

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Panama: Floods

**DREF operation n° MDRPA004
FL-2008-000158-PAN
Update n° 1
7 November 2008**

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 and 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.

Period covered by this update: 13 September to 7 November 2008.

Summary: CHF 120,000 (USD 109,090 or EUR 74,303) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 13 September 2008 to support the National Society of Panama in delivering immediate assistance to some 2,500 beneficiaries.

On 3 September 2008 heavy rain caused flash floods in the province of Chiriqui affecting several hundred people.

This operation is expected to be implemented over four months, and will therefore be completed by 12 January, 2008; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 12 April, 2009).

[<click here to view contact details>](#)



A Red Cross Society of Panama volunteer is evacuating people in Chiriqui. Source: Civil Protection

The situation

On 3 September 2008 the province of Chiriqui, in particular the region of Ngöbe Buglé in the district of Besiko, was affected by a low pressure system in the central mountain range, producing heavy rain and floods. Eight rural communities were affected by the overflowed rivers of Fonseca and Boca de Soloy in the region Ngöbe Buglé mainly because seven suspension bridges were destroyed. 50 houses were affected and 28 were completely destroyed. The Civil Protection reported approximately 545 affected people, 11 missing, and five casualties. Two emergency shelters were opened in the district of Soloy, providing shelter for a total of 293 people. The government through the office of the Civil Protection distributed water, blankets, food items and clothes to the most affected areas.

The region of Ngöbe Buglé is located in the western part of the country. Its total population is 122,423 and their main occupation is agriculture and elaboration of craftwork.

Additionally, tropical depression number 16 caused severe rains in other parts of the country. The district of Tocumen in the province of Panama was also affected by floods and it is consequently included in this DREF operation.

Coordination and partnerships

The International Federation through the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation Office for Central America and Mexico in Panama have been coordinating relief activities with the Red Cross Society of Panama. The Civil Protection National System (Sistema Nacional de Proteccion Civil – SINAPROC) has also been providing assistance to the Red Cross Society of Panama.

The National Society formed alliances with local non-governmental organizations (NGO) present in the area. NGOs such as Nutre Hogar provided assistance to temporary shelters, while private companies have provided food items.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The local branch of the Red Cross Society of Panama in David deployed relief, search and rescue units to the affected areas. Volunteers trained as Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members and National Intervention Team (NIT) members were also deployed to the areas in coordination with the local authorities. The National Society also maintained close coordination with the regional Centre of Operations for Emergencies (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencias – COE) who is responsible for the performing of evaluations and actions in the field.

The local branch in David opened a warehouse to receive donations and a city wide collection was completed on 10 September.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective 1: 500 families (2,500 people) will benefit from the provision of relief items to recover from the effects of the floods.

The following items will be distributed to the most affected families:

- 500 kitchen kits (1 per family)
- 500 hygiene kits (1 per family)
- 2,500 blankets (5 per family)
- 1,000 jerry cans (2 per family)
- 1,000 tarpaulins (2 per family)

Activities planned:

- Conduct needs assessments, census and beneficiary targeting.
- Procurement of relief supplies according to Federation procedures.
- Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end-user.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distribution.

Two vehicles will be leased from PADRU to facilitate the distributions of the relief items.

Progress:

The Red Cross Society of Panama completed a first distribution of blankets, hygiene kits and kitchen kits from their own stocks for 109 families in the communities affected in the province of Chiriqui.

In order to respond to the effects caused by tropical depression number 16, and thanks to further donations of relief items provided by SINAPROC, additional families could be assisted in the district of Tocumen. A second distribution of blankets, hygiene kits, kitchen kits and tarpaulins was completed for 205 families in this district by the Red Cross Society of Panama.

The Red Cross Society of Panama leased two vehicles (one Nissan pick-up and one Toyota Land Cruiser) from PADRU to facilitate the distributions of the relief items. PADRU will replenish stocks of the Red Cross Society of Panama with relief items for 500 families.

Challenges:

No challenges have been identified within this objective.

National Society Capacity Building

The capacity of the Red Cross Society of Panama in disaster response and preparedness will have been strengthened.

Two National Intervention Team (NIT) workshops will be held for volunteers in the local branch in David. In addition, two radios will be procured to be used by the communities, for early warning and preparedness activities.

Progress

The two radio equipments have been procured and installed in the vehicles leased by the National Society in order to be in constant communication with the local branches in the affected areas. Two NIT workshops are scheduled for November and December in the local branch in David.

Challenges:

There were some minor delays during the procurement of the radio equipment. To avoid further delays in this and future operations, it would be helpful to investigate the technical characteristics of radio equipment installed in the different vehicles.

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:

- In Panama: Jose Beliz, General Director of Red Cross Society of Panama; phone: (507) 315 1389; email: cruzroja@pa.gbnet.cc
- In Panama: Michele Detomaso, Programme Liaison Coordinator, Pan American Disaster Response Unit; phone: (507) 316 1001; fax: 316 1082; email: michele.detomaso@ifrc.org
- In Panama: Fabricio Lopez, Representative of the Regional Representation Office for Central America and Mexico; phone: (507) 380 0250; fax: (507) 317 1304; email: fabricio.lopez@ifrc.org
- In Panama: Maria Alcázar, Relationship Management Coordinator for the Americas; phone: (507) 380 0250; fax: (507) 317 1304; email: maria.alcazar@ifrc.org
- In Geneva: Pablo Medina, Operations Coordinator for the Americas; phone (41) 22 730 4300; email: pablo.medina@ifrc.org

[<click here to return to the title page>](#)