

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## ERITREA: DROUGHT

24 March 2004

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### In Brief

**Appeal No. 04/04; Operations Update no. 01; Period covered: February to October, 2004; Appeal coverage: 41.7%;** ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

#### Appeal history:

- Launched on 03 February 2004 for CHF 4,911,000 (USD 3,903,119 or EUR 3,133,492) for nine (9) months to assist 50,000 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: N/A
- This Update effectively closes the [Emergency Appeal no. 33/02](#); the Final Report will be issued shortly.<sup>1</sup>

**Outstanding needs:** CHF 2,862,970 (USD 1,798,434 or EUR 1,469,560)

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:** [Eritrea; Annual Appeal no. 01.03/2004; and Emergency Appeal 33/2002 \(now closed\)](#).

**Programme summary:** The [Red Cross Society of Eritrea](#) has made progress in relief operation since the launch of this appeal. The national society has continued to deliver much needed assistance to the vulnerable, despite a travel regulation issued by the government as a result of insecurity. The major priority for the national society is the distribution of food items, which is already underway. The beneficiaries have been identified already and the procurement process has been initiated with assistance from the regional logistics department. Distribution of food will contribute to reducing malnutrition, a major health concern. The national society has also made progress with the water and sanitation operation which aims to give safe drinking water to the vulnerable. With regards to advocacy and public information, the national society is striving to make the existing needs known by using various means of information dissemination.

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<sup>1</sup> As Emergency Appeal 04/2004 stated, while Appeal no. 33/02 had been planned to close in December 2003, a poor harvest led to increased concerns over the growing number of vulnerable people (estimated at 1.9 million by the end of 2003). This prompted the RCSE and the Federation to reconsider plans to end this operation. The Federation coordinated a Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) assessment in December 2003 to evaluate the impact of the programme in the Hagaz sub-zoba of Anseba zoba to determine the seriousness of the situation, identify more detailed beneficiary requirements, and specify actions being undertaken by other humanitarian agencies (UN, NGO's, and the Government). The assessment concluded that the Red Cross intervention had played a significant part in averting a major catastrophe, and that further action was required. This Emergency Appeal no. 04/04 is based on the assessment results, and extends the operation.

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### **Operational developments**

The demarcation of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia remains an unsettled issue, and efforts to mediate and resolve disagreements continue. The Eritrean government has started the demobilization of thousands of armed forces, but the unsettled situation continues to place pressure on the people and the economy of the country. After months of planning and negotiation the newly created Sector Military Coordination Commissions (SMCCs) have started successfully. The first meeting of the SMCCs, which addressed security issues at the local level in the sectors, took place on the Mereb River Bridge in Sector Centre on 3 March 2004 and was chaired by the UNMEE Sector Centre Commander. It was attended by Eritrean and Ethiopian military delegations.

Since 10 January, due to security concerns the government has introduced travel permit regulations for all UN agencies, embassies and international organizations based in Eritrea. These regulations, however, have left humanitarian organizations and agencies concerned about how to carry out and monitor their relief operations in benefit of the Eritrean people in these times of increasing need for external assistance.

Since the launching of this emergency appeal the country has received a good measure of the rains in the coastal areas and a little at the highlands. The grazing areas in the coastal region have improved and many herdsmen from the highlands are taking animals there. However, the lowlands of Anseba and Gash Barka zobas did not receive any rains. The drought situation in these areas has since worsened. The Red Cross of Eritrea with support from the Federation is in the starting phase of its 2004 relief programme.

Based on information and updates from the UN agencies working in Eritrea, the food security situation in the country remains bleak despite the partial improvement in agriculture production last year. According to final 2003 estimates, cereal production reached 57 percent of average production (1992 – 2002), but only 19 percent of annual consumption requirements. According to the observations by the Red Cross of Eritrea and UN reports, the situation requires urgent action. The crops and food aid stocks are not expected to last beyond March, when the hunger season begins. The ongoing demobilization at the border will contribute to the severe shortage of labor in the field of agricultural production. This is an important step taken by the authorities, but still the whole farming industry and food production depends on good rain in the planting and growing months, which are expected to begin in July and last through October.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact**

With reference to the objectives and planned activities of this drought appeal programme (see below) the following activities and development can be reported.

### **Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)**

**Objective 1: To provide relief food assistance to 50,000 beneficiaries to improve their livelihood for nine months between February and October 2004.**

**Activity planned to reach this objective:** Provide 50,000 beneficiaries with 6,750 MT of cereal, 540 MT of lentils and 405 MT of oil for nine months to secure and improve their livelihood until the next harvest of November 2004.

