

# DREF operation final report



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Costa Rica and Nicaragua: Tropical Storm Alma

DREF operation n° MDR43003  
Glide No. TC-2008-000077-CRI  
5 June 2009

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

**Summary:** CHF 200,001 (USD 190,476 or EUR 122,926) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 4 June 2008 to support the Costa Rican Red Cross and the Nicaraguan Red Cross in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,500 families (7,500 beneficiaries). The operation was originally planned to be completed in three months, but it was extended for an additional 30 days to allow the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC) to complete additional activities.

On 28 May 2008, Tropical Storm Alma caused torrential rain in the Central Pacific region of Costa Rica with gusts of wind up to 75 km per hour, affecting several regions. The storm later moved on to Nicaragua affecting seven departments on the Pacific coast, causing the death of three people, while several more went missing.

This DREF operation focused on meeting basic emergency relief needs including relief items such as blankets, plastic buckets, food, hygiene and kitchen kits. This final report documents the activities carried out by the National Societies and the impact the relief operation had on the beneficiaries.

At the end of this operation a total of 1,650 families (approximately 8,250 people) benefitted through the relief distributions in Costa Rica (1,150 families) and Nicaragua (500 families).



Distributions taking place in the community of Nagorote in Nicaragua. Source: Nicaraguan Red Cross

The Netherlands Red Cross (NRC), together with the Netherlands government generously contributed EUR 40,000 (CHF 65,400) to reimburse DREF funds for the emergency operation in Costa Rica and Nicaragua from its Silent Emergency Fund. The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, Italian, Netherlands and Norwegian governments and ECHO. Details of all donors can be found on <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/dref/donors.asp>

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## The situation

The first storm of the Pacific hurricane season, Tropical Storm Alma, started as a low pressure system off the coast of **Costa Rica** which strengthened to a Tropical Depression on the Pacific coast of Nicoya, on 28 May 2008. The Tropical Depression reached **Nicaragua** a day later, on 29 May 2008.

In **Costa Rica** heavy rain prevailed for more than 60 hours causing saturation of soil, the overflow of rivers along the coastal areas of Nicoya, Central valley, South Pacific and Central regions. 18 of 81 districts in the country were affected by the floods. The large majority of infrastructural damages were reported in the districts of Acosta, Aguirre, Cubano, Dota, Hojancha, Leon Cortes, Montes de Oro, Nandayure, Nicoya, Paquera, Perez Zeledon, Puntarenas, Santa Cruz and Tarrazu.

Other districts suffered lesser damage. Nevertheless, infrastructure such as roads, water systems and houses were affected. These districts were: Puriscal, Desamparados, Upala, San Carlos, Corredores, Alfaro Ruiz, El Guarco, La Union, Goicoechea, Naranjo, Alajuelita, Aserri and Osa.

The Pan American Highway 2, an important road in the sector known as Villa Mills, was blocked for 24 hours due to a landslide. Approximately 400 people were isolated as a result of the landslide. On 31 June, Disaster Response Units (consisting of firemen, public agencies and the CRRC) intervened in order to complete the clearing up activities so that the road could be used again. Route 34 in the sector of Parrita was also cut off by a landslide and a bridge over the Parrita River was damaged. The damages impacted on the economic situation of the region and the transit of people and commercial goods.



Distributions taking place in the community of La Paz Centro in Nicaragua. Source: Nicaraguan Red Cross

Relief items such as blankets, food parcels and mattresses were distributed by the Costa Rican government, through the National Emergency Commission (Comisión Nacional de Emergencia - CNE). The CNE constantly monitored the emergency and consequently activated its local emergency committees.

Tropical Storm Alma reached **Nicaragua** on 29 May 2008 and made landfall approximately 85 km southwest of the capital city of Managua, with winds reaching 100 km per hour. As a result of the storm, three people died and ten were reported missing. Approximately 263 families (1,390 people) from the departments of Leon, Chinandega, Masaya, Managua and Rivas were evacuated and relocated in temporary shelters, managed by the local authorities.

