

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CENTRAL AMERICA: HURRICANE FELIX

Appeal no. MDR43002
Operations Update 1
Glide No. TC- 2007-000150;
12 September 2007

The Federation's vision is to strive, through voluntary action, for a world of empowered communities, better able to address human suffering and crises with hope, respect for dignity and a concern for equity. Its 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

Operations Update no.1; Period covered: 3 September to 11 September 2007; Appeal target: CHF 992,673 (USD 825,165 OR EUR 601,620). Appeal coverage (provisional): over 60%. *Note: the updated donor report will be available on the Federation's website shortly.*

Appeal history:

- Launched on 6 September 2007 for CHF 992,673 (USD 825,165 OR EUR 601,620) for nine months to assist 23,520 beneficiaries (4,704 families).
- Final report is due on 6 September 2008.
- CHF 200,000 (USD 166,251 or EUR 121,655) was allocated from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 3 September 2007.

Operational summary: Since the onset of the emergency caused by Hurricane Felix, a number of Red Cross Societies and Partner National Societies in Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala have been assessing the needs and delivering immediate support to the most affected families. There is a continued need for food and non-food relief items in the most affected areas to assist beneficiaries in recovering from the effects of Hurricane Felix.

This preliminary appeal operational update outlines the basic activities planned, but as more consolidated information is gathered, a revised Appeal will be launched in the coming days. Currently the main focus is on the immediate provision of relief items and identifying the early recovery and rehabilitation activities. There is also a need for support to these Red Cross Societies in psychosocial support and other health activities

The International Federation undertakes activities that 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.

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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

Felix, the second hurricane of the 2007 Atlantic season after last month's Dean, made landfall in northeastern Nicaragua on the morning of 4 September as a dangerous category five hurricane. During 4 September, the center of hurricane Felix moved inland over northeastern **Nicaragua** and **Honduras**. As of 5 September, Felix downgraded to a tropical depression severely affecting the countries of **Honduras**, **Nicaragua**, and **Guatemala** with heavy rainfall.



Floods in EL Progreso, Yoro Northern town of Honduras. Source: International Federation

In **Honduras**, the departments of Santa Bárbara, Cortés, Choluteca, Valle and El Paraíso have been severely affected by the constant rains and flooding. The agricultural sector has been severely damaged. Livelihoods, like plantain crops have been destroyed. A total of 23,778 people were evacuated and a total of 2,170 families (10,750 people) have been affected by the hurricane. During 5 September, a red alert was in effect for the central region of the country, since they received up to 50 millimeters of rain. There were several landslides which obstructed major roads in Copán, Comayagua and Olancho. Preventive measures were taken in the capital city of Tegucigalpa where 782 families (3,200 people) were evacuated, especially in high risk areas.

On 5 September, heavy rains severely affected **Nicaragua**, specifically in the communities of Puerto Cabezas (500 km Northwest from Managua), Waspam, Siuna, Bonaza and Rosita

in the Northern Atlantic region. This region is periodically affected by hurricanes. Some communities are very difficult to reach to since they have no roads and can only be accessed by plane or by boat.

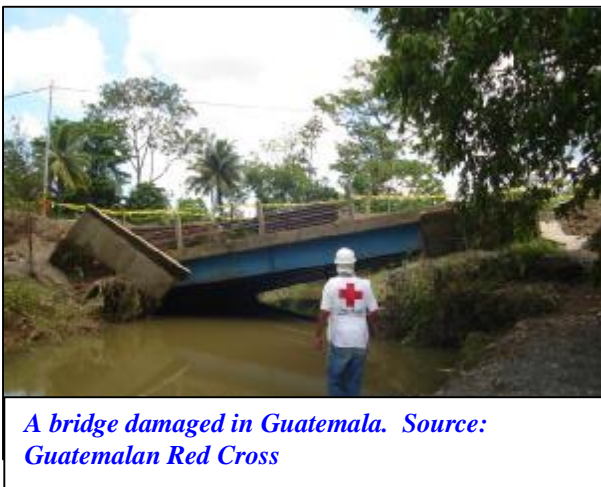
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The Nicaraguan government agency (Sistema Nacional para la Prevencion, Mitigacion y Atencion de Desastres, SINAPRED) confirms 25,096 families (151,834 people) have been affected. Damage and needs assessments report that Felix's severe winds and rain destroyed 9,785 houses. There have been 13,500 people evacuated 65 casualties and still 48 people missing. Dead animals and overflowing latrines are badly contaminating water sources.

