

# DREF operation final report



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Colombia: Volcano

DREF operation n° MDRCO003  
Glide No. VO-2008-000046-COL  
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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.

**Summary: CHF 103,000 (USD 105,060 or EUR 65,438) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 18 April 2008 to support the Colombian Red Cross Society in delivering assistance to over 2,250 families.**

On 29 March, 2008 the Colombian Institute of Geology and Mining (Instituto Colombiano de Geología y Minería – INGEOMINAS) issued an orange alert due to the increased volcanic activity of the Nevado del Huila volcano.

The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) worked arduously with local authorities carrying out evacuation activities, preliminary damage and needs assessments and humanitarian relief activities. This final report will detail all activities accomplished with the DREF funds.

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



CRCS volunteers setting up temporary shelters in Belalcázar. Source: CRCS

## The situation

The Nevado del Huila volcano is located between the departments of Cauca, Huila and Tolima, approximately 285 km. south-west of the capital city of Santa Fe de Bogota. In early 2008, INGEOMINAS reported that the Nevado del Huila volcano had doubled its volcanic activity compared to the previous year, and that its increased level of activity was putting at risk approximately 30,000 people.

On 19 February 2008, the volcano started an eruptive process. The National System of Prevention and Attention to Disasters (Sistema Nacional de Prevención y Atención de Desastres – SNPAD) activated the contingency plans in the municipalities of Paez and Inza located in the departments of Cauca and La Plata, as well as the municipalities of Nataga, Paigol and Tesalia in the department of Huila.

On 14 April 2008, an imminent eruption alert was issued by INGEOMINAS for the municipality of Paez in order to evacuate those people living in high risk areas. Authorities began to evacuate people with disabilities and those with chronic illnesses in the municipality of Belalcázar. The local Committee for the Prevention and Attention to Disasters in the Cauca Department reported that a total of 3,523 people were evacuated from urban areas and 10,678 people from rural areas.

Temporary shelters were opened to house the evacuees. No injuries due to the emergency were reported. However, the common shelters available were insufficient and inadequate common to house the affected

people. Lack of medical supplies and drinking water was also reported in Belalcázar. In addition, the heavy rains and landslides affected and partially obstructed evacuation routes.

Consequently, local authorities carried out the procurement of construction materials in order to build shelters and provide adequate signs or billboards showing the safest evacuation routes. This activity was coordinated by the different presidents of the local communities with local authorities. It benefitted approximately 14,201 people in the municipality of Belalcázar (3,523 people in 11 urban communities and 10,678 people in 9 indigenous communities).

Additional preventive actions taken by the local authorities were the implementation of a radio communication network for the municipalities located by the Rio Paez's basin. Sirens were installed in some key sectors and contingency plans were updated. Simulations and drills were practiced and preventive measures were revised by the local authorities in case the emergency worsened.

All response systems were activated and initial assessments were also completed. The affected people requiring medical attention were transported to the local hospital and tarpaulins were installed to shelter volunteers.

The majority of the affected population were living in rural areas, as shown in the table below:

Department	Municipality of Belalcázar	Zone	
		N° of families in urban areas	N° of families in rural areas
Cauca	Los Guadales	48	0
	El Jardin	170	0
	Bello Horizonte	88	0
	Las Americas	56	0
	Avenida Santander	97	0
	El Centro	34	0
	San Fernando	103	0
	La Primavera	49	0
	Panamericano	90	0
	Villa del Norte	116	0
	El Salado	115	0
	Huila	0	327
	Hoez	0	78
	Talaga	0	100
	Avirama	0	318
	Belalcázar	0	542
	Togoima	0	199
	Cohetango	0	220
	Ricaurte	0	312
	Pickwe Tha Fim	0	37
	966	2,133	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,099</b>	

Source: Local Committee for Disaster Prevention and Attention (Comité Local para la Prevención y Atención de Desastres - CLOPAD) in Belalcázar

After this emergency the Nevado del Huila volcano once again started an eruptive process in November 2008, displacing thousands of people. DREF funds were allocated through a separate operation to assist the affected people.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The local branch in Belalcázar has 17 volunteers, a warehouse as well as a crisis room, and to date it has responded to over 13 emergencies. A monitoring system was installed in the CRCS operational headquarters in Belalcázar and 16 volunteers were mobilized to attend the needs of those affected by the disaster.

At the onset of the emergency, the CRCS mobilized local branch resources to respond to the crisis. The CRCS in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and with SNPAD

performed rescue and evacuation activities, managed temporary shelters and coordinated transportation of goods and personnel to the affected areas. These activities reached 600 families. In addition, the CRCS posted evacuation signs in coordination with the local authorities as part of the disaster risk reduction measures.

