

## **DREF Final Report**

**Syria Wild Fire 2023** 

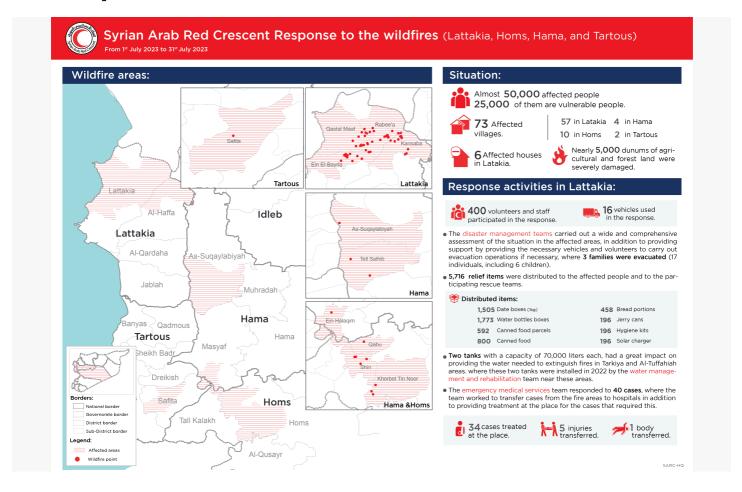


SARC volunteers supporting with firefighting response.

Appeal: MDRSY010	Total DREF Allocation:	Crisis Category:	Hazard:
	CHF 499,059	Yellow	<b>Fire</b>
Glide Number:	People Affected:	People Targeted:	People Assisted:
WF-2023-000129-SYR	50,000 people	10,000 people	
Event Onset: Sudden	Operation Start Date: 10-08-2023	Operational End Date: 29-02-2024	Total Operating Timeframe: 6 months
Targeted Regions: <b>Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Tartous</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**



#### Date of event

25-07-2023

#### What happened, where and when?

Multiple Fires have broken out around the coastal and central areas in Syria. Possible reasons behind these fires differ from warm eastern winds that are active during this time of the year in Syria, many dry herbs that burn quickly while moisture content of the trees is less during summer, in addition to high temperatures. It is not excluded that these fires could be caused by human.

The fires started since end of June in Homs, and the intensity of the fires increased from 15 July 2023 with the peak intensity on 25 July and lasted for few days, including Homs, Hama, and Latakia governorates. Most of the fires were in rugged mountainous remote areas. The intensity and size of bushfires in some areas have led to the creation of their own weather systems, generating pyro cumulonimbus clouds, trapping heat, and generating strong wind, in turn sparking further fires. High winds have also helped the bushfires to spread, with some fires jumping over highways and roads. These fires led to material and environmental damage, as a few homes of a number of residents were torched, in addition to burning agricultural crops on which they depend as a main source of livelihood, in addition to burning a large part of the vegetation, forests, and natural reserves.

Until the start date of operation, the directly affected family's numbers were less compared with previous years. Hazards mentioned above were raising expectations for more fires during the coming days, while the indirect effect of these fires would increase challenges to alleviate the suffering of the families in the affected areas and protect the remaining resilience in these communities.







#### **Scope and Scale**

The communities affected by the recent fires were already exhausted due to complicated reasons, including the effects of the continuous Syrian crisis, climate change, and the last earthquake.

Families were struggling to hold their resilience and protect their livelihoods, among a huge lack of resources, funding, aid, water, electricity, proper infrastructure, etc. Severe economic crises force them to survive by adapting different modalities and strategies, which in many cases increase the challenges to support them.

The most vulnerable categories were getting wider and not limited to the elderly, people with disabilities, and children. While identifying indicators to specify the priority of SARC response, assessment results began including people who were never in need of aid before, and unfortunately, the impact of these disasters and incidents has a long-term effect, which increases the load on Humanitarian teams. If the basics were not covered, early recovery initiatives would be faced with multiple challenges in the absence of parallel solutions.

until the start date of operation, 73 villages, including around 50,000 people, were affected by fires (Lattakia - Homs - Hama - Tatus) and more than 5,000,000 m2 were burned, including 6 houses that were completely damaged. Most displaced families chose to reside with host communities.

