CARIBBEAN & CENTRAL AMERICA:  
HURRICANE IRIS  
Information Bulletin No. 4/01

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: None

This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, the Federation will seek international support through a Preliminary Appeal.

The Situation

Hurricane Iris, a category 4 hurricane, made landfall in Belize on 8 October at approximately 20.45 hours local time. The eye of the hurricane passed over Independence and Placencia, small towns located some 130 km south of coastal Belize City, with wind speeds of up to 225 kph (140 mph). The hurricane resulted in waves between 13 and 18 feet (4-5 metres) above normal and heavy rainfall which battered the coast. Some 19 persons are now confirmed dead and three remain missing all from the tourist dive boat M.V. “Wave Dancer”. These are the only fatalities from “Iris” recorded to date in Belize. The storm left about 13,000 of Belize’s 250,000 people homeless and caused about $250 million in damage, and many thousands of people are now out of work.

In Big Creek, blocks-long lines of people waited for food and water trucked in by the army. As noted earlier 80-90% of the houses in many villages houses have been destroyed or seriously damaged. In Guatemala, the hurricane destroyed more than 700 houses in the northern Peten region and damaged many others. Winds also wiped out essential corn and bean crops.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Belize Red Cross (BRC) and the Federation’s assessment teams returned late last night from both ground and aerial surveys. A coordination meeting including the Federation team, the BRC President and his officers, the American Red Cross IDRU, OXFAM, OFDA, PAHO and IADB convened into the early hours of the morning to agree to basic responsibilities for a well coordinated response. The teams have taken a short rest and are now completing the Preliminary Appeal details which is now planned to be launched tomorrow morning (12 October Geneva time).

Up to 14,000 people may be homeless in Belize as a result of Hurricane Iris, and crop loss appears severe in some areas on the basis of visits and overflights made so far. Since numerous houses and public buildings have been destroyed, especially in the southern area of Toledo District, food stocks and household goods have been lost and there is a pressing need for emergency shelter (since the rainy season continues), and food to enable the affected population to last until the next harvest in early 2002. Taking account of the activities of other agencies and private
donors, a total of 5,600 people in the worst-affected villages of Toledo District will be targeted by the Federation’s programme.

**Needs**

The immediate priorities are the provision of food and non-food assistance to 5,600 persons now homeless by Hurricane Iris. Inputs will include shelter materials, three months supply of basic food, non-food relief items such as hygiene kits, kitchen sets, blankets and jerry cans, and relevant training, and administrative support. 800 families in remote communities in areas of southern Belize, selected on the basis of poverty and level of damage suffered during Hurricane Iris, will be assisted. Provision is also made for support costs of a team of two international delegates and several local staff, and appropriate training for the personnel of the Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS) for approximately 6,000 beneficiaries specifically those located in the southern end of Toledo province.

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at [http://www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation’s Annual Appeal.

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