

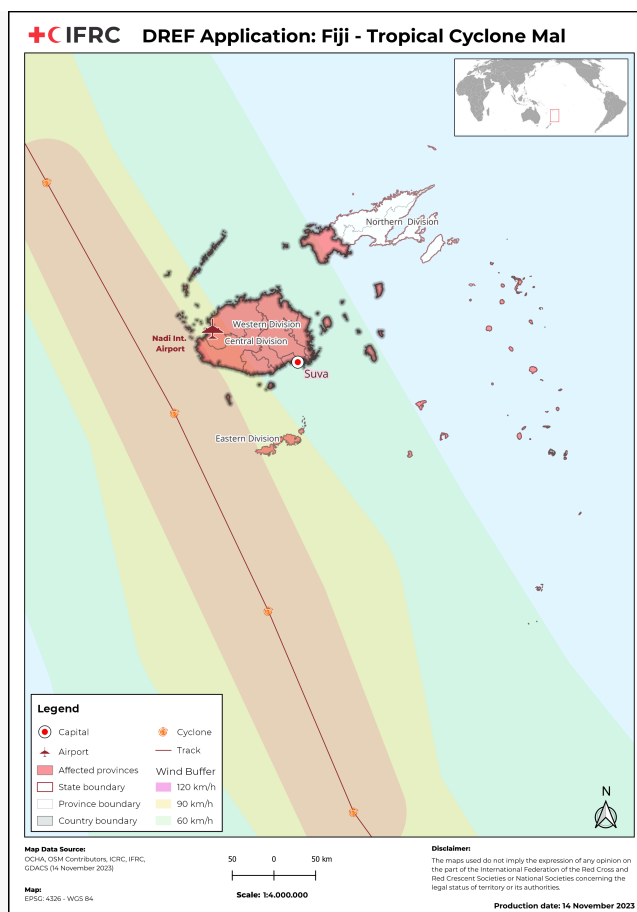


Volunteers transporting relief items to cyclone affected areas. (Photo: Fiji Red Cross)

Appeal: <b>MDRFJ007</b>	Total DREF Allocation: <b>CHF 142,018</b>	Crisis Category: <b>Yellow</b>	Hazard: <b>Cyclone</b>
Glide Number: <b>TC-2023-000219-FJI</b>	People Affected: <b>69,564 people</b>	People Targeted: <b>7,500 people</b>	
Event Onset: <b>Sudden</b>	Operation Start Date: <b>14-11-2023</b>	Operational End Date: <b>31-12-2023</b>	Total Operating Timeframe: <b>1 months</b>
Targeted Areas: <b>Central, Eastern, Northern, Western, Rotuma</b>			

The major donors and partners of the IFRC-DREF include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Britain, China, Czech, Canada, Denmark, German, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the Netherlands, as well as DG ECHO, Mondelez Foundation, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the National Society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

# Description of the Event



Tropical Cyclone Mal Track Path (Source: IFRC IM)

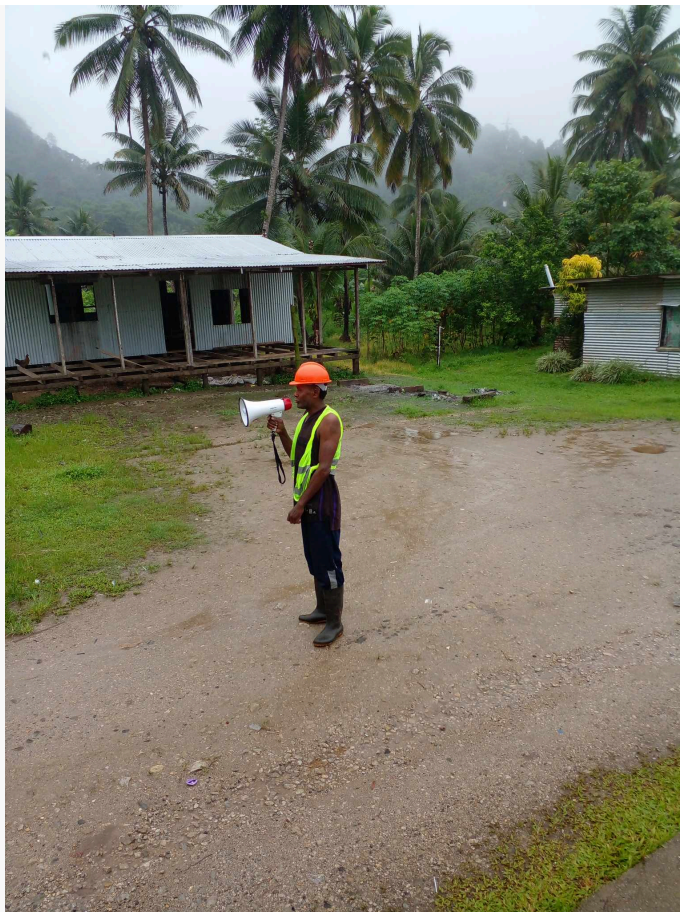
## Approximate date of impact

The Fiji Group was impacted by TC Mal rain and strong winds on the 14-15 Nov as per the Fiji Met Office's anticipated forecast of gale-force winds, heavy rainfall, and coastal hazards.

## Provide any updates in the situation since the field report and explain what is expected to happen.

A low-pressure system emerged at north of the Solomon Islands on 10 November 2023 and intensified into tropical disturbance TD02F on 11 November 2023. This development prompted the Fiji Meteorological Office to circulate an alert on 12 November anticipating a potential increase into a Category 3 cyclone by 14 November 2023. Expanding the warning to encompass the entire Fiji Group for a projected impact on 14-15 November 2023, Fiji Met Office highlighted anticipated gale-force winds, heavy rainfall, and coastal hazards. Proactive measures were taken, including public advisories urging preparedness, school closures, and a work-from-home policy for non-essential government employees until 16 November 2023. As the cyclone passed Fiji Group and the situation unfolded, the impact was minimal although the weather system that brought heavy rains and strong winds affected almost 70,000 people in Viti Levu islands and the outer islands of the north and west of Fiji. Areas that were affected by torrential rainfall and strong wind include the Yasawa group of islands, Lautoka, Nadi, and Ba for the Western Division and Ovalau Island for the Eastern Division. Low-lying communities in these areas were flooded and those along the shores were inundated with strong currents from the sea.