## **National Society Actions**

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?

Νo

## **IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event**

Secretariat	In addition to the regular support, IFRC is coordinating and supporting SARC's team technically to plan for the next phases to cover the upcoming needs. Through this DREF, IFRC is providing the financial support to cover urgent needs aligned with SARC mandate.
Participating National Societies	RCRC actors continue their support to SARC on regular bases, allowing the team to be the first responder, ready to scale up as per needs and support such a response.

## ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

ICRC has a regular program support to the affected branches to cover their running costs.



## Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	No
National authorities	All the Government institutions and public authorities in the affected areas were alerted and responding, supported by other governorates' capacities, staff, and equipment, coordinating with all stakeholders through MOFA and HRC. Emergency community centers were prepared to accept the evacuated people from the fires and to host those who were not able to. In coordination with SARC and other NGOs, a coordinated approach was agreed to respond to the needs, including the provision of relief support, also considering resilience and recovery.
UN or other actors	UN prepared in-kind materials in addition to coordination with field teams to support shelters and upcoming needs, trying to mobilize stocks in warehouses.

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

SARC is a member of the High Relief Committee (HRC), and each branch is a member of the sub-relief committee in their respective governorate. The coordination mechanisms were already in place, including the partners. SARC plays a pivotal role in coordination between movement partners and HRC, in addition to UN agencies on both levels at HQ and Governorates (local level - with UN's sub-offices). SARC leads all emergency responses under its mandate, respecting partners' interests (movement, UN, and INGOs).

## **Needs (Gaps) Identified**



## **Livelihoods And Basic Needs**

In addition to the loss and damage of their homes and possessions, the directly impacted population had also suffered losses in their assets and means of living. It would be greatly challenging for communities in fire-affected, especially rural areas, and those displaced to cover their immediate food needs, even more to protect and build resilient livelihoods in light of the climate intensity. Coverage of short-term needs was the priority for the affected people by the wildfires, especially those who remain displaced. These would require food and non-food items to be able to meet their immediate basic needs in the emergency phase.



#### Multi purpose cash grants

To contribute to meeting the immediate and urgent needs of families affected by the wildfires, multipurpose cash was indicated as a priority for the ongoing response and will allow people affected a wider and more dignified choice of assistance, based on their preferences. While multipurpose cash alone cannot cover all the sectors and needs, it is a valuable complement for affected households, and being unrestricted in nature, supported households can prioritize according to their individual needs. The value considered covering the Minimum Expenditure Basket for three months, and SARC ensured harmonization and coordination with the Cash Working Group. This intended support will be provided through an unconditional and unrestricted cash transfer value once-off through remittance companies.

Cash assistance ensured people have the freedom, dignity, and independence to decide on their own recovery. It also supported local economies by re-stimulating the markets in areas where affected people live.



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Regarding the management of safe water, hydration was needed for those affected, while there might be no access to safe water in areas damaged by the fires. Some did not have the necessary facilities for safe water consumption and sanitation. In terms of hygiene, necessary items were missing due to their sudden evacuations from their houses.



## Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

Raising community awareness of the risks of fires and appropriate actions and mitigation measures needed to be reinforced through the dissemination of public awareness and key messages.

## **Operational Strategy**

#### Overall objective of the operation

Through this DREF operation, SARC aimed to support affected people by the wildfires with most vulnerability, by providing Livelihoods and Basic Needs, Multi-purpose Cash, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, and National Society Strengthening in Homs, Hama, Tartous, and Latakia with 6 months implementation.

