

# DREF operation final report



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Ukraine: Mine blast

**DREF operation n° MDRUA003  
GLIDE n° AC-2007-000214-UKR  
18 September, 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 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 Final Report:**  
27 November 2007 to 31 May 2008.

### Summary:

CHF 37,132 (USD 32,038 or EUR 22,195) was allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 27 November, 2007 to support the National Society in providing psychosocial support (PSS) to the families of miners affected by methane explosions in coal mines in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine through a period of six months.

Some 131 miners' families, their relatives and community members (about 800 people) received psychosocial support through home visits, self-support group meetings and various public events conducted by Ukraine Red Cross staff and volunteers. It facilitated their return to normal life after the tragedy and substantially reduced the trauma.

The operation used the experience of PSS gained by the Russian Red Cross in assisting the people affected by mine blasts in Kemerovo in 2007 and the hostage crisis in Beslan in 2004.

This operation was implemented over six months and completed by 31 May, 2007.

[<click here for the final financial report, or here to view contact details>](#)



Ukraine Red Cross staff is visiting the father of a miner killed by the explosion in the Zasyadko mine in Donetsk. Photo: Ukraine Red Cross

## The situation

On 18 November 2007 a methane explosion killed 101 people and left 40 injured at the Zasyadko coal mine in Donetsk region, Ukraine. On 2 December two further explosions occurred in the same mine causing the death of five members of the rescue team and injuring 116 miners. Thus, during two weeks time 106 people lost their lives and 156 injured in a series of deadly mine accidents in Donetsk.

According to recent statistics on mine accidents in Donetsk and Lugansk regions, since the start of the DREF operation in November, 23 further accidents occurred. In total 25 miners died and 42 injured.

Although, all affected families have received financial support from the local authorities and the coal mine administration, their needs went beyond simple material compensation. Psychological support to the

relatives of the deceased miners was provided by state psychologists during the first three-four days in three cases of major accidents out of the 23, when the number of affected people was more than ten. Two months after the big accidents the local authorities and other governing bodies ceased all activities of providing assistance to the affected people. In case of small-scale accidents, the families of deceased miners did not receive such assistance.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

During the first days after the first explosion at the Zasyadko mine and the two other explosions on 2 December, the Donetsk branch of the Ukraine Red Cross started provided psychosocial support and first aid to the people who were waiting to hear news about their relatives caught in the mine. Red Cross nurses also provided psychosocial aid to the affected families in the office of the mine administration, the morgue during the identification of the bodies, in the hospital, and they also attended the funerals in ten different cemeteries in the Donetsk region.

During the three visits to the hospitals psychological support was provided to all 156 injured miners of the Zasyadko mine. Local funds and financial support from the neighbouring Red Cross branches were used to purchase 468 food parcels, including fruits, juices and mineral water, and some necessary medical supplies worth 5,000 Swiss francs. Each miner was provided with three food parcels. Also Ukraine Red Cross staff visited 19 injured miners in hospitals after two big incidents in a mine in Krasnoarmeisk in Donetsk region on 7 April and 23 May, and assisted them with food parcels.

On 23 May, when the operation was about to finish, another major blast killed 11 and injured 3 miners at the Krasnolimankaya mine in Krasnoarmeisk. Ukraine Red Cross staff and volunteers together with the psychologists of the regional Medical Psychological Centre provided psychological assistance. This was possible because of the effective cooperation established during the preparation and implementation of the DREF operation supporting families of miners affected by blasts in the Zasyadko mine. An agreement for common actions was signed in April 2008. In addition, Ukraine Red Cross staff assisted psychologists from the centre by providing "help to helpers" with snacks and drinks.

The Ukraine Red Cross had developed several directions in PSS: home visits to the families that lost their members, visits to hospitals to injured miners and to miners who had psychological post-traumatic syndrome, group meetings with members of families in need of psychological support and public events for children from affected families.

In the course of the operation, the International Federation's regional representation in Moscow, the Russian Red Cross and the regional Medical Psychological Centre in Donetsk were providing technical support and advice to the Ukraine Red Cross's regional and district branches in Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

## Progress towards objectives

### Immediate psychological support

**Objective 1: to minimize the psychological effects in the aftermath of the coal mine explosion.**

#### Activities planned:

- Provide psychosocial support at home for the affected individuals and families in the first two months following the mine explosion and during the recovery period to the affected individuals and families for five months following the blast.
- Organize teams of psychologists and nurses in Donetsk and Lugansk regions to accompany the affected families as they deal with the needs or obligations related to the tragedy (visits to cemeteries, hospitals, or government institutions distributing compensation).
- Create PSS and self-support groups for those affected by the explosion.
- Release and distribute information materials to the local population on overcoming stressful situations.
- Provide advocacy for the affected individuals and families and help them resolve any legal problems.

