

# 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

4 March 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

**Appeal no. 05EA002; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 1 January to 28 February 2005; Appeal coverage: 16.2%;** [Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website.](#)

#### Appeal history:

- Appeal launched on 27 January 2005 for CHF 5,210,000 (USD 4.38 million or EUR 3.36 million) for 12 months for 55,000 beneficiaries - [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?05/05EA002.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA002.pdf)
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 300,000

**Outstanding needs: CHF 4,365,781 (USD 3,671,800 or EUR 2,819,400)**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Eritrea 2005 Annual Appeal no. 05AA001** – [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA001.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA001.pdf)

**Operational Summary:** The food and water situation in the operational area is steadily worsening: food rations from the government have been reduced to 1,400 kcal per person per day, and communities are spending more time collecting water.

The Red Cross Society of Eritrea<sup>1</sup> has only just initiated the 2005 emergency response operation, but the overall level of hard and soft pledges has restrained activities. Regardless, the WatSan component has sufficient funds to begin its field activities.

The national society and the Federation have discussed the possibility of borrowing WFP food; depending on funds pledged before mid-March, it is likely an agreement will be reached.

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

- **In Eritrea:** Tsehaie Ghbresus, Programme Coordinator, Red Cross Society of Eritrea, Asmara; Email [rcse@gemel.com.er](mailto:rcse@gemel.com.er); Phone 291.1.15.16.93; Fax 261.1.15.18.59
- **In Eritrea:** Per Gunnar Jenssen, Federation Representative for Eritrea, Asmara; Email [ifrc2@gemel.com.er](mailto:ifrc2@gemel.com.er); Phone 291.1.15.05.50; Fax 291.1.15.18.59
- **In Kenya:** Steve Penny, Regional Disaster Management Coordinator, East Africa Regional Delegation; Email [ifrc78@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrc78@ifrc.org); Phone 254.20.283.5117; Mobile 254.734.600.311; Fax 254.20.271.8415
- **In Geneva:** Josse Gillijns, Federation Regional Officer for Eastern Africa, Africa Dept.; Email [josse.gillijns@ifrc.org](mailto:josse.gillijns@ifrc.org); Phone 41.22.730.42.24; Fax 41.22.733.03.95

<sup>1</sup> Red Cross Society of Eritrea - <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=188>

*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

## **Background**

Four consecutive years of inadequate rainfall have resulted in a deterioration of the food security situation in Eritrea. The Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation have implemented two successive Emergency Appeals, no. 33/2003 and 04/2004; this current Appeal continues this effort, and targets mainly general food distribution, water and health services, and community rehabilitation activities. A total population of 50,000 people in the Hagaz sub-zoba in Anseba zoba received humanitarian assistance for a period of 7 to 9 months through these operations.<sup>2</sup>

The 2004 relief operation was scheduled to end after the crop harvesting season in September/October 2004; however, a poor harvest from another failed rainy season forced the national society to reconsider. With the support of the Federation, the Red Cross of Eritrea assessed the situation in Zoba Anseba in December 2004. The assessment highlighted the worsening food crisis in 2005 due to the poor crop harvest season in September/October 2004. The report of that two-week assessment proposed longer-term Red Cross humanitarian action, and recommended that the Red Cross of Eritrea launch an Emergency Appeal to continue to respond to the immediate needs of a target population of 55,000 beneficiaries in Hagaz sub-Zoba. (The assessment report is available on request). Emergency Appeal no. 05EA002 was subsequently launched on 27 January.

## **Operational developments**

The UN Country Team organized a donor consultative meeting on 31 January 2005 to discuss the urgent requirement for humanitarian funding in the country. This is in the wake of a Special Report of the Joint FAO / WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Eritrea that indicates extremely serious food shortages in the country. The report places cereal production in 2004 at about 85,000 MT which is less than half the average production of the previous 12 years. With 80,000 MT of food aid pledged and in the pipeline, the uncovered deficit, for which international assistance is needed, is estimated at 262,000 MT of cereals.

The report also indicates that in 2005 an estimated 2.3 million people, about two thirds of the whole population in both urban and semi -urban areas will require food assistance to varying levels depending on their vulnerability and the time in the year. The observation by the Red Cross of Eritrea Anseba branch confirmed the need for urgent action. The crops and food aid stocks are not expected to last beyond March 2005 when the hunger season begins. The sow rate of pledges for both food and non food aid received so far this year is cause for alarm, and indicates the humanitarian crisis may worsen if urgent measures are not taken.

The water table is continuing to fall, forcing people to deepen wells while others have to walk longer distances to collect water. Communities are also moving their animals to non-traditional grazing areas in search of water and fodder.

Malnutrition and related diseases as well as water borne diseases are the dominant health problems in the country. According to recent WFP emergency reports, Global Malnutrition rates reached above 29 percent among children under five years of age in parts of Anseba region. The continuous shortage of rainfall and food production over the last years and growing dependency on foreign aid is an increasing concern as villages which are almost exclusively dependent on agriculture have been extremely hard hit by the drought.

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<sup>2</sup> Emergency Appeal no. 33/2002, Eritrea Drought - [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?02/3302.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?02/3302.pdf);  
Emergency Appeal no. 04/2004, Eritrea Drought - [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?04/0404.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?04/0404.pdf).