#### **Operation strategy rationale**

Preliminary assessments indicated that the needs were mostly linked to the recovery of losses caused by the fires,

complete losses of housing and basic household items. This intervention was implemented based on the damage and needs assessment that was carried out, as well as impact data from government authorities. Therefore, the intervention was based on official data and reports that were in line with the needs of the affected population. The National Society planned to implement a multipurpose cash transfer program so that people who do not have a formal income can access the basic elements lost as well as a resilience strategy providing awareness, and fire risk mitigation. Through this DREF, SARC aimed to replenish the distributed emergency stocks. The summary of the intervention was as follow:

- Replenishment of distributed stocks from onset of the disaster, including: 500 hygiene kits, 1,500 food parcels, and 2,000 drinking water bottles pack,
- Multipurpose cash: A one-time cash program to help families cover basic needs such as food, hygiene and replacement of household items. A total of 700 families to be assisted. The amount for the cash transfer program (USD 352) was calculated under averages of the basic family basket and the country's minimum breadbasket and the minimum salary. Likewise, this amount may vary once the studies and feasibility studies have been carried out.
- SARC raised community awareness of risks of fires and appropriate actions through dissemination of the Public Awareness and Public Education DRR key messages.

## **Targeting Strategy**

#### Who was targeted by this operation?

This operation aimed to assist 10,000 affected people in the 4 governorates, Latakia, Hama, Homs, Tartous. and affected directly or indirectly by the recent fires.

#### Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

SARC's identified criteria from previous wildfires that were set to be measured based on multiple indicators have changed for different sectors due to an increase in the severity and complexity of the overall context. Ongoing assessments were indicating new criteria that look into vulnerability changes in the families' profiles, while prioritize the sectorial needs which allow to include the most vulnerable families affected by the recent incidents in light of worsening economic situation, so they can hold to remaining resilience they have to stabilize communities.

General selection criteria would be the base line but not limited to: HHs in areas with the highest geographical impact, loss of essential assets and resources, specific vulnerabilities in the households such as multiple children, families with PWD, loss of livelihoods (agricultural crops/trees etc.).

gộ,

## **Total Targeted Population**

Women	5,000	Rural	-
Girls (under 18)	-	Urban	-
Men	5,000	People with disabilities (estimated)	10%
Boys (under 18)	-		
Total targeted population	10,000		

# Risk and Security Considerations (including "management")

Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.		
Risk	Mitigation action	
Expected risk of revival of the wildfires in nearby areas due to continuity of high temperatures and other enabling factors.	Continuous monitoring and coordination with the local authorities on the alerts of weather related hazards. Activation of mitigating measures and resources to the ongoing response operation, depending on location of the uprising fires.	
Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation:		
Risks related to weapon contamination in some areas by the extens	ion of fires and exposure to the unexploded remnants.	
Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?	Yes	

## **Implementation**



## **Livelihoods And Basic Needs**

**Budget:** CHF 110,228 **Targeted Persons:** 7,500 **Assisted Persons:** 10,260

#### **Indicators**

Title	Target	Actual
# of food parcels procured	1,500	1,806

#### Narrative description of achievements

• The Syrian Arab Red Crescent distributed ready-to-eat canned and food baskets to families who were forced to leave their homes during the fires, in addition to distributing them to the firefighting and civil defense teams that worked for days to extinguish the fires, in addition to distributing bread and dates to those affected. After the fires were extinguished and families returned to their homes, SARC disaster management volunteers collected data, conducted an assessment of the 600 affected families, determined the type of damage,



and then distributed food baskets to these families, each family was targeted with three baskets.

The DREF aimed at replenishing the items distributed and 1500 food parcels were procured and stocked. In addition, during the operation, some savings were made due to certain activities not taking place mainly the water bottles distribution and the awareness raising messages. The decision was made not to proceed with these activities due to changing context and other pressing needs. Approval was sought and received for this amendment. With these savings, approval was received to procure 306 additional food parcels that were distributed to 1744 people in Lattakia who were affected by the wildfires before the end date of the DREF.

#### **Lessons Learnt**

- The planned lessons learned workshop had to be postponed due to logistical issues and will be performed through a joint Lessons learned workshop for the Earthquake operation that is ongoing in the same area and implemented by the same teams. Results will be communicated once it is implemented.
- The lessons learned from the previous Fires DREF Operation in 2020 MDRSY005 that took place in the same areas were instrumental for this operation and allowed a smooth unhindered activity roll out.