#### Progress and impact:

The needs assessment carried out by the Ukraine Red Cross with the support of psychologists from the Medical Psychological Centre showed that 107 families (out of 329 families, which lost a member or have someone injured in the recent accidents in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions) required outside support.

Psychosocial support was also offered to other community members, including those who pulled the dead and injured people from the mine and those miners who have returned to work after the mines were reopened.

Two PSS teams consisting of staff and volunteers from the regional Red Cross branches trained in the course of the operation were providing assistance to 87 families (257 people) through home visits and individual conversations. People were assisted in accepting the loss, adapting to the new circumstances and in eliminating feelings of guilty.

In addition, Red Cross workers carried out nine individual consultations with family members on specific issues and arranged six consultations with external specialists. Topics of these consultations included legal advice, employment, education, financial support, and raising children following the loss of their father. Red Cross staff also provided individual social support in 13 cases related to property documentation, delivery of medicine, groceries. Targeted humanitarian aid including hygiene items, food parcels, bed-linen and cash grants at a total amount of about 460 Swiss francs were provided for the six most vulnerable families affected by mine blasts, who did not receive compensation.

During the project implementation the Ukraine Red Cross organized eight meetings of self-support groups during which 50 participants or 44 families expressed their feelings through narration, literature, art, science or contacts with the nature.

During the whole period the Ukraine Red Cross organized one public action for adults and two actions for children that covered 380 children and about 300 families. Actions were dedicated to public holidays such as Commemoration Day, Father's Day, and Children Protect Day to reintegrate the affected people into the community and increase their self confidence. These actions were held in association with major public events.

Due to the lack of financial resources, not all 457 families planned to be covered could be assisted. The Ukraine Red Cross was not able to print information materials on PSS for the local population. However, basic PSS messages were disseminated by television and radio reportages with Red Cross staff participation.

## Psychosocial support service

**Objective 2: to initiate and consolidate a Ukraine Red Cross PSS support service in accident-prone mining towns.**

### Progress and impact:



Staff and volunteers of the Ukraine Red Cross on a seminar on psychosocial support in Donetsk, Ukraine. Photo: Ukraine Red Cross

Two PSS teams comprising 30 members were formed among the employees and volunteers of the Ukraine Red Cross branches in Donetsk and the neighbouring cities and also in Lugansk region.

In total, five PSS workshops were held for 65 participants, three for the Donetsk PSS team, and two for Lugansk. The first four-day seminar was prepared with the support of the Russian Red Cross and the International Federation's regional representation in Moscow and the regional Medical Psychological Centre in Donetsk.

In order to adjust the programme, in the course of the operation, the PSS team held three special meetings and one round-table meeting to discuss the problems and constraints in their work and five training events to overcome professional burn-out.

### Recommendations:

The following advantages of the PSS were revealed:

- it is one of the most important activities to respond to mine accidents which have greater effect on everyday life because mines continue to be operational; some miners who had survived the accident

often could not go back to work, and the families of miners who returned to work constantly worry about their lives;

- support is more effective and faster through the involvement of beneficiaries in self-support groups.

However, direct PSS raised some concerns among the beneficiaries. For instance, some people considered that acceptance of such help would mean the recognition of their personal failure to cope with the consequences of the disaster. Because of these views they often refused invitations to join group meetings. The conclusion can be drawn that avoiding publicity of the lists of people involved in the operation is recommended. In addition, it would be better to disseminate in advance the basic psychological knowledge among the population of accident-prone mining areas, so that in future it would facilitate involving the affected population in self-support groups much faster.

### Impact:

The operation provided an opportunity for the Ukraine Red Cross to strengthen its disaster response capacity by absorbing a new response approach. The regional and district branches in the affected areas acquired the new knowledge and skills on PSS, including cooperation with the local authorities. The new niche for the Ukraine Red Cross in providing psychosocial support as a disaster response activity that was encouraged and facilitated by the Russian Red Cross was defined in the Donetsk and Lugansk PSS operation. This role of the National Society was fully accepted by the Ukrainian authorities. When the mine blast occurred in May 2007 in Krasnoarmeisk, the Donetsk regional Red Cross branch was asked specifically by the local authorities to help the people affected. Effective assistance provided in cooperation with the state psychologists in this case shows the increased potential of the Red Cross in PSS. The agreement signed between the Donetsk regional branch and the Medical Psychological Centre provides a good basis for future cooperation.

The implementation of the operation has not only promoted to hasten the rehabilitation process of affected people after disasters but also raised the Ukraine Red Cross's influence among the population and state authorities.

