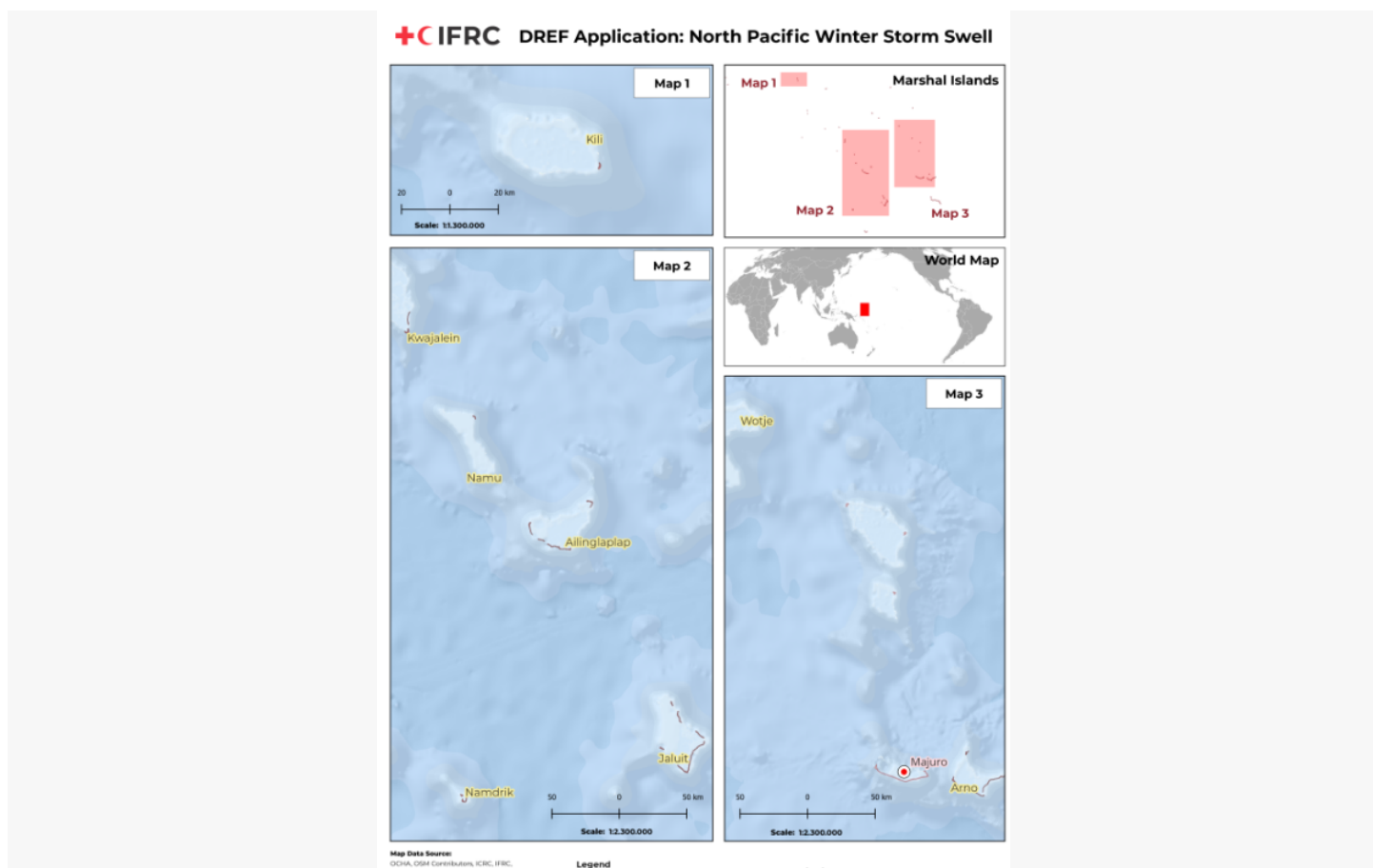




Damages caused by the Winter Storm Swell (Photo: MIRCS)

Appeal: MDRMH003	Country: Marshall Islands	Hazard: Storm Surge	Type of DREF: Assessment
Crisis Category: Yellow	Event Onset: Sudden	DREF Allocation: CHF 50,024	
Glide Number: 2024-000006	People Affected: 19,532 people	People Targeted: 19,532 people	
Operation Start Date: 2024-01-30	Operation Timeframe: 2 months	Operation End Date: 31-03-2024	DREF Published: 31-01-2024
Targeted Areas: Ratak Chain, Ralik Chain			

Description of the Event



Map of affected Atolls in Marshall Island

Date of event / Date when the trigger was met

2024-01-22

What happened, where and when?