The CRCS with the support of the French Red Cross (FRC) has been implementing the DIPECHO project in the departments of Cauca and Huila. The DIPECHO project's main objective is the activation of early warning systems when the threat of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are imminent. Throughout the year 2008, the communities of Nataga, Paicol, Tesalia, La Plata, Inza and Belalcázar have been sensitized in disaster response through the implementation of contingency emergency plans and kits including VHF (very high frequency) systems and surveillance material. Thanks to this project, people living in high risk areas will have the opportunity to evacuate on time.



CRCS volunteers mobilizing a water and sanitation unit in Belalcázar. Source: CRCS

The CRCS mobilized a water and sanitation team from the city of Pasto to the affected areas and provided 15 tents, 1,000 bed sheets and 1,000 blankets to the affected people. The local branch in Bogota also deployed a Telecom response unit in order to support the relief activities.

The CRCS supported the affected communities in water and sanitation activities to speed up their rehabilitation process. Two National Intervention Teams (NIT), specializing in relief and temporary shelters were sent to Belalcázar for a period of three months to support the operation.

The International Federation through its Pan American Disaster Response

Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation for the Andean Region has maintained ongoing contact throughout this emergency operation with the CRCS. A Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specialized in water and sanitation was deployed to provide support to the local branch in Belalcázar.

## Progress towards objectives

The CRCS Plan of Action (PoA) aimed to respond to the needs of 2,250 affected families and increase the capacity of the National Society in its response to the disaster. This DREF operation allowed the deployment of two National Intervention Teams specializing in disaster relief and shelter management to support the operation in Belalcázar for a period of three months. The DREF funds supported the CRCS initial response and mobilization activities.

## Risk Reduction and Preparedness

**Objective: 2,250 families affected by the volcano will benefit from the disaster risk reduction activities.**

### Activities planned:

- Evacuation processes will be supported in high risk areas.
- The SNPAD and the CRCS will apply early existing alerts in case of a volcanic event.
- The communities will receive educational information on basic first aid care and planning in case disaster strikes.

### Impact:

During the evacuation process that took place on 14 April 2008, the CRCS along with local authorities identified the locations to place the evacuees, assisting 600 families from the departments of Cauca and Huila. In addition, the planned activities were carried out (in part jointly with the DIPECHO project undertaken in Nevado del Huila) including: training and capacity building activities on First Aid, establishment of evacuation routes and rehabilitation of a helicopter evacuation landing point in the Colegio Minutos de Dios by the CRCS improving access to affected communities.

Activity	No. of activities	No. of volunteers	Beneficiary Families
Maintenance and rehabilitation of evacuation routes	20	68	3,523
Provision of first aid	6	11	12
Visits to meeting place and safe zones	12	68	3,050
Disaster preparedness community meetings	24	68	600

In order to complement the early volcanic eruption warning system, the CRCS, along with the indigenous authorities and CLOPAD, installed nine sirens within the communities at risk. These alarms have assisted and will continue to assist people to evacuate on time, as seen during an eruption of the same volcano in November 2008. Thanks to these alarms and the awareness raising activities held among the communities during the disaster preparedness meetings, people were able to evacuate and take preventive measures on time. The early volcanic eruption warning system consequently helped to save lives and reduce infrastructural damage.

### Water and sanitation

**Objective: A water and sanitation unit from PADRU will be deployed to the CRCS branch in Belalcázar.**

The branch of Belalcázar will be provided with a water sanitation unit in order to provide safe water for the affected people.

#### Impact:

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) sent a water purification unit and six water bladders by sea to the CRCS, which arrived in Colombia on 2 May, 2008 as mentioned in the DREF bulletin update published on 5 August 2008.

16 CRCS volunteers specialized in water and sanitation worked in setting up the water and sanitation unit and identifying the best water sources and in undertaking chemical and microbiological analyses. Approximately 3,200 people have benefited in Belalcázar with the water and sanitation unit.

### Emergency Shelter

**Objective: The CRCS will pre-position and distribute 100 tents to families according to needs and preventive evacuations.**

In case additional people needed to be evacuated, these tents, provided by PADRU, were made available in case the situation worsened.

#### Impact

The CRCS assisted in the evacuation and temporary accommodation of 600 families. Since then, no further evacuations were necessary until the emergency that occurred in November 2008. PADRU dispatched 100 tents by sea to the CRCS to be used in the affected areas of Popayán, Neiva, Belalcázar and Inza. All the tents were sent to the affected areas and were used by the evacuated families. The tents remain now with the CRCS and will be re-distributed or re-deployed if needed in any future emergencies. In addition, 14 CRCS tent modules were set up for hospital care in Belalcázar. Mobilization and transport costs were covered by DREF funds.