FRCS volunteer conducting early warning dissemination in a community at risk (Photo: FRCS)

## Scope and Scale

The cyclone Category 3 with 65kmph sustained storm-force winds and gusts up to 93kmph which affected 69,564 people (13,913 households) in most Viti Levu Island and Yasawa and Mamanuca groups.

- Initially the location potentially impacted by the system was the entire Fiji Group: Yasawa, Mamanuca, Lau, Lomaiviti, and eastern Viti Levu. As the situation unfolded, the actual impact of heavy rains and strong wind was the Yasawa groups of islands, Ba, Lautoka, and Nadi in the West and Levuka on Ovalau Island in the East.
- Wind: Gale to storm-force winds (65 kph sustained, gusts up to 93 kph) possible across Fiji, causing potential damage to infrastructure, disruptions to power and communication networks, and hazardous travel conditions.
- Rain: Torrential heavy rains expected on Viti Levu, bringing the risk of:
  - o Flooding: Localized flooding, inundation in low-lying areas, and potential damage to homes and communities.
  - o Water contamination: High likelihood of contaminated water sources due to flooding and overflow of streams.
  - o Health impacts: Increased risk of waterborne diseases and other health issues due to compromised water access.
  - o Food insecurity: Damage to agriculture and livelihoods may restrict access to food.
- Coastal: Rough to very rough seas with high waves anticipated in Fiji Waters, posing danger to small vessels, and increasing risk of coastal inundation.

Additional Considerations:

- Potential for disruptions to essential services such as transportation, communication, and healthcare.
- The Fiji Red Cross Society (FRCS) focused its early actions and preparedness measures in the Western, Central, and Eastern Divisions to assist approximately 7,500 people.

## Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
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## National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?	No
Please provide a brief description of those additional activities	-

## IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	IFRC CCD Pacific office supported the FRCS National Office Emergency Operations with technical support and advice on the response, including the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) application process and review. Furthermore, the IFRC CCD continues to support coordination between Movement partners and government disaster management authorities in the Pacific. IFRC CCD was active in the Pacific Humanitarian Team Principals and Coordinators meetings and within Shelter Cluster Coordination as one of the co-leads of the national clusters.
Participating National Societies	Australian Red Cross continues to communicate with both FRCS and IFRC CCD Suva office on fast-tracking assistance needed by the affected families.

## Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	<p>Fiji Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opened 180 evacuation centers across all divisions, currently housing over 6,381 evacuees.</li> <li>• Mobilized resources and teams to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Restoration of critical infrastructure.</li> <li>o Assist essential services like healthcare and communication.</li> <li>o Distribute food rations to prioritized groups.</li> <li>o Deploy Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) teams.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Made key decisions to facilitate recovery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Schools reopen with teachers contributing to disinfection.</li> <li>o Non-essential civil servants resuming work.</li> <li>o Food ration distribution was done in evacuation centers.</li> <li>o Businesses and public services are resuming operations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The government has been superb in ensuring partners work together to evacuate vulnerable families to evacuation centers.</li> </ul> <p>Energy Fiji Limited (EFL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilized teams to repair damaged power poles and restore electricity supply in Lomolomo and Lautoka, prioritizing safety and weather conditions.</li> </ul> <p>Fire Authority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assisted families displaced by a landslide in Wailoku, Vataleka, providing refuge and necessary support.</li> </ul>



	<p>NDMO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated and oversaw the overall national response, ensuring efficient resource allocation and collaboration between various authorities.</li> </ul> <p>Fiji Met:</p> <p>Provided consistent weather updates and tracked the cyclone's path, keeping the public informed. This helped communities prepare for the storm's impact and make informed decisions about their safety.</p> <p>Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF):</p> <p>Granted clearance for all vessels to resume operations starting from 6 am on 15 November 2023. This indicated that maritime conditions have improved sufficiently to allow safe travel, facilitating the transportation of goods, and potentially supporting recovery efforts.</p> <p>Fiji Roads:</p> <p>Helped clear roads to ensure proper traffic flow. This was crucial for emergency response teams to access affected areas, deliver aid, and facilitate the movement of people and resources during recovery.</p> <p>Overall, the National Authorities in Fiji demonstrated a coordinated and multifaceted response to mitigate the impact of Tropical Cyclone Mal, prioritizing public safety, infrastructure restoration, and community support.</p>
<p><b>UN or other actors</b></p>	<p>OCHA is closely monitoring the situation and informing accordingly to Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) partners through PHT cluster coordinators and principals.</p>

**Are there major coordination mechanism in place?**

**Government-Led Communication:**

- Viber Group Updates: A dedicated Viber group created including representatives from government agencies, emergency response teams, and NGOs. This platform facilitated the real-time sharing of crucial information, enabling a coordinated response across various stakeholders.
- Direct updates from NDMO to Fiji Red Cross DSLO: The National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) maintained direct communication with the Disaster Service Liaison Officer (DSLO) of the Fiji Red Cross Society. This ensured that Red Cross received timely and accurate information to guide their critical relief efforts.
- The government issued weather alerts, and the FRCS member of the Disaster Focal Group joining the platform provided timely updates. This forum facilitates information dissemination and connects all stakeholders involved in the response, resulting in a more coordinated effort.
- The National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) was on full activation from 13 November 2023 and was closely monitoring the situation with the Divisional EOCs. National Clusters were on standby for response activation if required.

**Fiji Red Cross Communication Structure:**

- Community to Branches, Branches to Divisional Managers, Divisional Managers to National Office, and vice versa: The Red Cross employed a structured communication flow. Information gathered from affected communities was escalated through branch, divisional, and national levels, enabling informed decision-making and efficient response delivery.

