



BURKINA FASO: FLOODS

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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 185 countries.

In Brief

This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 59,111 (USD 47,941 or EUR 37,579) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs in this operation, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to the affected population. This operation is expected to be implemented over 2 months, and will be completed by 17 October 2006; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's 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.

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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.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and current situation

After a delay in rains in most Sahel countries, unexpected torrential rains caused flooding in the northern part of Burkina Faso, leaving thousands of families homeless after their houses were washed away. The floods – which occurred on 9 August – also washed away many crops, food reserves and personal possessions of the poor farming communities.

Burkina Faso: Floods; DREF Bulletin no. MDRBF002

The town of Gorom-Gorom (close to the Niger and Mali border) – 270 km north of the capital Ouagadougou – together with some neighbouring villages, registered around 6,000 people seeking temporary shelter in strong-structured schools and town halls. With a population of more than 64,000 people, Gorom-Gorom is the major town of Oudalan Province. Most roads linking it with other villages have been cut off making it difficult for humanitarian help to reach the beneficiaries. Assessment teams are experiencing difficulties in obtaining the right picture of the damage caused as well as the humanitarian needs.

Northern Burkina Faso is a pastoralist and agricultural area which is full of cropping activities during this period of the year because of the rains. Three provinces (Oudalan, Seum and Yatenga), mainly arid but containing many seasonal rivers and water ponds during the rainy season, received more than 136 mm of rains in the past week. The recent floods hit a region that has endured 30 years of successive droughts, locust invasions and loss of grain to birds. With the floods washing away crops, food insecurity is looming, thus the need for immediate intervention. It is worth noting that the 2004-2005 agricultural production in this area was far below average due to lack of rains that resulted in severe drought conditions.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Immediately after the floods were announced, the Burkinabe Red Cross Society (BRCS) mobilized an assessment team in the region and deployed the National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) to support the local branches in assisting the affected people. Despite difficulties in accessing the affected areas, the team has come up with a preliminary report.

The Gorom-Gorom Red Cross local committee is hosting 100 families and providing them with one hot meal per day. Red Cross volunteers are closely working with the local authorities in assisting homeless families; the local branches of Oudalan, Seum and Yatenga provinces are represented in their respective Provincial Council of Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (COPROSUR¹).

The Federation Regional Delegation in Dakar is monitoring the situation, together with the BRCS, and a plan of action has been developed to respond to immediate needs of the affected populations.

The needs

Because the baked soil is slow to absorb water, even if the rain stops completely, it will take some time for the floodwaters to disappear. Portable water points are, therefore, at a high risk of contamination due to the floodwaters; there is also a concern about the stagnant water providing a ready breeding environment for mosquitoes. These bring about a health concern given that more than 25% of the affected families have children aged below ten years, who can contract diseases while playing with the stagnant water. Fearful of waterborne diseases, local authorities have launched an information campaign to instruct people not to drink floodwater. Officials have said that additional attention needs to be focused on sanitation so as to prevent the outbreak of diseases.

Though members of the community whose houses were not damaged have been helpful in hosting their homeless neighbours, about 900 families in the affected zones are in temporary shelters while more than 50 others have nowhere to go. With their beddings washed away and some of the salvaged mattresses soaked, the families are in need of sleeping mats. In addition, thousands of people are going without at least a meal per day since they lost all their food reserves; food items are thus needed to support such families.

Plan of Action

The information contained in this DREF Bulletin is limited in terms of beneficiary figures and needs; these will be provided in subsequent updates as assessment results become clearer. Based on the updated information provided by the assessment teams, the number of beneficiaries and the plan of action may be adjusted accordingly.

Objective: The Burkinabe Red Cross Society has contributed to the relief of the populations affected by floods in Northern Burkina Faso within 45 days.

¹ In French: Conseil Provincial de Secours d'Urgence et de Réhabilitation (COPROSUR)

Expected results:

- More than 10 metric tones (MT) of food is distributed to the people affected by floods;
- 800 impregnated mosquito nets are distributed to families with children aged under five years;
- At least 400 of the most vulnerable families receive sleeping mats;
- 100 volunteers are mobilized, trained and equipped to implement sensitization and distribution activities;
- Populations in the affected zones are reached with messages on proper hygiene practices and sanitation;
- Families from the flooded zones are sensitized to adopt positive attitudes towards water related diseases.

Strategy

The Red Cross relief intervention is a one-off operation accompanied with some water and sanitation (WatSan) activities. The activities will focus on sensitization campaigns based on community behaviour change, with sensitization visits to households and temporary shelter centres for the necessary prevention actions in the coming six weeks. This campaign will be done alongside relief distribution targeting families with children aged under five years, pregnant women, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Activities:

- Organize sensitization activities with populations, especially the displaced ones, to promote proper hygiene and sanitation;
- Carry out sensitization and promotion of hygiene practices to the benefit of the population affected by floods;
- Conduct house-to-house sensitization campaigns, targeting mothers;
- Conduct behavioural change communication (BCC) activities in public places (markets, bus stations and mosques);
- Distribute food items such as cereals, beans, sugar, salt and oil (one-month ration for 400 families);
- Distribute sanitation materials;
- Organize household distributions of non-food items such as impregnated mosquito nets and sleeping mats;
- Mobilize authorities to promote hygiene and to prevent outbreaks of waterborne diseases.

Coordination

The government of Burkina Faso assessed the affected areas and set up local coordination committees – COPROSUR – in each affected province to respond to the situation in close coordination with various partners. The local Red Cross branches are represented in these committees at their respective provinces. The relief committee set up temporary shelters in primary schools and are providing basic items, including food, sleeping mats and blankets. Some WatSan sensitization activities have been conducted in the affected areas.

Christian Aid – through its partner local non-governmental organization (NGO), UCEC-Sahel – is helping 900 of the most affected families. Over the next three weeks they will distribute rice, dried fish and oil. They will also distribute impregnated mosquito nets to prevent cases of malaria.

The UN food agency, World Food Programme (WFP), has assured to follow up the situation; a coordination meeting was held in order to assess the situation and to prepare a plan of intervention of the UN system.

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