#### Challenges

• The price of the food parcel increased during the operation from the time the DREF was approved until the procurement took place due to high inflation that hit Syria in 2023. Savings had to be identified from other budget lines like the budget lines of the water bottles replenishment, awareness sessions, and operational costs.

No other major challenges were noted for this activity as SARC has a long term framework agreement with suppliers and food parcels were easily procured and dispatched to SARC warehouses for replenishment. The distribution of the 306 additional parcels was also without issues as this area was also affected by the earthquake and SARC's teams are fully trained and operational in food distributions as this is a major activity as well under the earthquake.

• Beneficiary identification was also done directly though primary data collection and validation and no issues were noted.



#### **Multi Purpose Cash**

**Budget:** CHF 263,907 **Targeted Persons:** 3,500 **Assisted Persons:** 2,459

#### **Indicators**

Title	Target	Actual
# of households receiving MPC grant	700	650

#### Narrative description of achievements

• Based on the cumulative experiences gained by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Multi-purpose Cash projects as a form of response to those affected by crises, the Disaster Management team, in collaboration with the cash team, designed a verification form for beneficiaries. The form was designed using the ODK tool to collect data through the Information Management department.

Volunteers from the Disaster Management team were trained on using the form and conducted home visits to the affected families to gather the required data. This data was later analyzed to determine the final beneficiaries of the project based on vulnerability factors.

A total of 700 visits were conducted in the provinces of Lattakia and Homs. The criteria for selecting beneficiaries were as follows:

- 1- Families affected by fires that have affected their livelihood.
- 2- Families whose living spaces were damaged by fires.
- 3- Families supported by women.
- 4- Families with members with special needs.

After data analysis of the 700 households, 650 matched the eligibility criteria and were divided as follows: 344 beneficiaries were selected in Latakia province, and 306 beneficiaries in Homs province. The cash transfer amount was determined to be 3,250,000 Syrian pounds according to the minimum expenditure basket (MEB).



The funds were sent to the beneficiaries through Al-Fouad Financial Transfers company, and the beneficiaries were informed via SMS to collect their designated transfers. Syrian Arab Red Crescent teams were present at the transfer centers to assist the beneficiaries and address any issues they might face directly. All 650 households received the cash transfer.

#### **Lessons Learnt**

A PDM exercise was conducted to assess the impact and the process. Respondents were asked to what extent the cash distributions meet their household's basic needs. The response options were: "All," "Most," "None," and "Some." The majority, 81%, indicated that the cash distributions meet some of their household's basic needs. Additionally, 10% reported that the distributions meet most of their basic needs, while 9% stated that the distributions do not meet any of their basic needs.

• The PDM report will be attached to the submission of this final report for all the details.

#### **Challenges**

• SMS messages faced some delays due to connectivity problems. To this end, SMS were sent multiple times, and direct phone calls were then conducted to the assessed households that had not collected their cash. Eventually, all families received their money.



## Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

**Budget:** CHF 43,133 **Targeted Persons:** 10,000 **Assisted Persons:** 2,657

#### **Indicators**

Title	Target	Actual
# of family hygiene kits procured	500	500
# of bottled water packs distributed	2,000	0

#### Narrative description of achievements

- During the fire response operation, SARC teams at the firefighting sites distributed clean drinking water bottles to families who had to leave their homes, as well as to firefighters from the Civil Defense and firefighting teams. In order to minimize the risk of contracting diseases due to the pollution of the environment with dust and ash from the fires, SARC teams distributed hygiene kits to families to help improve hygiene and promote a sense of dignity and care for affected families.
- In response to these activities, the DREF allowed SARC to replenish its stocks, and 500 hygiene kits were procured and stored in the warehouses as replenishment. The procurement process was done based on the long-term framework agreement that SARC already has with suppliers, and this is also currently being used for the Earthquake Operation.
- The replenishment of the water bottles was not conducted due to the fact that there was no availability in the market because of the economic crisis that Syria is dealing with. Additionally, a strategic decision was made not to purchase these bottles in order not to deplete the local market stocks, given the needs of the wider population. Approval was received to shift the allocated funds to procure additional food parcels.