**Progress/Achievements**

**1. Targeting of beneficiaries.**

The local community council, consisting of village representatives, has identified the beneficiaries for the food distribution. The Red Cross is monitoring the selection process through its branch office staff assisted by staff from the headquarters in Asmara. Most of the beneficiaries are those receiving relief food through the Red Cross of Eritrea relief programme of 2003 under the **Emergency Appeal 33/02**. This is decided in consultation with ERREC, the coordination body in the country.

**2. Procurement, transport and distribution of grain, lentil and oil.**

With the uncertainty related the response from donors to this Emergency Appeal, the task force has decided to start the programme with distribution of reduced rations compared with international standards. Covered by the remaining balances carried over from the 2003 food security operation (**Emergency Appeal 33/02**), the programme will, for the first three months, provide 70% of standard rations for the 50,000 beneficiaries planned for under the appeal.

The tendering process and procedures for the first three month's supply will be completed by the mid of March, with the support of the Federation country delegation and the regional delegation in Nairobi. Invitations to take part in the bidding process were sent through the international media as well as directly to 18 potential suppliers, of which two are in Eritrea. The senior logistics officer from Nairobi is visiting Asmara in this second week of March, working together with the task force, and giving contracts to suppliers for this first procurement of the food security programme. Based on pledges coming in, new tenders will be announced at a later stage for the next months of distribution.

The Finnish Red Cross has made a big pledge, of which part is earmarked for procurement of food. The donor national society is going to be playing an active role in this process. As prices were found to be high in the first attempt, the Finnish Red Cross has asked the task force for support. Based on our experience gained through the tenders received in Nairobi and Asmara we hope to get the best possible terms.

As the bidding and procurement process will need to take some time before it has been completed and commodities can be expected to arrive in the country, the task force has taken certain steps to secure an early start for food distribution in the targeted areas. Contact was established at an early stage with the Eritrean Grain Board, which promised to lend necessary quantity of wheat grain to the Red Cross of Eritrea for the first three months of the operation. This will reduce the stress on the most vulnerable people in Hagaz sub-zoba of Zoba Anseba. A total of 2,250 MT will be borrowed from the Grain Board and transported to the national society's warehouse at the headquarters in Asmara. So far 700MT have been collected, of which 200MT has already been transported to the areas of intervention for distribution by the mid of March. The rest is to be transported in the coming days/weeks.

As far as the lentils and oil are concerned, the remaining stocks in the national society's warehouse from the 2003 distribution, 33.6MT and 4.8MT respectively, these quantities is not sufficient for the first month of the distribution. Hence, a request to borrow these two commodities was sent to WFP after the Eritrean Grain Board was not able to lend neither lentils nor oil to the Red Cross of Eritrea. However, as this process took some time before the WFP was able to give an answer, time ran out for the national society to be able to undertake full distribution in February. The final decision after contacting ERREC was that it should take care of the February distribution while the national society would take over from March.

**Objective 2: To improve the farming capacity of vulnerable communities through the provision of basic farming tools**

**Activity planned to reach this objective:** Provide 4,000 households shovels, sickles and hoes/ pick axes as to enable them participate in community development thereby reduce vulnerability.

## **Progress/Achievements**

### **1. Identification of beneficiaries.**

According to the planned activity to provide 4,000 households with farming tools, the need assessment has been made by the local administration of the Zoba. Thus the local community council identified the beneficiaries of the planned tool distribution and the list has been handed over to the Red Cross of Eritrea Anseba branch. Through this procedure the village authorities will be heavily involved in the support of the farmers and the community activity intended to contribute to food security on a longer -term.

### **2. Purchase and distribution .**

The national society assisted by the Federation country delegation is in the process of procuring the farming tools from the local market, which will be distributed as soon as received from the suppliers. The Anseba branch in close collaboration with the community leaders as well as with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) will take care of the distribution process. The headquarters and the Federation will closely monitor the distribution, making sure that it is carried out in according with the appeal plan. An important element in this process is also the advocacy, with the dissemination of Red Cross and Red Crescent principles and advocating for the most vulnerable.

The community is organized to make some field works for water and soil conservation and terracing. This is linked to intervention. Yet it observed that there is shortage of farming tools, so it is apparent that the provision of such tools will bring an important difference to the impact and an improvement in their fieldwork activities.