The most affected department by the storm was Leon, located in the southern pacific area of the country. The strong winds and severe rain damaged the roof tops of 280 houses, as well as interrupted and damaged 50 per cent of the phone and electricity networks. Most major roads, water wells and latrines sustained damages. In addition, agricultural crops were affected in some areas of Leon.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

From the beginning of the emergency the **Costa Rican Red Cross** carried out search, rescue and evacuation activities. The local branches of the CRRC in the affected areas were activated, as was the Emergency Operations Centre (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia – COE). The CRRC provided pre-hospital medical care and volunteers assisted in the temporary shelters opened for the affected people. Five relief officers from the CRRC were deployed to the Pacific coast with 4 x 4 vehicles, rescue units and ambulances to lend additional support to the branches.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross** (NRC) Damage and Needs Assessment teams performed evaluations and drew up a Plan of Action to benefit the most affected families. Ten members of the NRC National Relief Team supported the relief and distribution activities. Additionally, the NRC maintained contact with the local branches in the Pacific zone in order to carry out the plan of action. Among the planned actions carried out by the National Society were the notification of distribution activities to the beneficiaries, identification of distribution centres and distribution of relief aid.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross held coordination meetings with Partner National Societies present in the country and was closely monitoring the development of the emergency through its National Operation Centre.

The International Federation through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation Office for Central America and Mexico in Panama were in close contact, monitoring the situation and coordinating relief activities with both National Societies.

## Progress towards objectives

### Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

**Objective 1: 1,500 families (7,500 people) will benefit from the provision of relief items to recover from the effects of the floods.**

#### Activities completed:

- Conducted needs assessments, census and beneficiary targeting.
- Procured relief supplies according to Federation procedures.
- Distributed relief supplies and controlled supply movements from point of dispatch to end-user.
- Monitored and evaluated the relief activities and provided reporting on relief distribution.

#### Results:

**Costa Rica:** Affected families in the areas of Los Santos and Perez Zeledon in **Costa Rica** received relief items and food parcels as follows:

Item	Families reached in Los Santos	Families reached in Perez Zeledón	Total of items distributed
Food parcels	254	896	1,150
Kitchen kits	254	746	1,000
Hygiene kits	254	746	1,000
Jerry cans	-	500	500

## Challenges:

The CRRC experienced minor challenges during the first phase of the operation: delays in the delivery of relief supplies from the suppliers and poor road and conditions to access the distribution points. Nevertheless, an additional 150 families were reached under this objective.

**Nicaragua:** The Nicaraguan Red Cross distributed the relief items to 500 families in two municipalities (La Paz Centro and Nagarote) located in the department of Leon:

- Food kits
- Blankets (3 per family)
- Hygiene kits
- Plastic buckets (2 per family)

The food kits and hygiene kits distributed contained the following items:



Beneficiaries in the community of Pueblo Nuevo in the zone of Perez Zeledón; Costa Rica. Source: Costa Rican Red Cross

Food kits	Hygiene kits
15 lbs of beans	12 washing soap bars
15 lbs of rice	4 rolls of toilet paper
15 lbs of sugar	1 toothpaste
15 lbs of maize	4 shaving razors
10 bags of oatmeal	1 comb
10 bags of soup	5 toothbrushes
5 bags of salt	Sanitary pads
1 gallon of cooking oil	4 soap bars

The kits were distributed as follows:

Department	Municipality	Community	Families
Leon	La Paz Centro	El Guayabo	17
		Empalme de Izapa	28
		Casa de Piedra	10
		Villa Panama	7
		Caserio la union	2
		Sonto mil	7
		Comarca el Chorizo	10
		Rincon de los Bueyes	49
		Los limones y el chorizo	19
<b>Total</b>			<b>149</b>

Department	Municipality	Community	Families
Leon	Nagarote	Puerto Sandino	75
		Miramar	70
		La Gloria	22
		Trancito	184
<b>Total</b>			<b>351</b>

## Challenges:

No challenges were identified for this objective in Nicaragua.

## Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

**Objective: To ensure safe water supply by cleaning the water wells and promote hygiene practices among the affected families in Nicaragua and Costa Rica.**

### Activities planned:

- Evaluate the areas that need immediate cleaning of water wells.
- Mobilization of a cleaning team and of equipment to the affected areas.
- Cleaning and chlorination of water wells.

In Nicaragua, the objective and activities were not carried out since the storm damaged roads causing delays, hindering implementation of perform the relief actions. Additionally, Tropical Storm 16 hit the country, damaging once more the water system in the affected areas. Therefore, the cleaning of water wells was accomplished under the Central America: Floods appeal. For additional information please see <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/08/MDR4300403.pdf> The funding allocated to this component of the plan of action was therefore reimbursed to the DREF fund.