## Needs (Gaps) Identified



### Shelter Housing And Settlements

Major flooding was anticipated in the affected areas due to tidal movements and ongoing heavy rains. The soil was already saturated, increasing the risk of trees falling. No major damage to houses was reported. Strong coordination with local authorities and within the communities was crucial for cleaning and removing debris/fallen trees and ensuring safe access to settlements. Emphasizing the dissemination of safe shelter awareness and key messages on securing houses, removing potential flying objects, and trimming branches around houses helped mitigate possible damages. Timely and clear communication with communities regarding safe evacuation centers was prioritized. Coordinated assessments to identify future damages, needs, and coping mechanisms of the affected population were necessary to provide adequate and timely emergency shelter assistance.





## Health

Due to the heavy rain and flooding, coupled with the landfall of TC Mal, health messaging on water and vector-borne diseases, including COVID-19, were prioritized. Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) was provided to volunteers and staff involved in continuous situational monitoring and assessment that is integrated into the overall response. This approach stems from identified needs in previous operations, aiming to better support staff, volunteers, and address the psychosocial needs of the affected population.

First aid kits were provided to field staff and volunteers to support minor medical injuries and care that were results of the strong winds and flooding. In high-risk communities where FRCS has Community Based Surveillance (CBS) volunteers, it raised health alerts regarding identified cases of illness/disease throughout the ongoing flooding. Follow-up referrals, health promotion, and messaging were focused on relevant diseases, including dengue, typhoid, leptospirosis, and COVID-19.



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Due to the anticipated extensive flooding, concerns regarding hygiene-related and waterborne diseases were significant. There was high probability of water source contamination, making access to clean drinking water challenging. The WASH cluster held regular meetings and both FRCS and IFRC maintained coordination and monitoring of these needs. However, currently, there is limited capacity within FRCS to deliver services in this area at a significant scale. Household water filtration could be considered as an option to provide aid to the most vulnerable households if a response becomes necessary.



## Protection, Gender And Inclusion

During disaster situations, affected individuals experienced heightened vulnerability due to inadequate housing, limited healthcare access, substandard WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities, and economic instability resulting from immediate livelihood loss. Particularly vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, people with disabilities and those with chronic medical conditions, encountered obstacles in accessing assistance and were at increased risk of violence and abuse. FRCS continued to focus its effort on anticipating and addressing protection, gender, and inclusion issues from the beginning of the cyclone response. Continued awareness raising were carried out to support affected communities and promote safety and inclusivity. A child safeguarding risk analysis was developed for volunteers to ensure they are knowledgeable and safe before deployment.

In response to planning, it was essential to prioritize the protection of these individuals and address their specific needs. This entailed ensuring the availability of Sex, Age, and Disability Disaggregated Data (SADDD) to foster accountability and inclusivity throughout the response efforts.

In Fiji, protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) are identified as critical concerns, especially during disasters. Lessons learned from previous events like TC Yasa underscored the necessity of focusing on PGI, as past responses have revealed notable instances of gender-based violence. In anticipation of evacuation center activation, gender and protection considerations must be integrated into planning processes.

Moreover, providing psychosocial support interventions for individuals who have suffered livelihood loss and displacement is imperative. Additionally, establishing child-friendly spaces is crucial for supporting the emotional well-being and safety of children affected by disasters.

Overall, a comprehensive approach that prioritizes protection, gender responsiveness and inclusion is indispensable for effectively addressing the diverse needs of vulnerable populations during and after disasters.



## Migration And Displacement

FRCS provided support and assistance to the displaced population, those that were residing in evacuation centers or staying with friends or relatives nearby. Throughout displacement, FRCS continued to complement the Government's efforts in delivering quality humanitarian assistance to these individuals. Upon de-escalation of the alert level, FRCS aided them in safely returning to their respective homes. Some or many of these individuals partially or fully lost their shelter and livelihood. After carefully assessing the situation, and identifying gaps and needs, FRCS supported the most vulnerable in rebuilding their lives.





## Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

The potential impact of this cyclone is multifaceted, and community awareness and preparedness were crucial to prevent loss of life and mitigate humanitarian consequences. Therefore, emphasis was placed on various communication outputs for early warning messaging, which was vital for communities to make prompt and informed decisions at the individual and household levels beforehand.

In response to the looming threat of Tropical Cyclone Mal, the Fiji Red Cross resilience communities were ready to activate their community disaster response plan. The disaster committee, comprising dedicated individuals with expertise in community emergency response, played a pivotal role in coordinating efforts to inform communities about the situation. The primary focus was on implementing various communication outputs for early warning messaging, emphasizing the urgency for communities to make swift and informed decisions at the individual and household levels beforehand.

Timely dissemination of accurate information was crucial to enable residents to take necessary precautions and evacuate vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and their livestock. FRCS was particularly committed to ensuring early warning and early action activities to minimize the impact of TC Mal. This included prioritizing the evacuation of the elderly, who were often more vulnerable during such events and safeguarding their livestock. Simultaneously, efforts were directed toward securing homes and belongings to enhance overall community resilience in the face of the impending cyclone.

By activating their disaster response plan and engaging the disaster committee, the FRCS aims to foster a comprehensive and community-centric approach to disaster management. Through these proactive measures, the organization strives to mitigate the potential humanitarian impact of TC Mal and contribute to the overall safety and well-being of the affected communities



## Community Engagement And Accountability

The affected households required support from both government and non-governmental organizations. It was crucial to provide information on the types of available support and how households can access it. That information needed to be readily available to ensure that affected households are aware of the support options accessible to them.

Additionally, the development and intensity of the tropical depression being unpredictable, necessitating continuous updates and information on the status of the track path to communities. This information included what needed to be done and what support was available. Continuous updates were essential to keep at-risk communities informed of any changes as the situation evolved.

Monitoring the needs of different groups continuously was also essential. Different groups of people may have varying needs, and it was important to ensure that the support provided targeted these specific needs.