### Strengthening of Capacities

**Objective: Two 4 x 4 vehicles will be made available to the CRCS by PADRU for the transport of volunteers and goods for the duration of the emergency.**

#### Impact

PADRU's Regional Fleet Base in Panama dispatched two double cabin 4 x 4 vehicles. The vehicles have helped mobilize volunteers to the affected areas and assisted in the distribution of tents for the temporary accommodation of affected people. The vehicles not only have helped during this emergency, but also in two additional emergencies so far this year: during the floods in October and the second volcanic eruptions in

November. The vehicles are still in use by the CRCS's current response to the November 2008 eruptions for the mobilization of relief items and volunteers.

## Conclusion

The DREF funds allowed the CRCS to assist more than 2,250 families with disaster preparedness activities including maintenance and rehabilitation of evacuation routes, provision of first aid, visits to safe zones and disaster preparedness meetings. All these disaster preparedness actions improved the resilience of people living in high risk areas by providing them with guidance to follow step by step when a disaster is imminent. This operation helped the affected people and the CRCS to prepare for the ongoing emergency that started on November 2008.

The response capacity of the CRCS local branches in Cauca and Huila has been strengthened, especially during volcanic eruption threats. CRCS volunteers installed early warning systems and telecommunication equipment, implemented operational logistics, and identified evacuation routes and temporary shelters. Lessons learned from this operation will be systematized for future emergencies.

Overall, the objectives within this DREF operation were completed successfully and no major challenges were encountered within the objectives. Moreover, the ongoing cooperation with Movement and non-Movement partners in Colombia supported the effective coordination of actions during the response operation. Partners included: SNPAD, ICRC and DIPECHO-CRCS-French Red Cross.

Community members demonstrated a positive interest during the community meetings held, increasing their awareness of disaster preparedness. As mentioned before, in November 2008, the Nevado del Huila Volcano started a new eruptive phase. Thanks to the disaster preparedness activities and training carried out during this operation, the CRCS managed to help to save more lives by evacuating families affected by the eruption successfully and in time.

This response operation took place during a time when the Colombian Red Cross Society had started to undergo major organizational changes helping to respond more effectively to the needs of vulnerable people during the operation and the humanitarian challenges ahead.

## 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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**[<Final financial report below; click here to return to the title page>](#)**

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

MDRCO003 - Colombia - Volcano (Nevado del Huila)

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2008/4-2009/7
Budget Timeframe	2008/4-2009/7
Appeal	MDRCO003
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>	103,000					103,000
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>Income</b>						
<u>Other Income</u>						
<i>Voluntary Income</i>	99,409					99,409
<b>C5. Other Income</b>	99,409					99,409
<b>C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)</b>	99,409					99,409
<b>D. Total Funding = B + C</b>	99,409					99,409
<b>Appeal Coverage</b>	97%					97%

**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>	99,409					99,409
<b>E. Expenditure</b>	-99,409					-99,409
<b>F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)</b>	0					0

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**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>103,000</b>					<b>103,000</b>	
<b>Supplies</b>								
Shelter - Relief	25,000	28,086					28,086	-3,086
Construction Materials		28					28	-28
Water & Sanitation	30,000	29,020					29,020	980
<b>Total Supplies</b>	<b>55,000</b>	<b>57,134</b>					<b>57,134</b>	<b>-2,134</b>
<b>Transport &amp; Storage</b>								
Storage	7,505	9,491					9,491	-1,986
Distribution & Monitoring		3,034					3,034	-3,034
Transport & Vehicle Costs	10,600	9,366					9,366	1,234
<b>Total Transport &amp; Storage</b>	<b>18,105</b>	<b>21,891</b>					<b>21,891</b>	<b>-3,786</b>
<b>Personnel</b>								
Regionally Deployed Staff	5,500	1,438					1,438	4,062
National Staff	2,500	893					893	1,608
National Society Staff	6,000	9,583					9,583	-3,583
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>14,000</b>	<b>11,913</b>					<b>11,913</b>	<b>2,087</b>
<b>Workshops &amp; Training</b>								
Workshops & Training		377					377	-377
<b>Total Workshops &amp; Training</b>		<b>377</b>					<b>377</b>	<b>-377</b>
<b>General Expenditure</b>								
Travel	2,450	1,303					1,303	1,147
Office Costs	3,500	49					49	3,451
Communications	1,000	356					356	644
Financial Charges		-2,838					-2,838	2,838
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>6,950</b>	<b>-1,130</b>					<b>-1,130</b>	<b>8,080</b>
<b>Programme Support</b>								
Program Support	8,945	6,270					6,270	2,675
<b>Total Programme Support</b>	<b>8,945</b>	<b>6,270</b>					<b>6,270</b>	<b>2,675</b>
<b>Services</b>								
Services & Recoveries		2,954					2,954	-2,954
<b>Total Services</b>		<b>2,954</b>					<b>2,954</b>	<b>-2,954</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)</b>	<b>103,000</b>	<b>99,409</b>					<b>99,409</b>	<b>3,591</b>
<b>VARIANCE (C - D)</b>		<b>3,591</b>					<b>3,591</b>	