#### **Lessons Learnt**

- The lessons learned from the previous Fires DREF Operation in 2020 MDRSY005 that took place in the same areas were instrumental for this operation and allowed a smooth, unhindered initial activity roll-out in terms of identification of initial needs and support to the first responders and affected community.
- Market availability and prediction of near future risks in a context affected by hyperinflation and limited access to goods due to compounding factors and disasters is an essential factor to be taken into consideration for future designs of emergency interventions.



#### **Challenges**

• The scarcity of water bottles in the market presented a challenge for replenishment. A decision was made not to proceed with this activity in order not to affect the local market and access of the population. The savings made were used to cover and increase the procurement of food parcels that was also hit by inflation.



## **Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery**

**Budget:** CHF 74,550 **Targeted Persons:** 10,000 **Assisted Persons:** 0

#### **Indicators**

Title	Target	Actual
# of people reached with awareness messaging	10,000	0

#### Narrative description of achievements

• Due to limited resources and the involvement of SARC in the Wildfires response as well as the Earthquake response that was taking place in the same governorates, capacities of the branches were stretched. Additionally, the price inflation of the food parcels required SARC to make strategic decisions and prioritize activities based on the available resources. To this end, this activity was not implemented and approval was sought and received.

#### **Lessons Learnt**

Internal capacity assessments and context-related dynamics should be relied upon when dealing with multiple emergencies occurring concurrently in the same geographical areas. The extreme fluidity of the situation in Syria during the implementation period presented challenging and differing contexts from when the intervention was designed to when implementation took place in the 6 months after the trigger event. The flexibility of the DREF allowed the National Society to adapt and adjust t the changing context in a way to respond in the most efficient way to the emergency using the available resources.

#### **Challenges**

• Inflation and organizational capacity in a context of multiple natural disasters (earthquake and wildfires) happening within a protracted crisis affected the implementation of this activity where SARC had to make strategic decisions to use the resources available to respond to the emergency that had some differences from the initial design.



Budget: CHF 5,112
Targeted Persons: 1
Assisted Persons: 1

#### **Indicators**

Title	Target	Actual
# of timely final financial reports	1	0



#### Narrative description of achievements

- Support was provided throughout the operation to the National Society at Financial, programmatic, and Operational level.
- · Activities were closed on time
- Requests for amendments and approvals were conducted on time and amended activities implemented within the timeframe of the DREF
- there was a close coordination and transparent communications between IFRC and SARC throughout the project



#### **National Society Strengthening**

**Budget:** CHF 2,129 **Targeted Persons:** 30 **Assisted Persons:** 0

#### **Indicators**

Title	Target	Actual
# of lessons learned report	1	0

#### Narrative description of achievements

- The lessons learned workshop will be done jointly with the Earthquake response workshop as both operations are taking place in the same areas with the same teams. This was also due to limited resources and complex logistics for the affected branches.
- The allocated budget will be returned to the DREF fund.
- However, a PDM exercise was conducted for the main activity of the DREF (Distribution of Cash grants). The overall goal of this post-distribution monitoring survey was to:
- 1. To collect and analyze information to determine the effectiveness of the multi-purpose cash distributions and recommend a possible solution for improvement in the subsequent multi-purpose cash distribution exercise.
- 2. To get community feedback.
- METHODOLOGY
- 1.1 Sample Design

The survey's sample size was determined based on the 635 households that received the cash transfers (310 from Homs and 334 from Lattakia). This calculation yielded a sample size of 248 participants, ensuring a margin of error of 0.05 and a 95% confidence interval.

• 1.2 Data Collection

A team of trained volunteers collected the survey data using ODK (Open Data Kit) on smartphones and tablets. The volunteers underwent refresher training provided by the SARC MEAL team with support from the IFRC PMER, which included background information about the project, a detailed walkthrough of the questionnaire, explanations of the questions, and role-playing exercises. The MEAL/IM team at headquarters pre-tested the survey questionnaire to ensure its suitability and robustness. Before administering the survey, volunteers explained its objectives to the participants and sought their voluntary participation.