### **Objective 3: To procure and distribute seeds to 10,000 households to improve the 2004 cropping season.**

**Activity planned to reach this objective:** Provide 150 MT of sorghum/pier millet seeds to 10,000 households .

## **Progress/Achievements**

### **1. Identification of households .**

As for the farming tool distribution, the Anseba branch and the headquarters will in close cooperation with the village councils and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) undertake screening of beneficiaries and decide who will be receiving seeds under the food security programme. As this is a new activity for the national society, representatives of the MoA will be providing support and be supervision of the implementation of this operation.

### **2. Procurement, storage and distribution .**

The Red Cross of Eritrea, in close cooperation with the MoA, will procure the seeds in the country. Distribution is to be undertaken by the Anseba branch in close collaboration with the Zoba administration, the headquarters, as well as community volunteers. The distribution is intended for April or May, just before the main rainy season sets. Experts from the MoA will be training the beneficiaries on the utilization of the seeds. Furthermore the training will include when, where and how to sow the seeds depending on the type of the seeds, soil and rainfall. The operation will also be an important learning exercise for the national society's staff and volunteers.

## **Coordination**

The Governmental body, Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) is the overall responsible for coordinating all intervention of governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations engaged in relief work related to the drought. Information and coordination meetings take place every second month, but also on ad hoc basis whenever needed.

Constraints on field assessment and monitoring related to the new travel permit regulations, security concerns, counterpart capacity and resource availability have caused WFP to downsize 2004 project targets for its Food for Training / Adult Literacy Programme and school feeding programme from 70,000 and 120,000 beneficiaries to 40,000 and 80,000 beneficiaries respectively.

As part of the Red Cross / Federation emergency intervention a task force, comprising senior staff of the national society and Federation delegates is meeting every Monday, to pursue the implementation of the relief operations, sharing information and making all operational decisions related to the drought programme.

## **Health**

One of the most dominant health problems in the country is malnutrition and related diseases. The continuous shortage of rainfall and food production over the last years and growing dependency on foreign aid is an increasing concern. According to the report from a recent nutrition survey undertaken jointly by UN agencies, NGOs and the Ministry of Health, the prevalence of acute under-nutrition among children was seen in the four zobas of Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea, Anseba and Dehub as high as 15.6%, 16.9%, 13.9% and 12.8% respectively. By international benchmarks, the prevalence of under-nutrition among mothers was found to be very high (>40 percent). However, the figures were relatively better than in the previous year, partly due to seasonal factors such as the recent harvest, better delivery of food aid and supplementary feeding coverage. The analysis points heavily towards "food supply" as the determining factor for the observed nutritional status causing the need for further food aid.

## **Water, Sanitation and Public Health**

The water table has fallen dramatically during the last years, in some cases as much as 10 meters below the pumping level. Many communities are responding by deepening wells, trekking long distances for water and moving their animals to non-traditional grazing areas in search of water and fodder. The last few months have been more adverse.

**Objective 1: To reduce stress provoked by lack of water through provision of emergency water trucking services.**

### **Activities implemented within this objective.**

Provide water-trucking services to 6,000 people in the Shebek area of Hagaz sub-zoba, for a period of eight months.

### **Progress/Achievements.**

Water trucking for a number of 6,000 beneficiaries in the Shebek villages in Hagaz Sub-zoba resumed in December 2003 as part of the previous emergency operation of the year, after a break of four months due to the improved water situation following the Kirenty rains. The trucking has continued throughout January 2004, and will be continued up by the national society until the next main rainfall, which is expected in July to August/September. Through the water trucking programme sufficient water is being provided to the population in eight villages and two schools in the targeted areas, where people otherwise have to walk for several hours (up to 20 km each way) to fetch potable water. With the national society's three water trucks, which all have been repaired after last years operation, the national society is on an average providing 15 litres per day per person, which is according to the accepted international standard.

As this report is being produced all staff working in the water and sanitation unit of the national society are making assessments of the ongoing projects and preparing for the new ones under this emergency intervention.

**Objective 2: To provide safe and adequate water supply to communities through the rehabilitation six existing water projects.**

### **Activities planned to reach this objective:**

- Conduct water quality analysis and pump-testing to establish water quality and quantity.
- Rehabilitate storage and distribution systems and disinfect the six rehabilitated water projects.
- Train the six existing water committees, conduct two training sessions for 12 caretakers and provide them with repair kits.