### Results:

The Costa Rican Red Cross distributed the following in the areas of Los Santos and Perez Zeledon:

- 500 jerry cans of 5 gallons were distributed in Perez Zeledon (1 per family), reaching a total of 500 families.
- 5 plastic tanks of 2,500 litres, reaching a total of 833 beneficiaries.

### Challenges:

The Costa Rican Red Cross originally planned to distribute 1,000 jerry cans, but after further assessments it opted to make a structural improvement to the communities through the procurement of five plastic tanks of 2,500 litres, to benefit more people through the storage of safe drinking water in the affected communities of Los Santos and Perez Zeledon.

## Conclusion

In Nicaragua, the affected families actively engaged in their own recovery process. This resulted to be very significant since the affected people became the main actors during the relief process. The timeframe extension allowed the Costa Rican Red Cross to finalize its activities since the effects of Tropical Storm 16 that hit the country caused delays to the final distributions.

The Costa Rican Red Cross and the Nicaraguan Red Cross were well prepared with pre-positioned stocks, radio networks and trained personnel. TNational Societies sit in the National Emergency Operations Centre in their countries and have specific roles within their country's National Disaster Plan. The capacity of the CRRC and the NRC has been strengthened and new lessons are learned (including dealing with damaged roads) with each new operation, especially with the challenges encountered and the solutions implemented.

The International Federation will continue to assist and strengthen the National Societies' capacity in emergency response to help increase their response efforts during disasters. This will be generally helpful for all future emergencies in the Central American region.

## How we work

*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

**Global Agenda Goals:**

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

**Contact information****For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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**[<Final financial report below; click here to return to the title page>](#)**

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

MDR43003 - Central America - Tropical Storm Alma

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2007/1-2008/12
Budget Timeframe	2007/1-2008/12
Appeal	MDR43003
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

**I. Consolidated Response to Appeal**

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
<b>A. Budget</b>	200,001					200,001
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>Income</b>						
<u>Other Income</u>						
<i>Voluntary Income</i>	171,818					171,818
<b>C5. Other Income</b>	171,818					171,818
<b>C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)</b>	171,818					171,818
<b>D. Total Funding = B + C</b>	171,818					171,818
<b>Appeal Coverage</b>	86%					86%

**II. Balance of Funds**

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>C. Income</b>	171,818					171,818
<b>E. Expenditure</b>	-171,818					-171,818
<b>F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)</b>	0					0

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Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2007/1-2008/12
Budget Timeframe	2007/1-2008/12
Appeal	MDR43003
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

### III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination		
A							B	A - B
<b>BUDGET (C)</b>		<b>200,001</b>					<b>200,001</b>	
<b>Supplies</b>								
Clothing & textiles	16,575						16,575	
Food	63,578	75,072				75,072	-11,495	
Utensils & Tools	45,115	35,364				35,364	9,751	
Other Supplies & Services	32,360	26,106				26,106	6,254	
<b>Total Supplies</b>	<b>157,628</b>	<b>136,542</b>				<b>136,542</b>	<b>21,086</b>	
<b>Transport &amp; Storage</b>								
Storage		43				43	-43	
Distribution & Monitoring		6,968				6,968	-6,968	
Transport & Vehicle Costs	13,548	9,904				9,904	3,644	
<b>Total Transport &amp; Storage</b>	<b>13,548</b>	<b>16,915</b>				<b>16,915</b>	<b>-3,367</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>								
National Staff	10,855						10,855	
National Society Staff		4,568				4,568	-4,568	
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>10,855</b>	<b>4,568</b>				<b>4,568</b>	<b>6,287</b>	
<b>General Expenditure</b>								
Information & Public Relation	2,395	377				377	2,018	
Office Costs	525	2,796				2,796	-2,271	
Communications	2,050	344				344	1,706	
Financial Charges		-892				-892	892	
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>4,970</b>	<b>2,625</b>				<b>2,625</b>	<b>2,345</b>	
<b>Programme Support</b>								
Program Support	13,000	11,168				11,168	1,832	
<b>Total Programme Support</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>11,168</b>				<b>11,168</b>	<b>1,832</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)</b>	<b>200,001</b>	<b>171,818</b>				<b>171,818</b>	<b>28,183</b>	
<b>VARIANCE (C - D)</b>		<b>28,183</b>				<b>28,183</b>		