Two-way communication was vital in providing aid during disasters. It wasn't enough to provide information to affected households; listening to their needs and feedback was equally important. Information served as a life-saving mechanism during disasters, and it was imperative to ensure that accurate and up-to-date information was provided to potentially affected households. The joint undertaking emphasizes the importance of two-way communication as aid, highlighting the necessity of effective communication in providing support to affected households.

# Operational Strategy

## Overall objective of the operation

The operation aimed to provide essential support to the FRCS in addressing the urgent early actions and preparedness measures for at-risk communities in the Western and Central Eastern Division potentially affected by the developing tropical cyclone based on the forecast released by the Fiji Meteorological Office on 12 November 2023. The operation was focused on stock movement in anticipation of evacuation near evacuation centers, disseminating early warning messages and shelter/hygiene/health-related messages, including activation of CERT volunteers and activation of EOC, and volunteer mobilization for the activities with potential support towards evacuation based on government announcement. The operation was targeted to assist 7,500 people at risk (1,500 households) for one month in the western, central, and eastern divisions.

As part of the cyclone season preparation and before Tropical Cyclone Mal reached Fiji, FRCS undertook several preparedness activities, including reviewing stock levels and ensuring teams were ready to conduct assessments through Emergency Response Training for staff, volunteers, and communities.



FRCS supported 6,202 most affected people across the three divisions (Central, Eastern, and Western), focusing on initial damage assessments and distribution of immediate relief items for a one-month timeframe.

The bullet point below shows the breakdown of people reached and the total relief items distributed by branches:

1. Levuka Branch - distributed 7 tarpaulins, 7 cooking sets, 7 black packs, 17 blankets, 7 hygiene kits, 10 jerry cans, and 7 mosquito nets to Vuniivisavu and Lovoni villages in the middle of Ovalau Island.
2. Ba branch - distributed 1 shelter tool kit, 2 tarpaulin, 1 cooking Set, 1 black pack, 1 solar light, 1 blanket, 1 hygiene kit, 1 dignity kit, 4 jerry cans and 2 mosquito nets.

FRCS engaged 21 volunteers (14 females and 7 males), together with seven staff in the initial assessment and distribution of relief items to 1,354 households. The volunteers had undergone through training on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), Psychosocial Support (PSS), Shelter, WASH, and RFL before the event of TC Mal. This DREF covered the transportation of WASH, health, emergency shelter, and essential household relief items to branches and affected communities and provinces. The DREF allocation also covered volunteer allowances and communications costs in the field and health messaging through various forms of mass media. The volunteers were insured until the end of December 2023.

## Operation strategy rationale

The objective of this imminent operation was to provide immediate early actions that would reduce the potential humanitarian impact of the Category 3 tropical cyclone as it develops and passes over the Fiji Group. This includes:

1. Personnel were mobilized to disseminate early warning messages and potentially evacuate people if required.
2. Stock was mobilized closer to evacuation areas in preparation for possible government evacuation announcements.
3. Preparedness briefings were conducted for personnel at branches and HQ Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers. These briefings covered situation/weather updates, potential impacts, response triggers, preparedness checklists including safety/security, stakeholder coordination, SOPs, volunteer readiness, stock updates, fleet readiness, ECV toolkit, IEC, etc.
4. Health and hygiene- messages were sensitized to reduce the potential escalation of water-borne diseases.
5. Shelter awareness messages on housing reinforcement and shelter/settlement safety were conveyed.
6. IEC materials and communication tools for communities at risk were produced.
7. The EOC was activated, and coordinating with branches and stakeholders was conducted.
8. Monitoring and assessing the rapidly changing situation due to the impact of heavy rains and strong winds was conducted before the cyclone made landfall to ensure timely evacuation.

Most of these activities commenced on 12 November 2023, following the weather advisory from the Fiji Meteorological Office forecasting the low depression's likely development into a tropical cyclone within 48-72 hours. FRCS mobilized its personnel and resources to conduct preparedness briefings with branches and communities.

Early warning dissemination regarding the cyclone's development was carried out through all media platforms and direct community visits. This included preparedness measures at the household level and shelter awareness messaging for communities to take precautionary measures to reinforce their housing structures where possible.

Ongoing assessments monitored the early effects of heavy rains and strong winds as the tropical cyclone developed. FRCS was prepared to support evacuations if necessary. Initially, FRCS focused on assisting vulnerable communities in the Western and Central Eastern Divisions, situated along the anticipated path of the tropical cyclone. As the cyclone intensified, it fortunately did not make a direct landfall in these areas. Instead, FRCS conducted immediate assessments to gauge potential impacts, primarily to inform and prepare response strategies.

Throughout the period, FRCS, together with IFRC, intensified community awareness and preparedness activities. These efforts were continually adapted based on ongoing assessments of the cyclone's trajectory and intensity. In the event of a significant escalation, FRCS was prepared to request support from the DREF based on the geographic extent of the impact, the intensity of the storm, and the needs of the affected families.

As the situation de-escalated, FRCS stood down the mobilization of resources, as the humanitarian impact was not extensive. Tropical Cyclone Mal did not intensify further or cause significant damage on the ground.



# Targeting Strategy

## Who was targeted by this operation?

The overall target beneficiaries were based on the forecast track path of Tropical Depression 02F (TD02F) that was predicted to affect population in the Western and Central Eastern Division of Viti Levu, Fiji, particularly in Ba, Lautoka, Nadi, Yasawa, and Kadavu. This includes the most vulnerable communities who may have had to be evacuated soon, people who were injured or sick, and people with special needs. The FRCS worked with the Fijian government to identify the specific communities and individuals targeted through the operation, estimated to assist about 1,500 families which rose to 2600. FRCS also works with other humanitarian partners to ensure that the most vulnerable people are reached. Working with partners, especially government and vessel companies ensured affected maritime islands that were affected are reached.

## Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The selection criteria for the targeted population were based on the following factors: (i) Vulnerability: FRCS targeted the most vulnerable people that were likely to be impacted by TC Mal, such as those who might have lost their homes and livelihoods, those who were displaced, people who were injured or sick, and those with disabilities. (ii) Need: FRCS targeted people with the greatest need for assistance, assessed based on the severity of the cyclone damage, level of displacement, and availability of other resources. (iii) Equity: FRCS ensured that the operation was equitable and that all affected people had an equal opportunity to receive assistance. This meant that FRCS did not discriminate based on race, gender, religion, age, political affiliation or any other factor. FRCS worked with the Fijian government especially NDMO and other humanitarian partners to identify the specific communities and individuals targeted through the operation. The total targeted population was 7,500 whereby 3,675 were female and 3,825 were male.

## Total Targeted Population

Women	3,675	Rural	2%
Girls (under 18)	-	Urban	4%
Men	3,825	People with disabilities (estimated)	6%
Boys (under 18)	-		
Total targeted population	7,500		

## Risk and Security Considerations

### Please indicate about potential operation risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
Insufficient funding	Funding was secured from a variety of sources, including DREF, corporate donors, and individual donors.
The FRCS may face logistical challenges in delivering assistance to communities at risk, especially if the cyclone causes significant damage to infrastructure and transportation.	The FRCS will need to develop contingency plans and worked with the Fijian government and other humanitarian partners to overcome logistical challenges.
Lack of coordination with other humanitarian partners.	Coordination was closely monitored with the Fijian government and other humanitarian partners to avoid duplication of services and ensure that the response was comprehensive.

### Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

Bad weather: TD02F was expected to develop into a powerful cyclone category 3 that could cause significant damage to Fiji. The FRCS needed to take precautions to protect its staff and volunteers from bad weather conditions.



Disease outbreaks: The cyclone could have increased the risk of disease outbreaks, such as cholera and malaria. The FRCS needed to take precautions to prevent disease outbreaks, such as providing clean water and sanitation facilities.

The National Society's security framework was applicable for the duration of the operation to their staff and volunteers. In case of the need for deployment of personnel under IFRC security's responsibility, including surge support, the existing IFRC security plan, including security regulations, contingency plans for medical emergencies, relocation, and critical incident management, as applicable.

All IFRC and RCRC staff and volunteers were encouraged to complete the IFRC Stay Safe e-learning courses. Staff and volunteers were to be aware of the security situation and briefed on reactions in an emergency before deployment in the operational area.

Any field missions undertaken by IFRC personnel were undertaken following the current IFRC travel approval process and current health advisories. There are currently no significant security issues or threats for NS and IFRC staff.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

Yes

## Implementation



### Shelter Housing And Settlements

**Budget:** CHF 22,299

**Targeted Persons:** 3,500

**Assisted Persons:** 6,200

### Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people who received training/awareness raising sessions/messaging on safe shelter	3,500	6,200
# of assessments conducted based on the standard IFRC guidelines	1	1

### Narrative description of achievements

The response team achieved significant milestones, effectively delivering messaging and assessments in 37 out of the 33 targeted communities, reaching a total of 6,200 individuals with vital information on disaster preparedness, health, PGI, and safety. Through the assessment process, critical issues such as weak housing structures, water scarcity, and sanitation challenges were identified guiding future interventions. Additionally, the distribution of 2,351 Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials played a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting preparedness. The engagement with communities was strengthened through collaborative efforts with local leaders and volunteers, facilitating data collection and ensuring effective messaging delivery, thereby enhancing community resilience and response capacity. As per distribution, 36 families were direct beneficiaries of relief items distributions. The items distributed by the responding branch and division are listed below:

1. 1 black pack (clothing items), 1 shelter tool kit, 1 cooking set, and 1 solar light in Koronubu settlement in Ba
2. 7 black packs, 7 tarpaulins with 17 blankets in Lovoni and Vuniivisavu villages, Levuka, Ovalau island

### Lessons Learnt

- Prior engagement with communities, data collection, and clear communication channels are crucial.
- Investing in disaster preparedness training and raising awareness can significantly improve community resilience.
- Collaboration with local authorities and updating community data are vital for targeted response efforts.



## Challenges

- A significant portion of houses in the areas affected by TC Mal were not built to withstand cyclone conditions. Additionally, detached kitchen and ablution blocks further increased vulnerability.
- Communities often lacked updated data, awareness and training in disaster preparedness.
- Many houses were identified as non-cyclone-proof, with poor water and sanitation facilities.
- Shortages of IEC materials and challenges in transportation impacted the teams.



**Budget:** CHF 19,114

**Targeted Persons:** 3,500

**Assisted Persons:** 6,200

## Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
#of people reached by the NS with services to reduce relevant health risk factors.	3,500	6,200
# of assessments conducted based on the standard IFRC assessment guidelines.	1	1

## Narrative description of achievements

In response to the challenges post-Tropical Cyclone Mal, trained volunteers undertook a critical role in reaching over 6,200 individuals with vital awareness messages focusing on basic healthcare, hygiene practices, and disease prevention. This comprehensive outreach initiative involved door-to-door visits, ensuring that every family received essential information tailored to their needs. By directly engaging with households, volunteers were able to address specific concerns and reinforce key messages, thereby enhancing community resilience and empowering individuals to safeguard their health amidst the cyclone.

Moreover, the assessment conducted following the cyclone revealed several pressing issues, including a lack of updated data, sanitation challenges, and the potential for disease outbreaks in certain villages. These findings underscored the urgent need for targeted interventions aimed at improving sanitation infrastructure and strengthening disease surveillance mechanisms to mitigate health risks and prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Additionally, the assessment highlighted the importance of leveraging existing community health worker networks to facilitate referrals and ensure access to healthcare services for those in need. By collaborating with community health workers, the response efforts were able to bridge gaps in healthcare access and enhance the overall effectiveness of service delivery in cyclone-affected areas.