## **Eritrea: Drought; Appeal no. 05EA002; Operations Update no. 1**

The dispute between the governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia about the border demarcation still remains unsettled. Dialogue between the two UN Country Teams of Eritrea and Ethiopia began in January to develop common strategies on humanitarian implications of the peace process. The United Nations Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) reports calm at the Temporary Security Zone. Resettlement of IDP began under a joint UNDP / UNICEF / WFP / Government of Eritrea programme commenced on 31 January 2005. The exercise ran over a 10 day period and saw a total of 20,428 IDP resettled in their places of origin in Lai Lay Gash sub-region.

### **Coordination**

ERREC is the government body with overall responsibility for coordinating both government and non-governmental agencies and organizations engaged in the drought relief work.

A Red Cross of Eritrea / Federation task force comprised of Red Cross of Eritrea senior staff and the Federation Representative for Eritrea is coordinating the Red Cross intervention. The task force cooperates closely with the Anseba branch, the Federation regional delegation in Nairobi, and national and international agencies involved in food security, water, sanitation, health and agriculture. This cooperation allows for better information sharing, coordination and operational decisions related to the drought response program.

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

### **Emergency food and water assistance**

#### **Objective 1: To immediately improve livelihood and food security by provision of monthly food distributions to 55,000 people for 8 months.**

One key lesson learned from the 2004 operation was that international procurement takes a long time. The Red Cross of Eritrea and the Federation began procurement in mid-February. The regional logistics officer travelled to Eritrea to assist with bid analysis; the bid related to a six-month food ration, and was based on funding from pledges (soft and hard) and DREF allocations.

Given the present funding situation, the Red Cross of Eritrea is unlikely to make any distribution of food in March. The national society has subsequently approached ERREC to cover the March distribution. By the time of writing this report, ERREC had distributed wheat, oil and lentils to 40,000 beneficiaries in Hagaz sub-zoba; this represents 60 % of SPHERE standards. Full coverage of the number of beneficiaries was not achieved: ERREC is also distributing in other zobas not covered by other humanitarian organizations.

Discussions have also begun with WFP to borrow food. This was agreed in principle under the assumption the national society will repay the loan no later than May 2005. Formal application to WFP will occur once the approval of tenders from Geneva has been received and once the Finnish Red Cross pledge is confirmed (e.t.a. early March).

#### **Objective 2: To improve sustainable livelihood and food security by provision of monthly food distributions to 27,500 people for 4 months depending on crop yields in September 2005.**

Implementation of activities under this objective will start in August based on the results of a crop assessment, results of an operational review planned for August and the availability of funding.

#### **Objective 3: To reduce morbidity and vulnerability to water related diseases by improving access to safe drinking water.**

The trucking of water has not begun, due to the current funding situation. As well, discussions are on-going with local authorities and UNICEF about the pending launch of a large water supply project in early March covering much of the area. The construction of five water points in areas not covered by the large project will start in parallel with farm improving activities and dry farming methods in March.

## Medium term food security, sustainable livelihoods and integrated health

### **Objective 1: To increase medium term food security through distribution of seeds and farming tools to 10,000 households.**

Activities have not been implemented due to the lack of funds.

### **Objective 2: Promote food security through the improvement of farming practices.**

An expert on agriculture and water deployed by the Swedish Red Cross is expected to arrive in March. The mission was delayed from February: experts were temporarily deployed to the Tsunami disaster. Once in Eritrea, the Swedish Red Cross delegate will work closely with Red Cross of Eritrea WatSan staff and volunteers supported by the regional WatSan team.

### **Objective 3: To reduce morbidity and vulnerability to water related diseases by improving access to safe drinking water.**

This activity will start upon the arrival of the agriculture and water specialists from the Swedish Red Cross

### **Objective 4: To improve the health status of targeted communities through Community Based First Aid (CBFA), Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) and provision of basic sanitation installations.**

All the health activities are planned to run parallel with or after the water projects.

### **Objective 5: To improve household economy and reduce environmental degradation through the provision of fuel efficient stoves.**

Activities under this objective will commence together with health promotion activities if funding is secured.

## 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.**

This launch of this current Appeal was accompanied by a press release issued by Federation Secretariat. It warned Eritrean food stocks have been exhausted by four years of drought.

To be proactive, the Red Cross of Eritrea and Federation ensured food distribution in February and March by ERREC in view of the length of time taken by international procurement process.

The Federation Representative and the Red Cross of Eritrea leadership have held talks with local film makers in view of preparing a video film showing the drought and the situation of the people in Hagaz sub-zoba. Some film samples have been sent to the regional information unit for comment, and a movie script is being prepared.

With support of the Swedish Red Cross, a delegation of students and teachers from the Folk High school produced some still photos and a radio interview some of the affected communities to be used in highlighting the impact of the drought.

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

This activity will commence with distribution of food, distribution of agricultural tools and seeds, and water and sanitation projects.

## Capacity Building

### **Objective 1: To build the response and operational capacity of the National Society at headquarters and branch level.**

Activities have not been implemented due to the lack of funds.

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

# Eritrea - drought

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA002

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

15/03/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					<b>TOTAL COVERAGE</b>	
				<b>5,210,000</b>		<b>16.2%</b>
JAPANESE - RC		144,500	USD	163,574	14.02.05	
MONACO - RC		20,000	EUR	30,970	27.01.05	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		2,750,000	NOK	512,875	28.02.05	
SWEDISH - GOVT		800,000	SEK	136,800	31.01.05	TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT, PLANNING MISSION
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				844,219	CHF	16.2%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

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