

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Moldova: Food Insecurity

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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: 4 February-18 April 2008

Summary: CHF 248,198 (USD 230,791 or EUR 154,803) has been allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the national society in delivering immediate assistance to some 6,700 families. Un-earmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Over 200,000 people have been affected by drastically diminished harvests in Moldova. The Moldova Red Cross Society with the support of the International Federation is providing supplementary food assistance to 6,700 vulnerable families in isolated rural farmsteads and villages.

During the reporting period 5,450 food parcels out of the 6,700 have been distributed to beneficiaries from multi-child families, single-headed households and families with disabled members. The distribution is scheduled to be finished by the end of April. However, the National Society has managed to make considerable savings on the cost of the food parcels and on transportation (about 30,000 Swiss francs) that will allow the purchase and distribution of some 1,050 extra parcels with which 900 additional beneficiaries are expected to be covered. Therefore, the Moldova Red Cross is planning to extend the operation for one month in order to manage additional distributions. No modification to the budget is necessary.



An elderly lady living alone receives her food parcel from the Moldova Red Cross in Bender, Transnistria. Photo: Moldova Red Cross.

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The situation

Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, was struck in 2007 by the worst drought in its recent history. The drought hit 80 per cent of the country's territory and decimated farming, which constitutes one-fifth of the value of Moldova's gross domestic product.

The United Nations has launched an assistance programme of 11 million US dollars, with funding provided by the European Commission, Austria, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden to assist 135,000 people. However, the situation in Moldova remains difficult. Since January 2008 the prices of basic food products such as meat, rice and vegetable oil have increased 150 per cent. The prices for electricity and gas have also gone up. The small increase in pensions, about 17 per cent, does not cover the needs of vulnerable people. The winter reserves of the affected people are depleted and much of the livestock was slaughtered for cash. Although the spring harvest- of radishes, cabbages and tomatoes- is already available on the market, prices are too high for vulnerable people to afford.

Coordination and partnerships

In order to ensure the process of beneficiary selection and food parcel distribution is effective, special working groups consisting of representatives from the Red Cross regional branches, local authorities and volunteers were set up at the regional level. Coordination meetings with programme stakeholders such as the Ministry of Social Protection, Family and Child, and local authorities have been held where the parties discussed the plan of implementation and distribution, as well as the selection of beneficiaries.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards objectives

Objective: To provide supplementary food rations for two months for 6,700 vulnerable families in order to reduce the threat of malnutrition.

Criteria for families' selection were the following:

1. Have two or more children aged under 15
2. Have one or more family members who need assistance (pensioner, disabled, social case)
3. Did not receive assistance from other donors
4. Did not receive government support
5. Have lost their food production and reserves for the winter period due to the drought

The beneficiaries of the relief distributions include rural farming families dependant on home gardens and dairy cattle as their main sources of nutrition. This category is not covered by any government financial support programme, although some do benefit from the United Nations programme that supplies animal fodder.

In order to procure food parcels, the Moldova Red Cross held a tender according to the International Federation's requirements and the best supplier was selected. The content of a single food parcel (sugar, rice, buckwheat, wheat flour, vegetable oil, corn flour, canned pork meat) with a total weight of 18 kg was calculated according to the SPHERE criteria and contributes to meeting nutritional needs over the leanest months. The food parcels are given to beneficiaries in a one-off distribution in 12 regions throughout the entire territory of the country. Although initially 10 regions were planned to be covered, more detailed assessments during the first round of distribution showed the need for assistance in 12 regions. Families with more than five members have received two parcels per family.

During the period from 31 March to 18 April, the Moldova Red Cross has distributed 5,450 food parcels in 11 regions as follows:

Location	Number of food parcels
Chisinau	300
Balti	250
Briceni	300
Cahul	500
Calarasi	250
Comrat	800
Hincesti	800
Leova	700
Rezina	500
Bender	550
Taracli	500

Distributions were held at the mayor's office or in the Red Cross branches. Beneficiaries had been prior informed about the place and time of distribution. The food parcels have been distributed by the Moldova Red Cross staff and volunteers jointly with representatives of the local authorities.

Those 300 beneficiaries who could not collect parcels due to their disabilities received them at home.

A team consisting of Moldova Red Cross staff and International Federation representatives conducted monitoring to ensure transparency and assess the programme's impact. During the monitoring visit the beneficiaries expressed their gratitude for the humanitarian assistance and noted that it would help them to survive until the new harvest. The monitoring team witnessed that the operation in the field was running well, in large part thanks to the Red Cross staff/ volunteers who had been trained through the disaster management programme in 2005-2006 and the effective cooperation with the local authorities and mass media.

In order to strengthen the capacities of the Moldova Red Cross in disaster management a workshop on relief distribution, including types, mechanisms, recent developments and experience sharing, and International Federation disaster response tools will be held for the Moldova Red Cross headquarters' staff members by a regional disaster response team (RDRT) member from the disaster management department of the Armenian Red Cross. The head of the department has been deployed for a one month mission to Moldova with the goal of monitoring the distribution process, evaluating the current situation in the country and proposing further activities to be taken in Moldova to meet the needs of the beneficiaries.

Information gathering/ Assessment mission

The International Federation continues to monitor the situation and has offered assistance to the Moldova Red Cross in response to the drought, as needed. On 14-15 April, a monitoring and information mission took place to assess further needs of the vulnerable population in the rural areas of Moldova and prepare a strategy on how to address their vulnerability in the future. In this regard, meetings with representatives of the local authorities in Bender (Transnistria) and Comrat (Gagauzian Autonomous Territorial Unit) have been held in order to establish a long-term partnership that will allow immediate response to the needs of vulnerable people.

Challenges:

The main challenge encountered by the Moldova Red Cross is that many vulnerable people can not be covered simply through recovery operation. There is a demonstrable need for the Red Cross to launch development programmes in order to address the root causes of people's vulnerability.

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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