1.3 Data analysis

The quantitative survey data was cleaned and analyzed using MS Excel by the IM team at the HQ. The analysis done by the IM team at the HQ focused on descriptive statistics and was presented in tables, charts, and graphs. Trends were identified by noting common conclusions and divergent views on specific questions.

#### LIMITATIONS

- •The limited time allocated for the survey put considerable pressure on the volunteers supporting data collection.
- •SARC's capacities are stretched due to the several responses in the country, in addition to the earthquakes, SARC is responding to displacement in areas of hostilities, cholera/acute watery diarrhea outbreaks, drought and water shortages, and also focusing on preparedness due to the MENA regional crisis.

#### **Lessons Learnt**

Below is the summary of the findings of the PDM:

Findings and Analysis:



- Gender of Respondents: 92% of respondents were female, while 8% were male.
- Household Composition: Most households had both adult male and female members.
- Cash Assistance: Each household received 3,250,000 SYP, meeting the Minimum Expenditure Basket for three months.
- Awareness and Communication: 97% were aware of SARC's assistance, with direct communication channels like SARC volunteers proving the most effective.
- Distribution Process: 100% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the cash transfer process, with 74% waiting less than 30 minutes at the distribution points. Additionally, 73% reported a travel time of 0 to 1 hour to the distribution points.
- Safety and Security: 100% felt safe during the distribution from Al-Fouad, reflecting the effective safety protocols put in place by SARC/Al-Fouad.

#### Recommendations and Lessons Learned:

- Recommendations from the respondents: Address specific urgent needs like medical and health needs, water infrastructure, and agricultural support.
- Lessons Learned: Direct communication and community engagement from the SARC volunteers enhanced the trust of the affected people in the cash distribution.
- $\bullet$  The full report will be shared with the submission of this report.



## **Financial Report**

bo.ifrc.org > Public Folders > Finance > Donor Reports > Appeals and Projects > DREF Operation - Standard Report 2022

Dana 1 of '

#### **DREF Operation**

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRSY010 - Syria - Wild fire

Operating Timeframe: 10 Aug 2023 to 29 Feb 2024

#### I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	499,059
DREF Response Pillar	499,059
Expenditure	-490,976
Closing Balance	8,083

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

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
PO01 - Shelter and Basic Household Items			0
PO02 - Livelihoods	110,228	185,099	-74,872
PO03 - Multi-purpose Cash	263,907	255,777	8,130
PO04 - Health			0
PO05 - Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	43,133	49,795	-6,663
PO06 - Protection, Gender and Inclusion			0
PO07 - Education			0
PO08 - Migration			0
PO09 - Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	74,550	383	74,167
PO10 - Community Engagement and Accountability			0
PO11 - Environmental Sustainability			0
Planned Operations Total	491,817	491,054	763
EA01 - Coordination and Partnerships			0
EA02 - Secretariat Services	5,112	-78	5,190
EA03 - National Society Strengthening	2,130		2,130
Enabling Approaches Total	7,242	-78	7,320
Grand Total	499,059	490,976	8,083

www.ifrc.org Saving lives, changing minds



Click here for the complete financial report



## **Contact Information**

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

National Society contact: Tammam Muhrez, Head of operations, tammam.muhrez@sarc-sy.org, +963953666635/+963114041

IFRC Appeal Manager: Dr. Hosam Faysal, Head of MENA HDCC, hosam.faysal@ifrc.org, +96171802916

IFRC Project Manager: Mads Brinch HANSEN, Head of Syria Country Office, mads.brinch@ifrc.org, +963 959 999 869

IFRC focal point for the emergency: Raja Assaf, Operations Manager, raja.assaf@ifrc.org, +96171910896

Media Contact: Rahaf Aboud, Head of communication, rahaf.aboud@sarc-sy.org, +963959999853/+963114041

Click here for reference