### **Progress/Achievements**

The national society's Anseba branch has been working closely with the administrations of the zoba and the sub-zobas, as well as with other humanitarian actors to identify the potential six sites of the planned intervention. After a thorough assessment and analysis of the most pressing needs based on mapping of the sub-zobas by the administrations, the following six villages have been identified and will be the focus areas for the first phase of the water and sanitation intervention under this appeal programme; Geleb, Firdighe, Balwa, Derok, Adiomer, and

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Hashishay. The staff of the WatSan unit will in mid March be make an assessment and feasibility study and later prepare a project proposal document for two or three of the six water sites to be rehabilitated.

According to the plan the recruitment of new staff in the water and sanitation unit at headquarters level has been completed. The WatSan coordinator and the new water engineer are working in close collaboration under the supervision of the Federation water and sanitation delegate, coordinating and strengthening the capacity of the national society in the field of water and sanitation. With this new recruitment the unit, being part of the health and care department consists of one coordinator, two engineers, one technician, and one mason at headquarters level and one WatSan field officer at the Anseba branch. For the sake of a close follow up and more emphasis is on the software part of the water and sanitation intervention, a health personnel has been recruited and allocated to the emergency programme. With health background also for the newly recruited relief coordinator at the Anseba branch, the software component will receive highest possible attention in the entire implementation period of the emergency operation.

The national society is considering investing in water testing equipment and material, hydrological and geological instruments as well as some other tools for implementation of water projects. Funding for this investment is expected to arrive from other sources. The Federation through the county delegation will provide technical and professional support in case of realization of the purchase.

### **Objective 3: To provide safe and adequate water supply to communities through the construction of three new water projects.**

#### **Activities planned to reach this objective:**

- Conduct assessment and construct three new water points in selected sites.
- Carry out water quality assessment, pump testing.
- Establish three water committees, conduct two training sessions for the committees and six caretakers, and provide them with repair kits.

#### **Progress/Achievements**

The task force has decided that the selection of sites and further project work for the three new water projects under this appeal programme will have to wait until the funding situation is clearer. Preliminary project work in a village, in particular when it is related to water will always raise high expectations in the community. Therefore the opinion of the task force is that it is better to start the field work when funding is secured. However, the preliminary sites mentioned are Wesbensirik, Kaybosa and Gizgiza.

### **Objective 4: To improve the health status of communities through awareness campaigns and training.**

#### **Activities planned to reach this objective:**

- Train and enable 40 Red Cross volunteers to collect primary data in health, nutrition and water and sanitation to help monitor the impact of the operation and ensure that needs are met in a timely manner.
- Organize four workshops on Community Based First Aid (CBFA) and [Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation \(PHAST\)](#) at branch level for 40 national society staff and volunteers. These sessions will also include malaria prevention and social mobilization techniques targeting children under five years and pregnant women. All training will be done in conjunction with the Ministry of Health (MoH).
- Conduct 18 hygiene promotion and education training on PHAST at the community level in the selected areas where the nine water points will be constructed or rehabilitated.
- Produce Information, Education, Communication (IEC) materials on PHAST.
- Assist communities construct 30 household latrines at the nine water project sites by providing sanitation plates (sanplates/slabs), ventilation pipes and hand washing sets.
- Organize nine CBFA training sessions targeting a minimum of 400 pupils in nine schools in the nine water project areas.
- Organize 10 home management training sessions targeting 540 women / households on water handling and preparation of food at household level to minimize anaemia and diarrhoea diseases.

### **Progress/Achievements**

The planned activities and various training programmes will first and foremost be part of water and sanitation interventions, with building of Red Cross infrastructures and community involvement. These activities will be starting within the next month in some of the six villages.

## **Advocacy and Public information**

**Objective 1: To ensure that the needs and rights of the most vulnerable in relation to the drought situation are secured.**

### **Activities planned to reach this objective:**

- Advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable to influence policy, commitment and allocation of resources by government, donors and other agencies.
- Monitor closely the development of the food security situation in the country through direct contact with beneficiaries.
- Produce press releases, articles and photographs to highlight both the impact of the Red Cross and Red Crescent activities on beneficiaries and signal in a timely manner any potential deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Eritrea.
- Facilitate and co-ordinate the access of, as well as accompanying journalists to Red Cross and Red Crescent operational areas.

### **Progress/Achievements**

As the procurement process of this operation will take some time, the Red Cross of Eritrea has secured distribution of food to the beneficiaries through other means, such as borrowing necessary commodities and agreeing with the ERREC that February distribution will be taken care of by them.