Furthermore, the involvement of FRCS volunteers in supporting community health workers in referring cases to healthcare services proved instrumental in ensuring timely access to medical care for affected individuals. Many communities encountered FRCS for the first time during this crisis, shedding light on the need for wider dissemination of available services and the importance of building trust and rapport with affected populations. This experience underscored the significance of proactive community engagement and outreach initiatives in fostering resilience and promoting sustainable recovery efforts in disaster-affected communities.

## Lessons Learnt

To address the healthcare challenges faced in disaster-prone areas, it is imperative to integrate health messaging into disaster preparedness initiatives. This involves incorporating information on health risks and preventive measures into broader disaster training programs, equipping communities with the knowledge and skills needed to safeguard their health amidst crises. Additionally, providing comprehensive training, resources, and communication tools to community health workers and volunteers can enhance their capacity in data collection, referral processes, and awareness-raising roles. By empowering these frontline responders, communities can improve their preparedness and response capabilities, ensuring timely access to essential healthcare services and resources in the event of a disaster.



## Challenges

Remote communities faced significant challenges in accessing essential medical facilities and qualified healthcare professionals, exacerbating health disparities in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Mal. Furthermore, community health workers, who serve as crucial frontline responders, often lack updated data on health status, immunization records, and specific needs within their communities, hindering targeted healthcare interventions. Effective communication with diverse communities proved challenging, necessitating sensitivity to language and cultural nuances to ensure information dissemination and understanding. Moreover, the limited availability of medical supplies, medications, and access to clean water further impeded comprehensive health interventions, compromising the ability to address urgent healthcare needs effectively. Additionally, increased exposure to contaminated water, overcrowded shelters, and mosquito-borne diseases heightened health risks, underscoring the urgent need for robust public health interventions and access to essential healthcare services in cyclone-affected areas.



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

**Budget:** CHF 16,990

**Targeted Persons:** 3,500

**Assisted Persons:** 6,200

## Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people reached by hygiene promotion activities	3,500	6,200
# of assessments conducted based on the standard IFRC assessment guidelines	1	1

## Narrative description of achievements

In addition to the findings regarding housing vulnerabilities and community preparedness, the response efforts following Tropical Cyclone Mal included reaching over 6,200 individuals with awareness campaigns on hygiene practices and safe water use, alongside the distribution of essential Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials. These initiatives aimed to mitigate health risks and promote resilience among affected communities. Furthermore, essential hygiene items such as soap, water purification tablets, and sanitary napkins were provided to families in need, addressing immediate hygiene needs in the aftermath of the cyclone.

Assessments of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure revealed damaged water sources, sanitation facilities, and hygiene promotion needs, guiding subsequent rehabilitation efforts. Working in collaboration with partners from Water Authority Fiji, volunteers initiated critical repair work on water systems and sanitation facilities, aiming to restore access to clean water and sanitation. Additionally, volunteers were trained on water treatment and safe handling procedures, empowering them to reinforce community-based initiatives and contribute to long-term resilience-building efforts.

## Lessons Learnt

A critical lesson learned from the response to Tropical Cyclone Mal is the importance of integrating Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) into disaster preparedness efforts. By addressing WASH needs, including hygiene promotion, in pre-disaster training and community planning, communities can better mitigate health risks and prevent the spread of diseases in the aftermath of disasters. Moreover, pre-positioning WASH supplies, such as hygiene kits, water purification tablets, and repair tools, enables a more rapid and effective response, ensuring timely access to essential resources when disasters strike. Prioritizing water access and sanitation infrastructure restoration is also paramount, as immediate repairs to water sources and sanitation facilities are crucial for preventing disease outbreaks and safeguarding public health in the aftermath of cyclones.

Furthermore, empowering communities through training initiatives is essential for building resilience and promoting sustainable recovery efforts. By training local volunteers on water treatment, hygiene practices, and sanitation facility maintenance, communities can take ownership of their health and well-being, enhancing their capacity to respond effectively to future disasters.

Additionally, collaboration with local authorities, including water boards and sanitation departments, is indispensable for assessing damage, coordinating repairs, and sharing resources. By working hand-in-hand with local stakeholders, response efforts can be more



coordinated, resources can be mobilized efficiently, and the needs of affected communities can be addressed comprehensively, ultimately fostering greater resilience and ensuring better health outcomes in disaster-affected areas.

## Challenges

Several challenges emerged in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Mal, exacerbating health and sanitation concerns within affected communities. Damaged water sources, compounded by power outages, severely hindered the availability of clean water, exacerbating hygiene and sanitation issues. Overflowing and damaged latrines posed significant health risks, especially in overcrowded shelters where proper sanitation facilities were lacking. Furthermore, communities faced gaps in hygiene practices and knowledge, with limited access to soap, clean water for handwashing, and awareness of proper hygiene techniques. Delivering hygiene kits and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) supplies to remote areas proved arduous due to transportation limitations, impeding timely relief efforts. Additionally, the presence of debris and stagnant water heightened the risk of disease outbreaks, underscoring the urgent need for improved waste disposal systems and comprehensive sanitation interventions to mitigate health hazards in the cyclone-affected areas.



## Protection, Gender And Inclusion

**Budget:** CHF 4,672

**Targeted Persons:** 7,500

**Assisted Persons:** 6,200

## Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of Child Safeguarding risk assessment conducted	1	1

## Narrative description of achievements

Through FRCS initiatives, awareness surrounding Protection, Gender and Inclusion Issues (PGI) significantly heightened, meticulously disseminating vital insights on gender-based violence (GBV), child protection, and the imperative inclusion of vulnerable demographics in disaster preparedness and response strategies. The comprehensive community assessments diligently scrutinized potential risks of GBV, exploitation, and abuse, with a particular focus on safeguarding women, children, and individuals with disabilities. By championing the establishment of secure havens for women and children and emphasizing accessible reporting avenues for abuse tirelessly advocated for their safety and well-being. Engaging proactively with community leaders, women's collectives, and child protection agencies fostered collaborative endeavors to address identified concerns and streamline coordination efforts. Moreover, by seamlessly integrating PGI considerations across all facets of response efforts ensured holistic inclusivity and protection for vulnerable cohorts, thereby fortifying the resilience of communities in the face of adversity.