On the night of 22 January 2024, a significant water and wave-related event occurred due to a potent winter storm system in the far northern Pacific. This event primarily impacted the Marshall Islands, particularly the Roi Namur Islet in the northern sector of Kwajalein Atoll, which is part of the US Military base. Notably, this incident involved weather-driven waves and inundation, distinct from a tsunami.

The powerful winds associated with the storm system generated a substantial swell that affected Roi-Namur and other areas such as Arno Atoll and the runway in Ailinglaplap. There are suspicions that additional islands and atolls (namely: Jaluit, Arno, Namu, Ailinglaplap, Wotje, Jabot, Namdrik, Kili, Kwajalein) may have been affected, although ground reports are limited and experiencing delays due to communication and infrastructure challenges.

Collectively, a total of 19,532 people live on those islands. In the neighboring Federated State of Micronesia (FSM), islands also encountered inundation, leading to evacuations from coastal areas in Kosrae. According to information from NOAA, this event appears to be more severe than the flood in December 2008 that affected RMI and is comparable to the December 2021 King Tide inundation event across the FSM.





MIRCS team assessing the Impact of the Winter Storm Swell (Photo: MIRCS)

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. Radio New Zealand	https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/507233/freak-waves-cause-damage-at-us-army-base-shut-airports-in-remote-islands

Current National Society Actions

Start date of National Society actions

2024-01-23

Water, Sanitation And Hygiene	There is an evolving drought situation in the North Pacific, hence the MIRCS will ensure to complete a multi-sectoral assessment to gather the true picture of the vulnerable communities.
Protection, Gender And Inclusion	Refresher online training with volunteers and staff to be compliant with policies while completing assessments/responding.
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery	Community Disaster Committees have been activating their disaster response plan. DRM personnel in MIRCS have been involved in receiving and disseminating information from staff as well as volunteers at the branches.
Community Engagement And Accountability	Disseminating information on MIRCS actions on the ground. Collect stories from beneficiaries and feedback on relief item usage.



