

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Niger: Meningitis DREF Cancellation

DREF operation n° MDRNE003
GLIDE n° EP-2008-000067-NER
Update n° 1 (Final)
29 May 2008

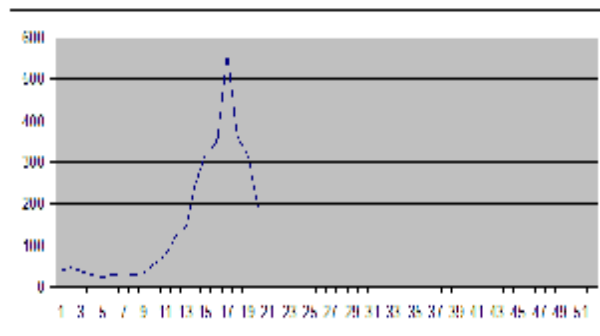
The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered by this update: 20-29 May 2008.

Summary: CHF 33,336 (USD 32,053 or EUR 20,641) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 20 May, 2008, to support the national society in delivering assistance to some 500,000 beneficiaries following an outbreak of meningitis.

The southern part of Niger was hit by meningitis, with an alarming increase noted between mid-March and mid-May 2008 (up to week 17). Funds were therefore sought to assist the authorities in preventing the spread of meningitis in areas at risk, particularly along the border with Nigeria. However subsequent epidemiological data showed that the situation had peaked at Week 17, with the number of cases rapidly diminishing, as shown in the attached graph. The Ministry of Health decided to suspend further vaccination campaigns at this time. As a result, Red Cross intervention was no longer deemed necessary. The funds allocated for this operation will therefore be returned to DREF. This operation has been cancelled and there will be no further reporting.

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Epidemiological data on the progression of the recent outbreak of meningitis in Niger.
(Source: International Federation based on Niger Ministry of Health statistics).

The situation

Niger is a West African country located in the heart of the African meningitis belt, which stretches from Senegal to Djibouti. The hot and dry climate is favorable to the outbreak of meningitis epidemics, which generally occur between October and May.

Epidemiological data over 17 weeks showed a sudden increase as from mid-March, with 1,991 cases and 111 deaths recorded up to that date. The mortality rate was 5.5%, with the southern part of the country being most severely affected.

As a result of the rapid increase noted (see graph above), the Ministry of Health decided to initiate a vaccination campaign, with support from the Red Cross Society of Niger (RCSN), in terms of public awareness-raising and sensitization activities.

Subsequent epidemiological data showed however that the situation had stabilized, and the number of cases diminished dramatically. Now that the first rains have arrived, it is felt that the current meningitis season is basically at an end. The Ministry of Health has therefore suspended vaccination activities. In light of this and given that there is no longer an emergency situation on the ground, the Federation has decided to cancel the funds allocated for this operation and return the moneys to the central DREF.

Coordination and partnerships

RCSN has been in close contact with the Ministry of Health, the 'Direction des statistiques, de la surveillance et de la riposte aux endémies' (DSS/RE), along with WHO and the Centre for medical tests (CERMES) to support the efforts of medical districts and regions. Epidemiological monitoring enabled all concerned entities to follow the progress of the situation, initiate vaccination campaigns in the most affected areas, and stand down activities once the situation had stabilized.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

National society members and volunteers were put on alert, and remained in regular contact with health authorities in the most seriously affected areas (Tahoua, Dosso, Zinder, Maradi and Tillabéri). The RCSN liaised with its regional committees, to obtain additional information and assess needs, and participated in weekly meetings with the health authorities at national level.

Given the epidemic proportion increase in cases leading up to week 17, a plan of action and request for support was initiated, in consultation with the Federation's Sahel Plus sub-regional office, and the Zone Office for Central and West Africa in Dakar.

DREF was allocated on 20 May. Shortly thereafter, it became apparent that the situation had peaked. This was confirmed by the epidemiological data. The Federation, in consultation with the national society, therefore decided to cancel the current DREF allocation. Given that no activities were undertaken, funds are being returned to the central DREF.

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:

- In **Niger**: Aly Bandiaré, President, Red Cross Society of Niger, Niamey; email: crniger@intnet.ne; telephone +227.73 30 37, fax 227 73 24 61
- In **Senegal**: Alasan Senghore, Federation Head of West and Central Africa Zone, Dakar; email: alasan.senghore@ifrc.org; telephone +221 33 869 36 41; fax +221 33 820 25 34; Hans Ebbing,

Health Coordinator, West and Central Africa Zone, email: hans.ebbing@ifrc.org; telephone +221
33 869 39 15

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