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Questions about emergency appeals

If you have any queries about donating to the British Red Cross then please email us at supportercare@redcross.org.uk or ring 0300 456 11 55.

1. How much of my donation will be used for the appeal?

2. How do I know that my money will go to the cause?

3. When do you impose your Disaster Fund caveat?

4. Can I donate blankets, clothing, food or other goods for those affected by international disasters?

5. Can I donate blankets, clothing, food or other goods for those affected by UK disasters?

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8. What else can I do to help?

1. How much of my donation will be used for the appeal?

For emergency appeals we will retain a small percentage of your donation to cover some of the costs incurred managing and administering the appeal. This percentage will vary with each appeal as our costs differ depending on the amount of work involved, but we would expect it to be no more than seven per cent. Any costs over and above this will be met from our general funds.

2. How do I know that my money will go to the cause?

The Red Cross operates internationally through a network of Red Cross or Red Crescent National Societies, which deliver aid at a local level. All money donated to British Red Cross emergency appeals stays entirely within the Red Cross Movement and is channelled directly to the beneficiaries.

Red Cross delegates are always present on the ground to monitor the situation and manage the operation, ensuring aid reaches those who need it most with transparency and accountability.

3. When do you impose your Disaster Fund caveat?

Our caveat states that "In the unlikely event that we raise more money than can be reasonably and efficiently spent, any surplus funds will be used to help us prepare for and respond to other humanitarian disasters either overseas or here in the UK".

This is mainly to ensure we are not left with funds we can't reasonably spend, in the event of an unprecedented public response that is disproportionate to the need.

We only impose the caveat when it is impractical to restrict the use of the money raised to a specific appeal because the overall need of that appeal had been met.

4. Can I donate blankets, clothing, food or other goods for those affected by international disasters?

No. Whenever possible, we buy the items we need to respond to an emergency in the affected country or in the region. This benefits the local economy (by helping local markets and traders) and allows us to take into account local tastes, traditions and culture.

Local purchasing also helps us reduce transport costs and speed up delivery times. Very often the cost of transporting a "free" donation from the UK is more than the total value of the donation itself.

We purchase goods of a standard specification and quality so that our principles of impartiality and neutrality are not jeopardised. We do this because beneficiaries might feel they have been treated unfairly if they receive something that is different from their neighbour or, worse still, those on an opposing side.

For this reason, we only accept donated goods for resale in the UK, through our chain of shops. Find your nearest shop by entering your postcode in the [near you search box](#).

The best and easiest way to help the Red Cross is to support us with a donation of money. Money can be instantly transferred and converted into whatever is most needed, anywhere in the world. One of the most efficient ways to give is by making a donation online.

5. Can I donate blankets, clothing, food or other goods for those affected by UK disasters?

In an emergency situation, it is important for us to ensure we respond quickly. In these circumstances, it is generally easier to distribute goods from pre-allocated stock that has already been sorted, some of which will be taken from stock held in Red Cross shops.

With regard to donations of food: we have to cater on a very large scale so it is difficult for us to effectively utilise miscellaneous gifts of food. However, we are very fortunate to benefit from the generosity of corporate partners such as Tesco who often donate what we need as part of their charitable giving.

6. How can I get in touch with missing family or friends?

British citizens in the UK who are unable to contact relatives in a country affected by a conflict or disaster should contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 020 7008 0000. British citizens overseas should contact the British embassy or high commission in their country of residence. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website has details of British embassies and high commissions around the world.

Nationals of other countries who are in the UK should contact their embassy or high commission in the UK. If this is not possible, they should contact the British Red Cross' international family tracing (IFT) on 0845 053 2004 for advice.

[More about IFT](#)

7. Why don't you send volunteers overseas?

The British Red Cross is one of 188 National Societies that make up the Red Cross Movement. As each National Society has the capacity to draw upon its own body of volunteers, we don't send volunteers overseas.

Not only does this save time and money, but local volunteers have the advantage of speaking the language, knowing the region, and understanding the culture.

We do recruit experienced professionals for our international work. International staff, or 'delegates', are seconded to work for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Committee of the Red Cross or directly on British Red Cross programmes when suitable positions arise.

[More about working for us overseas](#)

8. What else can I do to help?

You could raise money for an appeal, volunteer for one of our services in the UK, or tell people you know about how we are helping.

Raising money

Please contact your local fundraiser for information and advice. Find your nearest Red Cross office by entering your postcode in the [near you search box](#).

Before you raise money for an appeal, please read about the [legal issues](#) affecting how people can fundraise for a charity, such as collection permits and commercial agreements.

When fundraising for an emergency appeal, please don't organise your fundraising too far in the future, as if the appeal has ended by the time we receive the money you raise, it would go into our [Disaster Fund](#), rather than to the specific appeal.

Volunteer

The British Red Cross is a volunteer-led organisation. All our services in the UK rely on people who selflessly give up their time to help others. We have a wide range of volunteer opportunities around the country, so there is something to suit everyone.

We don't send volunteers overseas, but you can find out more about how to [work for us overseas](#).

Tell your friends and family

You can also tell your friends and family about our appeal and the work we do. For instance, you could join our group on social networking sites like [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#) or [Youtube](#), or link from your website to ours.

RELATED TAGS: INTERNATIONAL DISASTER CONFLICT DONATION

Supporter Care Line

(during office hours Mon-Fri)

0300 456 11 55

Sign up for emails

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