<p>Coordination</p>	<p>Coordination efforts have been underway since the onset of the Winter Storm swell on 22 January 2023. The government took a proactive initiative by facilitating a joint assessment involving partners to survey the affected atolls. However, this initiative faced significant challenges due to the prevailing strong currents. Recognizing these obstacles, the government convened a Disaster Management Council meeting to deliberate on effective strategies for responding to the impacts of the Winter Storm swell. During this crucial meeting, the MIRCS presented pertinent information and insights, contributing to collaborative planning efforts.</p> <p>The inclusion of MIRCS in the Disaster Management Council meeting highlights the integral role of the National Society in shaping any response strategy. The insights and information presented by MIRCS serve as a valuable resource in devising a well-informed and comprehensive plan. Additionally, the involvement of the IFRC, both on-site and remotely, underscores the commitment to providing continuous support to MIRCS and the government. This collaborative approach ensures a unified and coordinated response to address the multifaceted challenges posed by the Winter Storm.</p> <p>Moving forward, sustaining this coordination momentum is essential for an effective and streamlined response. Establishing clear communication channels, defining roles and responsibilities, and regularly convening coordination meetings will further enhance the collective efforts of all stakeholders. The IFRC's continuous support, both on the ground and remotely, strengthens the collaborative response mechanism, reflecting a concerted commitment to addressing the immediate and long-term needs arising from the Winter Storm in the Marshall Islands.</p>
<p>National Society Readiness</p>	<p>MIRCS maintains an active information-seeking process, persistently requesting updates from its branches and the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). There is strong coordination that exists between the NDMO and the MIRCS. Since the onset of the disaster, MIRCS staff and the authorities have been coordinating closely, considering the limited resources available at the moment.</p> <p>MIRCS has disaster preparedness stocks prepositioned in storage containers. The national society also has staff and volunteers trained in disaster assessments, distribution of relief items, and logistics.</p> <p>MIRCS is a young national society that became a member of the IFRC in 2019. It has been progressing well in building the structure and capacities for disaster response.</p> <p>Considering the Marshall Islands is an island country in the North Pacific Ocean, it faces considerable challenges in terms of logistics, even for assessments. The national society has a strong coordination and resource-sharing mechanism with in-country stakeholders that allows it to overcome logistical challenges.</p> <p>The current stock level of MIRCS can assist at least 400 households with emergency shelter assistance and essential household items. This includes 840 tarpaulins, 418 shelter toolkits, 824 mosquito nets, 406 kitchen sets, 640 jerry cans, 33 solar lamps, and 1,182 blankets. There is an urgent need for hygiene kits, sleeping mats, and solar lamps.</p>
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>MIRCS has initiated its assessment of the situation in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Office. The national society and the NDMO visited Arno, an island that has been struck by the swell, with a population of 390 people. The initial assessment of this island revealed that the houses have been swept away by the waves, leaving only the foundations behind. Families have lost all their belongings, and the rainwater harvesting systems, one of the sources of water, are damaged. The other source of water on the island, hand-dug wells, is filled with stone, sand, and salty water. People are traumatized and have taken shelter on the other part of the island closer to the reef. Additionally, some shops on the island are damaged, and boats, the primary means of commuting to nearby islands, are also affected. It is important to note that this observation is based on one island, and it is anticipated that there are 9-10 additional atolls and islands impacted by the swell.</p>



	<p>Given the current resources of the national society, MIRCS is still unable to reach all the atolls and islands, recognizing the costliness of traveling to these remote locations. Therefore, the national society intends to seek funding from the DREF to conduct assessments of the affected atolls and islands, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the affected population. This will allow the national society to determine the scope and scale of the response if required.</p>
Resource Mobilization	<p>MIRCS has strategically planned to engage at least 30 dedicated volunteers, with the possibility of mobilizing up to 50 volunteers if required, accompanied by 8 staff members, for the crucial tasks of conducting the initial assessment and facilitating the distribution of relief items. These volunteers have undergone comprehensive training in various areas, including Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Psychosocial Support (PSS), Shelter, WASH, First Aid, and Restoring Family Links (RFL), equipping them with the necessary skills to carry out their roles effectively. The IFRC-DREF allocation will be specifically directed towards assessing the level and type of damage and, consequently, the needs of the affected people. Upon the completion of the assessment and should the response need to escalate, MIRCS will also be able to determine the number of relief items (essential WASH, health, emergency shelter, and household items) for branches and communities in the affected atolls and islands.</p> <p>The IFRC-DREF support will cover vital aspects of the assessment on these remote islands, such as transportation, volunteer allowances, field communication expenses, and the distribution of essential supplies such as food items and water.</p> <p>In addition, the IFRC-DREF assessment is scheduled over the next two months. The IFRC North Pacific Sub-Delegation and Pacific Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) will play a pivotal role by providing operational assistance in assessments, as well as any distribution and post-distribution monitoring. Additionally, the CCD's finance, logistics, and Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) teams will offer guidance and support wherever necessary, contributing to the seamless execution of relief operations in any response required for the winter storm in the Marshall Islands.</p>
Activation Of Contingency Plans	<p>Leveraging the existing MIRCS logistics, disaster planning, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the organization will provide ongoing guidance and support to branch volunteers and staff involved in the operation. MIRCS is committed to ensuring the seamless execution of assessment and relief efforts by offering comprehensive briefings to its skilled staff and volunteers, emphasizing adherence to their response SOPs for a well-coordinated and effective Winter Storm response.</p>
National Society EOC	<p>EOC is not being activated yet.</p>
Other	<p>The main purpose of the IFRC-DREF is to conduct a thorough damage and needs assessment on the ground. In the North Pacific scenario, it is not advisable to travel long distances just to carry out the assessment. Therefore, MIRCS teams will be carrying essential household items/non-food items (NFIs) from the Disaster Preparedness stocks, water and food, and distributing them based on the situation. Assessment expenses along with food and water supply (which is a small component) will be supported by this IFRC-DREF.</p>