## Lessons Learnt

The lessons learned underscore the imperative of integrating Protection, Gender and Inclusion Issues (PGI) considerations across all phases of disaster management, from preparedness through recovery, to ensure comprehensive inclusivity and protection for vulnerable populations. Collaborating closely with community leaders, women's collectives, and youth organizations proved pivotal in not only raising awareness but also in addressing concerns and fostering a culture of reporting. By establishing diverse and confidential channels for reporting abuse, accessible to individuals of all genders, ages, and abilities enhanced the likelihood of survivors seeking support. Furthermore, equipping local responders and community members with the requisite knowledge and skills to identify, prevent and effectively respond to PGI concerns emerged as a cornerstone for building resilient and empowered communities capable of navigating future challenges with greater efficacy and compassion.

## Challenges

Addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by gender-based violence (GBV), child protection deficits, and the nuanced needs of vulnerable populations in communities demanded a holistic approach. Faced with lack of awareness of these issues, along with limited number of trained personnel and dedicated safe spaces, FRCS confronted formidable obstacles in providing comprehensive survivor support. Furthermore, ensuring equitable access to information, services, and meaningful participation for marginalized groups,



including persons with disabilities, necessitated heightened sensitivity and tailored interventions to bridge existing gaps and foster inclusive resilience within these communities.



## Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

**Budget:** CHF 32,918

**Targeted Persons:** 7,500

**Assisted Persons:** 6,200

### Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people reached by RCRC through disaster risk reduction public awareness messaging and public education campaigns (PAPE)	7,500	6,200
# of EOC activated	1	2
# of assessments conducted based on the standard IFRC assessment guidelines.	1	1

### Narrative description of achievements

The response achievements stand as pillars of resilience in the face of cyclones and climate change impacts. Through extensive public awareness campaigns, FRCS reached potentially thousands, enhancing community preparedness and understanding of disaster risks. Early activation of Emergency Operation Centers (EOCs) facilitated swift and coordinated responses, supported resource mobilization and information sharing among stakeholders. Guided by IFRC guidelines, the needs assessments meticulously identified priorities, guiding targeted interventions and facilitating efficient recovery efforts, thereby laying the groundwork for sustainable resilience building within affected communities.

### Lessons Learnt

The lessons learned from DREF intervention highlight the importance of empowering communities to take ownership of preparedness measures through comprehensive training, provision of resources, and active engagement of local leadership. Using a hybrid approach that combines traditional communication methods such as radio announcements with innovative technologies like mobile applications enables to reach wider audiences effectively. Moreover, fostering collaboration with local authorities, NGOs, and community groups emerges as indispensable for ensuring effective risk reduction strategies and facilitating sustainable recovery efforts. Additionally, the significance of regularly assessing the effectiveness of Risk Reduction, Climate Action, and Resilience (RRCAR) programs cannot be overstated, emphasizing the need to adapt strategies based on lessons learned and evolving community needs to ensure their continued efficacy and relevance.

### Challenges

Although the DREF supported in enhancing community preparedness and response to cyclones and climate change, there were few challenges encountered. Despite FRCS efforts, reaching remote or marginalized communities with messages and campaigns remained an obstacle, constrained by access limitations, communication barriers, and resource constraints. Additionally, balancing immediate needs with long-term preparedness measures proved intricate, demanding sustained engagement and capacity-building efforts within communities. The collection of accurate and comprehensive data for needs assessments was further complicated by infrastructure damage, displacement, and limited resources in the aftermath of disasters. Moreover, addressing pre-existing social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities posed a critical consideration for effective disaster risk reduction, necessitating a holistic approach to building long-term resilience within these communities.





## Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 425

Targeted Persons: 7,498

Assisted Persons: 0

### Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of hotline activated	1	1

### Narrative description of achievements

The activation of a hotline number for Tropical Cyclone Mal proved to be a valuable tool for community engagement and accountability measures. The number was effectively advertised and utilized by the public, resulting in the reception of 20 calls. The calls were promptly accommodated, demonstrating a responsive and transparent approach to addressing community concerns and inquiries. By actively promoting and leveraging the hotline, the response team fostered trust and transparency with the affected population, ensuring that their voices were heard and their needs were addressed in a timely manner. This proactive communication channel not only facilitated information dissemination but also provided a platform for community feedback and engagement, ultimately enhancing accountability and promoting a more inclusive disaster response effort.

### Lessons Learnt

The implementation of the hotline for Tropical Cyclone Mal provided valuable insights into effective community engagement and accountability measures during disaster response. Key lessons learned include the importance of anticipating and addressing potential challenges in managing call volume, ensuring accessibility for all community members, and sustaining engagement beyond the initial response phase. Proactive measures, such as expanding call handling capacity, utilizing multiple communication channels to reach diverse populations and implementing long-term engagement strategies are crucial for enhancing the hotline's utility and effectiveness in future disaster response efforts. By continuously adapting and improving communication strategies based on lessons learned, response teams can better meet the needs of affected communities and strengthen accountability mechanisms during times of crisis.

### Challenges

Despite the successful implementation of the hotline for Tropical Cyclone Mal, several challenges emerged during its utilization. One challenge was managing the volume of calls received especially in the night, as the team accommodated a total of 20 calls, suggesting potentially limited capacity to handle a larger influx of inquiries during peak periods. Additionally, ensuring accessibility for all members of the community, particularly those with limited access to technology or communication networks, presented a significant hurdle. Moreover, maintaining the hotline's effectiveness over an extended duration and sustaining community engagement beyond the immediate aftermath of the cyclone posed ongoing challenges. Despite these obstacles, proactive measures to address these challenges can further enhance the hotline's utility as a tool for community engagement and accountability in future disaster response efforts.



## Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 8,070

Targeted Persons: 0

Assisted Persons: 0

### Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of shelter cluster coordination meeting	2	2



# of monitoring visit	2	2
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## Narrative description of achievements

The meetings underscored the urgency of enhancing preparedness efforts in urban centers such as Suva, with a particular focus on the availability and deployment of pre-positioned shelter toolkits. Partners engaged in discussions aimed at harnessing expertise in mock-tie-down initiatives, advancing Building Back Safer (BBS) programs and refining Terms of Reference to optimize response strategies. These deliberations culminated in a collective commitment to conduct a simulation exercise, aimed at assessing the effectiveness of disaster response mechanisms and identifying areas for improvement.

Furthermore, the session served as a platform for shelter cluster partners to provide comprehensive updates on the progress of their respective divisions and ongoing activities. This exchange of information facilitated a shared understanding of current initiatives, challenges, and opportunities, laying the groundwork for enhanced collaboration and coordination within the response framework. Likewise, two monitoring visits were conducted to ensure the smooth functioning of the operation as well as providing moral support to the volunteers in the affected areas.

## Lessons Learnt

The significance of pre-positioning resources was emphasized, highlighting how strategically locating essential supplies in urban areas like Suva can significantly increase the effectiveness of initial disaster response efforts. This proactive measure ensures swift access to critical resources, minimizing response time and maximizing the support provided to affected communities.

Collaborative efforts were underscored as essential for enhancing response capabilities within the Shelter Cluster. By fostering partnerships and sharing expertise and resources, the collective capacity to respond to emergencies is strengthened. This collaborative approach enables more efficient and comprehensive support to be delivered to those in need during times of crisis.

The importance of testing and adapting response plans through simulation exercises was emphasized as a crucial step in preparedness. By conducting simulations, weaknesses in disaster response plans can be identified and addressed before an actual event occurs. This iterative process allows for continuous improvement.

Lastly, inclusive response planning was emphasized as vital for addressing the diverse needs of affected populations. Timely availability of data and collaborative planning efforts are essential for ensuring that response strategies are tailored to meet the specific needs of all individuals and communities. By adopting an inclusive approach, the Shelter Cluster can better serve those most vulnerable during times of crisis.

## Challenges

1. The insufficiency of shelter toolkits in urban areas raises significant concerns regarding the community's response capacity. While there is shelter kits available, they are insufficient to adequately cover the urban population, highlighting a gap in preparedness efforts.
2. Partners face challenges in promptly formulating response plans due to limited information availability, exacerbating stress for Red Cross personnel who often handle the responsibility of data collection and dissemination. This delay also impacts other partners awaiting crucial information, leading to prolonged response planning processes. Meeting the diverse needs of partners, such as the Pacific Disability Forum, adds complexity to response efforts, requiring careful attention and coordination to ensure inclusive and effective shelter response planning.



## National Society Strengthening

**Budget:** CHF 37,530

**Targeted Persons:** 240

**Assisted Persons:** 0

## Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers insured	240	240



# of posts and communication on media platforms	5	20
# of lesson learned workshop conducted	1	1

## Narrative description of achievements

With 240 volunteers insured, showed the commitment to ensure their safety and well-being as they dedicate their time to service. Moreover, this insurance coverage fosters increased confidence among volunteers, empowering them to participate more actively and take on challenging tasks with greater assurance. The conduct of a lesson-learned workshop further underscores dedication to continuous reflection and improvement, demonstrating a proactive approach to refining practices based on past experiences and insights gained from volunteer engagement.

## Lessons Learnt

Investing in volunteer insurance demonstrates a commitment to their safety and well-being. It is important to explore cost-effective and targeted insurance coverage options while clearly communicating the availability and limitations of insurance to volunteers. Leveraging media platforms for communication and outreach can enhance engagement, but consistency and quality content are essential for effectiveness. Moreover, expanding the scope of workshops and reaching a broader audience can maximize their impact on learning and improvement.

## Challenges

The challenges regarding resource allocation and cost management may arise when securing insurance for a large volunteer base, especially in contexts with limited financial resources. Balancing the need for comprehensive coverage with budgetary constraints requires strategic decision-making and possibly seeking alternative funding sources or negotiating insurance packages tailored to specific volunteer roles and risks. Additionally, ensuring widespread participation and engagement in lesson-learned workshops poses a challenge, particularly in reaching remote or marginalized communities and involving stakeholders with diverse perspectives. Overcoming these challenges necessitates innovative approaches to communication and collaboration, including leveraging technology for virtual workshops and partnerships with local organizations to facilitate broader dissemination of lessons learned.



# Financial Report

## DREF Operation

Final FINANCIAL REPORT

### MDRFJ007 - Fiji - Cyclone Mal

Operating Timeframe: 14 Nov 2023 to 31 Dec 2023

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/11-2024/3	Operation	MDRFJ007
Budget Timeframe	2023/11-2023/12	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 29/Apr/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

### I. Summary

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funds &amp; Other Income</b>	<b>142,018</b>
DREF Response Pillar	142,018
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>-54,731</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>87,287</b>

### II. Expenditure by planned operations / enabling approaches

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items	22,299	4,712	17,587
PO02 - Livelihoods			0
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash			0
PO04 - Health	19,114		19,114
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	16,990	92	16,898
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion	4,672		4,672
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	32,918	30,043	2,875
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability	425		425
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
<b>Planned Operations Total</b>	<b>96,417</b>	<b>34,847</b>	<b>61,570</b>
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	8,070		8,070
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	37,530	19,884	17,647
<b>Enabling Approaches Total</b>	<b>45,601</b>	<b>19,884</b>	<b>25,717</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>142,018</b>	<b>54,731</b>	<b>87,287</b>

[Click here for the complete financial report](#)

## Please explain variances (if any)

The final track of the cyclone diverts from the initial trajectory forecasted, resulting in less impact. With such, less expenses were incurred as there were no significant damages to area of focus. The expenditures recorded on the operation were mainly on volunteers mobilisation cost and trainings workshop. The remaining DREF balance of CHF 87,287 will be returned to the DREF pot.

# Contact Information

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[Click here for reference](#)