Together with the launching of this emergency appeal there was a press release issued by the regional delegation in Nairobi. At the same time an article written by the Eritrea head of delegation was published on the Federation web site. The local newspaper *Dehai –News* published the two articles and part of the drought appeal. There was also good coverage of the operation through an interview given to the Voice of America by the desk officer for East Africa at Geneva.

Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway were in February invited on a field visit to one of the villages where the national society has been implementing a water and sanitation project in 2003. The national society's staff and volunteers were demonstrating training programme, household latrine inspected, the new stove was demonstrated, and the representatives were able to interview leaders of the village.

**Objective 2: To promote the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values in the intervention areas.**

### **Activities planned to reach this objective :**

- Conduct one training session for national society counterpart on promotion of fundamental principles and humanitarian values.
- Include a module on fundamental principles and humanitarian values in all training sessions conducted in the framework of this appeal.

### **Progress/Achievements**

These activities will be started together with the food distribution, water and sanitation projects and agriculture tools and seed distribution.

## **Logistics**

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**Objective 1: To build the response and operational capacity of the national society at headquarters and branch level.**

### **Activities planned to reach this objective :**

- Recruit qualified water and sanitation, reporting coordinators for the headquarters as well as a relief coordinator for the Anseba branch.
- Provide the national society with basic office working facilities and equipment including four computers, communication equipment systems and furniture.
- Conduct one training session to increase skills and procedures in reporting, administration, volunteer management, finance and logistics - including international procurement.
- Develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and assessment procedures including for the present relief operation as well as health and nutritional monitoring. Improved quality control systems will focus on beneficiary targeting criteria systems and methodology. Close cooperation with the authority will be encouraged particularly in health and nutritional monitoring.
- The Red Cross of Eritrea monitors and evaluates the overall operation by using data collected by volunteers in the field.

### **Progress/Achievements**

As a response to the plan to improve the capacity of the national society in terms of response and operational capacity, the two new water and sanitation staff are just hired for the follow up of the water projects. Moreover, to assist and facilitate the relief operation, two other people were recruited, who both have health and community development background. One of them will be part of the health team at headquarters level to facilitate the software part of WatSan projects while the other one will be at the Zoba Anseba branch level to monitor the whole relief operation. They are both going through an orientation and introduction at the headquarters on the fundamental principles of the Movement and the tasks and structure of the Red Cross of Eritrea.

To equip the newly recruited staff with the necessary work qualities, the WatSan delegate is providing on-the-job training. The training focuses on; coordination and administration in WatSan activities, technical training in field water supply system and sanitation, standards of latrine, quality water testing system, training emergency, response unit and field assessment coordination team.

Furthermore, one reporting officer was recruited and is being trained at the Federation country delegation, and additional training will be conducted through arrangements made with the region delegation in Nairobi. In addition to the upgrading the capacity of human resources of the national society, it has been provided with the basic office working facilities for the newly recruited staff, such as furniture and computers. The IT officer in RDN will provide IT training for the new employees as well as for those of the national society's staff interested.

**Objective 2: To improve the national society's logistics management**

### **Activities planned to reach this objective :**

- Provide technical support through the Federation country and regional delegations to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the operation.
- Develop a relationship between the Red Cross of Eritrea and Partner National Societies (PNSs) with recognized strengths in managing Emergency Response Units (ERU).

### **Progress/Achievements**

Training will be started in March as part of the procurement process with tender and contract allocations. This will be followed up with clarification regarding roles and responsibilities between the national society, the Federation country delegation, regional delegation and Federation Secretariat in Geneva.

**[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page and contact information.](#)**

# Eritrea - drought

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 04/2004

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

24/03/2004

### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->						TOTAL COVERAGE	
						4,911,000	41.7%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD FROM PREVIOUS OPERATION						1,166,000	02/02/2004
JAPANESE - RC	128,800	USD	163,125	12.02.04			
FINNISH - RC	20,345	EUR	32,054	18.03.04	PROGRAMME SUPPORT		
LIBYAN - RC			5,000	16.02.04			
MONACO - RC	12,000	EUR	18,720	06.02.04			
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC	1,000,000	SEK	170,000	19.02.04	BILATERAL		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH						1,554,899	CHF 31.7%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
FINNISH - GOVT/RC		313,000	EUR	493,131	18.03.04	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				493,131	CHF	10.0%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	