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	<p>The IFRC North Pacific sub office is coordinating with the USAID representative in the country based in the USA Embassy in Marshall Islands and also the USAID Regional representative based in Hawaii. The coordination meetings between USAID, IFRC, MIRCS and NDMO were held on 25-26 January 2024. This coordination mechanism will be further strengthened through the joint field visits.</p>
Participating National Societies	<p>Australian Red Cross is informed and communicating on the needs.</p>



ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

No presence in the country

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	The government, in collaboration with MIRCS, conducted a swift evaluation of Arno Atoll, uncovering substantial damages. Out of the five islands within the atoll, only two were assessed, affecting a population of approximately 390 individuals. The assessment encompassed four communities, where 78 households bore the full impact of the waves. Ongoing assessments are being carried out in the remaining atolls.
UN or other actors	None

Are there major coordination mechanism in place? NDMO has been coordinating the response through regular meetings.

Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The objective of this IFRC-DREF operation is to undertake a comprehensive multi-sectoral assessment of the winter storm's impact, meticulously examining its consequences. Subsequently, the aim is to formulate a detailed action plan that delineates any specific measures to be implemented. This strategic approach ensures a systematic and well-informed response to address the diverse challenges arising from the winter storm, fostering a more resilient and adaptive recovery process for the affected communities. Lifesaving needs such as food and water will also be addressed during these assessments, considering the vast locations and hard-to-reach communities.

Operation strategy rationale

The operational plan aligns entirely with IFRC policies, procedures, and commitments. Its primary objective is to swiftly conduct an assessment of the atolls and islands to understand the needs of the families significantly impacted by inundation and associated events in the Marshall Islands. Currently, the MIRC's focus is solely on assessment and addressing immediate needs, with no scheduled plans for post-relief intervention at this stage.

The IFRC-DREF allocation aims to support an assessment to identify the needs of households and provide a small relief distribution during the assessment visits. The National Society will also carry NFIs from its disaster preparedness (DP) stocks as needed so that the families can be provided with some immediate assistance during the assessment visit. The replenishment of the DP stocks will be considered at a later stage when the assessment data is available. To deliver the assistance, operational support, and assessment teams will be mobilized and deployed with the support of the IFRC-DREF allocation. The operation will be implemented over two months, and an assessment report will be made available by the end of the IFRC-DREF operation.

MIRCS plans to involve 30 dedicated volunteers, with the possibility to mobilize up to 50 volunteers depending on the rotation and needs, along with 8 staff members in conducting the initial assessment and distribution of relief items. These volunteers have undergone comprehensive training in PGI, PSS, Shelter, WASH, First Aid, and RFL. The IFRC-DREF allocation encompasses the transportation of essential NFIs such as cooking utensils, shelter tool kits, blankets, tarpaulins, etc., along with the purchase and distribution of food and water as needed. Furthermore, it will cover volunteer allowances, insurance, and communication/travel/fuel expenses in the field. MIRCS is also coordinating with various stakeholders, including NDMO, RMI relevant authorities, and embassies for this response in collaboration with the IFRC North Pacific Sub office.

Additionally, the IFRC North Pacific Sub office will provide hands-on support to the National Society, and CCD will extend support from technical sectors as required. The CCD's finance, logistics, and PMER teams will offer guidance wherever necessary, along with any technical support for DM, Health, WASH as needed. The main aim of the IFRC-DREF is for assessment and for a small relief distribution based on the reported damage and anticipated needs, and the assessments will be designed and conducted in reference to the IFRC Assessment Methodologies and Analytical Framework.



Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through this operation?

