops possible early strategies to mitigate the outburst of the artificial lake and identify priority humanitarian needs of the affected population.

Damage

As of 18 July, the assessment team composed of central and local Governments as well as international organizations did not observe any human loss or injuries. The preliminary results of the assessment by State Commission for Emergencies as of 18 July provided by Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES) are indicated below:

- At least 56 houses damaged and are not safe to reside anymore:
 - Barsem village – 41 houses
 - Berdibekobod village – 3 houses
 - Kolkhozobod village – 12 houses
- One local school has been destroyed;
- 2.5 Km. of strategic Khorog – Murghab highway damaged;
- 2 Km. of local road connecting several communities;
- 4 Km. of electricity lines damaged;
- At least 3,000 fruit-trees damaged;
- 2 local pedestrian bridges and 2 motor bridges damaged.

As a result of the debris flow one portion of Barsem village is currently completely isolated and can only be reached by helicopter. Around 1,100 people were blocked in the isolated part of the village while 149 households in the lower parts were evacuated to the upper parts of the isolated section.

The mudflow damaged electric lines which supply electricity to the region from the main hydropower station Pamir-1. Due to a risk of flooding the water to Khorog hydropower station is blocked by Pamir Energy team, and there is no electricity in whole area, including Khorog town. More information on the damage, total number of affected families, number of vulnerable groups and their humanitarian needs are yet to be finalized as assessment is on-going.

Local Government and FOCUS/Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) carried out two helicopter monitoring mission to the affected site to assess the condition of glaciers and identify further response needs and strategies. According to the assessment conducted by the specialists, there are two more glaciers above the village that could melt if temperature in the

region remains high.

Assistance Provided

A joint team consisting from the representatives of local authorities, regional CoES, FOCUS and Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) have evacuated 140 households from hazard zones. At the moment, the isolated communities can be only reached on helicopters.

On 17 July, AKDN and Government provided through helicopter to the isolated areas one ton of drinking water as well as with 20 tents, 30 blankets, 16 hygiene kits, 20 kitchen sets, four boats (in case of evacuation), and five stretchers. Children, elderly people, people with disabilities, sick and women are being evacuated to safer sites using the return routes of the helicopters.

According to information received on 18 July from local sources (FOCUS) Government has decided to set-up tent camp at Manem village for about 70 evacuated families. FOCUS and Tajik Red Crescent Society are ready to mobilize 70 family tents to these families. In addition, Tajik Red Crescent Society stands ready to provide 60 sets of ready-to-distribute Non-food Items, while increasing this number in case of need through mobilizing other nearby Red Crescent Society-managed emergency reserve stocks. In addition, Red Crescent Society is in contact with Ministry of Health to provide 100 sets of Hygiene Kits.

UN World Food Programme has expressed its readiness to support the affected communities with food assistance, noting joint actions are already underway with local stakeholders in GBAO. UN Emergency Reserve for Tajikistan non-food items based in Dushanbe could also be released in case if need for NFI exceeds the existing available resources in the affected regions and vicinities.

On 18 July, Government, represented by First Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Economic Development and Trade urgently convened joint UN/Donor and Government meeting to discuss further joint response actions to the disaster affected communities and take necessary actions to mitigate the risks of further outburst of the dam. Government informed the UN/Donor community to provide all necessary advocacy support and has requested international community to support Government in providing relief and recovery assistance. During the meeting, the donor/ambassador and UN community agreed to coordinate all response actions through UN and provide required assistance through joint actions and resource mobilization strategies.

AKDN will deploy another team headed by AKDN Country Representative on 19 July to disaster affected area to analyze potential threats of outburst of the artificial lake, collect information on damage and needs using new and existing sources/information. In addition, based on collected initial damage and needs information, an extra-ordinary REACT meeting maybe called on 20 or 21 July to discuss further possible joint response actions based on agreed response strategies of Inter-Agency Contingency Plan.

Needs Information

Main food stocks for the non-damaged households is about to be exhausted since neighboring household hosts additional village members evacuated from the affected area. Given the current situations indicative estimations show that in case the population remains in the

isolated areas it would be almost impossible to sustain the village inhabitants with water and food supplies.

The preliminary assessments show that the affected and displaced families need water, shelter and kitchen items, food, clothing, hygiene kits, heavy machinery and fuel to clean the affected areas of debris. Due to shortage of electricity, available medical supplies might also be irrelevant to use in the coming days, posing additional health threats. Initial reports also suggest that the affected population would need psychological support.

The Government has also indicated a need to provide affected communities with construction materials to start early recovery housing and other infrastructure initiatives.

A need to identify hydrological and geological risk mitigation activities is also not addressed as in addition to current outstanding humanitarian needs, the activities to mitigate the impending threat of further outburst of the lake and its potential consequences to upstream and downstream communities is yet to be identified.

The number of affected, humanitarian needs and information on damage may change significantly as the assessment results unfold. REACT Secretariat will keep close contact with relevant local REACT partners and Commission for Emergency Situations to obtain and share updated information. The Government of Tajikistan has advised that the results of the rapid damage and needs assessment will be available by 20 July 2015.

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