From a letter of gratitude to the Red Cross regional branch:

*After my husband died, I stayed all alone with my grief, crying him out with my children. I thought that we were abandoned by this world. No money could replace a husband.*

*Red Cross nurse Elena Eshenko came to me and distracted from my grief. I was passing days much easier. I wanted to live again. I am grateful to the Red Cross workers for their support, mercy and kindness.*

Olga, Makeevka, Donetsk region

### Challenges:

Providing PSS was complicated because of three main difficulties:

- poor PSS educational material in Russian language;
- poor public transport connection between the seven settlements where the beneficiaries lived;
- the absence of salary to support the members of PSS teams.

The first and second difficulties were solved thanks to the effective partnership with the Russian Red Cross that provided the Ukraine Red Cross with electronic versions of the International Federation's PSS text book published in 2008 and translated into Russian, and with the medical institutions in Donetsk and Lugansk that provided the PSS teams with their own transport means. However, because of the lack of financial support to the PSS teams only a limited number of home visits to families were conducted.

### Conclusion

The DREF funds received through the International Federation enabled the Ukraine Red Cross to respond adequately to the needs of the affected population. Although, the Red Cross achieved the main objective of providing PSS to the people in need, a short-time operation cannot cover all the needs in a region highly prone to mine accidents. The PSS component should become an integral part of disaster management activities of the National Society. To achieve this, the Ukraine Red Cross has included the PSS programme in its programme plan for 2009-2010.

Effective communication and cooperation during the current operation between the National Society headquarters (Ukraine and Russian Red Cross Societies), local branches, the regional representation of the International Federation and also several partners (Donetsk Medical Psychological Centre, Regional Representation of the Ukraine Ministry of Emergency) led to effective and relevant response.

This DREF operation had a positive impact on the visibility of the National Society. It strongly reinforced its profile and community perception of the work conducted by the Ukraine Red Cross.

The negative balance of 61 Swiss francs which was a result of different exchange rate was covered from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.

## 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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**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

MDRUA003 - Ukraine - Mine Blast

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2007/11-2008/07
Budget Timeframe	2007/11-2008/5
Appeal	MDRUA003
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

**I. Consolidated Response to Appeal**

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
<b>A. Budget</b>	37,131					37,131
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>Income</b>						
<u>Other Income</u>						
<i>Voluntary Income</i>	37,132					37,132
<b>C5. Other Income</b>	37,132					37,132
<b>C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)</b>	37,132					37,132
<b>D. Total Funding = B + C</b>	37,132					37,132
<b>Appeal Coverage</b>	100%					100%

**II. Balance of Funds**

	Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>C. Income</b>	37,132					37,132
<b>E. Expenditure</b>	-37,193					-37,193
<b>F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)</b>	-61					-61

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MDRUA003 - Ukraine - Mine Blast

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2007/11-2008/07
Budget Timeframe	2007/11-2008/5
Appeal	MDRUA003
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

**III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure**

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Goal 1: Disaster Management	Goal 2: Health and Care	Goal 3: Capacity Building	Goal 4: Principles and Values	Coordination		
A							B	A - B
<b>BUDGET (C)</b>		<b>37,131</b>					<b>37,131</b>	
<b>Supplies</b>								
Medical & First Aid	252						252	
<b>Total Supplies</b>	<b>252</b>						<b>252</b>	
<b>Transport &amp; Storage</b>								
Transport & Vehicle Costs	600	677				677	-77	
<b>Total Transport &amp; Storage</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>677</b>				<b>677</b>	<b>-77</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>								
National Society Staff	4,720	4,194				4,194	527	
Consultants	1,500	1,524				1,524	-24	
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>6,220</b>	<b>5,718</b>				<b>5,718</b>	<b>503</b>	
<b>Workshops &amp; Training</b>								
Workshops & Training	20,915	21,718				21,718	-803	
<b>Total Workshops &amp; Training</b>	<b>20,915</b>	<b>21,718</b>				<b>21,718</b>	<b>-803</b>	
<b>General Expenditure</b>								
Travel	4,650	3,556				3,556	1,094	
Information & Public Relation	1,600	1,648				1,648	-48	
Office Costs		230				230	-230	
Communications	480	1,423				1,423	-943	
Financial Charges		-194				-194	194	
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>6,730</b>	<b>6,663</b>				<b>6,663</b>	<b>67</b>	
<b>Programme Support</b>								
Program Support	2,414	2,418				2,418	-4	
<b>Total Programme Support</b>	<b>2,414</b>	<b>2,418</b>				<b>2,418</b>	<b>-4</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)</b>	<b>37,131</b>	<b>37,193</b>				<b>37,193</b>	<b>-62</b>	
<b>VARIANCE (C - D)</b>		<b>-62</b>				<b>-62</b>		