The objective of the IFRC-DREF operation is to conduct a comprehensive multi-sectoral assessment of damages of the affected atolls and islands, meticulously evaluating the extent of the impact. Concurrently, it seeks to meet the immediate needs of households by supplying essential food items, safe drinking water, and prepositioned NFIs.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The targeted communities comprise those directly affected by winter storms swell, with specific attention directed towards individuals with special needs. This focused approach ensures that relief efforts will address the unique challenges faced by the most vulnerable populations. Additionally, an inclusive outreach strategy will be proposed to identify and cater to the diverse needs within these communities, ensuring a comprehensive and equitable response.

Total Targeted Population

Rural	100%	Urban	0%
People with disabilities (estimated)	1%		
Total targeted population	19,532		

Risk and Security Considerations

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

Risk	Mitigation action
High waves in the ocean and weather condition	Mitigation Actions The staff and volunteers will be advised not to take unnecessary risks. If the travel is not possible, they should return to the coast. While travelling they will always be wearing life jackets and follow IFRC security guidelines at all times.
High fuel prices and unavailability of boats may delay the assessment	The national society will try its best to organize the fuel and boats through coordination with various keyholders.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

The usual risks while commuting through the Pacific Ocean remain. The National Society's security framework will be applicable for the duration of the operation to its 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, will be applicable. All IFRC and RCRC staff and volunteers are encouraged to complete the IFRC Stay Safe e-learning courses. Staff and volunteers are 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 will follow the current IFRC travel approval process and current health advisories. There are currently no significant security concerns or threats to NS and IFRC personnel other than those related to the operating environment.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

No



Planned Intervention



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

DREF Allocation: CHF 50,024

Budget: CHF 1,203

Targeted Persons: 19,532

Indicators

Title	Target
# of households reached with food assistance	100

Priority Actions

1. Distribute food based on the needs alongside the assessment and data collection.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

DREF Allocation: CHF 50,024

Budget: CHF 3,425

Targeted Persons: 19,532

Indicators

Title	Target
# of households reached with safe drinking water	100

Priority Actions

1. Provide safe drinking water to affected families based on the needs alongside the assessment and data collection.



Secretariat Services

DREF Allocation: CHF 50,024

Budget: -

Targeted Persons: -

Indicators

Title	Target
# of monitoring visits conducted	1



Priority Actions

1. Provide technical support to MIRCS.
2. Conduct monitoring visit.



National Society Strengthening

DREF Allocation: CHF 50,024

Budget: CHF 45,395

Targeted Persons: 50

Indicators

Title	Target
# of assessment report developed and disseminated	1
# of volunteers insured for the operation	50
# of multi-sectoral assessments conducted	100
# of Lessons Learned workshop conducted	1

Priority Actions

1. Brief staff and volunteers on assessment.
2. Provide insurance coverage for volunteers.
3. Carry out multi-sectoral assessment.
4. Develop data analysis and assessment report.
5. Conduct Lessons Learned workshop.

About Support Services

How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.

MIRCS has strategically planned to engage at least 30 dedicated volunteers, with the possibility to mobilize up to 50 volunteers if required, accompanied by 8 staff members, for the crucial tasks of conducting the initial assessment and facilitating the distribution of relief items. These volunteers have undergone comprehensive training in various areas, including PGI, PSS, Shelter, WASH, First Aid, and RFL, equipping them with the necessary skills to carry out their roles effectively. The IFRC-DREF allocation will be specifically directed towards assessing the level and type of damage, and consequently, the needs of the affected people. Upon the completion of the assessment and should the response need to escalate, MIRCS will also be able to determine the number of relief items (essential WASH, health, emergency shelter, and household items) for branches and communities in the affected atolls and islands.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

MDRMH003 - Marshall Islands Red Cross Society North Pacific Winter Storm Swell

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	4,628
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0
Livelihoods	1,203
Multi-purpose Cash	0
Health	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	3,425
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	0
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	45,395
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	0
National Society Strengthening	45,395
TOTAL BUDGET	50,024

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)



Contact Information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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IFRC focal point for the emergency: Nusrat Hassan, Operation Coordinator Pacific, Nusrat.HASSAN@ifrc.org

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[Click here for the reference](#)