The near proximity of Hurricane Felix caused continuous rain and floods in **Guatemala**. The government agency for Disaster Reduction (Coordinadora Nacional de Reduccion y Desastre, CONRED) reported major floods in 17 communities in the municipalities of Puerto Barrios and Morales. These municipalities confirmed of having major basic sanitary infrastructure damages in their sewage systems and lack of drinking water. Consequently, drinking water has been contaminated creating grave health problems, especially children. There have been 781 families (3,901 people) affected and 914 houses destroyed by floods. Government institutions have started to clear the roads and bridges obstructed by the landslides. Monitoring and assessments have not been completed since some areas remain inaccessible due to damaged roads.



*Hurricane damage in Sandy Bay on the Atlantic coast.
Source: Alex Wynter/International Federation*



A bridge damaged in Guatemala. Source: Guatemalan Red Cross

Operational developments

The Belize Red Cross (BRC) Disaster Management Committee met on two occasions on Monday 3 September in order to prepare for hurricane Felix. Following damage and needs assessments by the BRC, no further action will be required, although USD 5,000 from the initial DREF allocation will go to cover expenses on small health awareness programs made in preparation for Felix.

The Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) and the local branches of Puerto Barrios and Santo Tomás de Castilla in the department of Izabal, carried out need and damage

assessments and formulated a Plan of Action. This plan will assist 200 families (1,000 people) who are located in the most affected areas. The local branches main responsibilities have been to evacuate people in high risk areas, search and rescue teams, first aid care, item distributions, temporary shelters and damage and needs assessments.. The GRC has mobilized two National Intervention Teams (NIT), specializing in Health and Water Sanitation, and PADRU deployed a Coordination Delegate and one general RIT person to support the GRC in all relief activities. The GRC has been organizing relief aid activities with municipal coordinating offices and other national society local branches. International agencies such as OCHA and WFP are providing relief aid in coordination with the GRC, and supported by Ericsson Response. The Partner National Societies (PNS) from Norway, Netherlands and Spain have assisted and coordinated with the GRC, the preparation and activities in the plan of action.

The **Honduran Red Cross (HRC)** activated their local branches in the departments of Colón, Atlántida, Yoro, Santa Bárbara and Cortés in the Northern region; Francisco Morazán in the Central region and Choluteca in the Southern region, to respond to the emergency. Due to the increase in levels from several rivers, HRC volunteers from the local branches are helping with search and rescue activities, evacuation activities and providing immediate support to people in shelters. In addition, HRC has conducted distribution of local donations of food, medicine and water . The Pan American Disaster Relief Unit (PADRU) in coordination with the Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) in Panama sent a container with relief goods for 400 families (2,000 beneficiaries). These

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goods were distributed this week in the Department of Cortés by the HRC and supported by a PADRU DM Delegate. Overall, the plan of action of the Honduran Red Cross will seek to assist approximately 1,450 families (7,250 beneficiaries) through distribution of emergency relief items, roofing materials and potential support to livelihoods programs. These numbers may increase in the coming days depending upon needs assessments that are currently being carried out.

Further assessments need to be carried out after the emergency phase to determine medium and longer term needs and to identify key recovery activities. Several Partner National Societies (PNS) from Spain, Canada, Holland, Italy and Switzerland continue to support the emergency with technical, logistics and finance personnel.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross** (NRC) is coordinating with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud: MINSA), and is providing direct support to the evacuation activities in the affected areas of Puerto Cabezas and La Bocana. There are 80 volunteers of the NRC local branch in Puerto Cabezas supporting the emergency situation since day one in activities such as rescue, information, evacuation, and need assessments. Costa Rica Red Cross Society has sent a team of 15 people to Puerto Cabezas specializing in search and rescue, along with five ambulances and three trucks. There were three Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members specializing in logistics, telecommunications and water and sanitation deployed to this region to support the emergency relief. The NRC plan of action will assist 3,000 families (15,000 people) from the Northern Atlantic region. PADRU in coordination with the RLU has sent a container with relief goods for 1,000 families to Nicaragua.

Furthermore, the NRC along with all local branches, PNS, UN, donors, embassies and government agencies are coordinating all emergency relief activities to the affected areas. The NRC has received donations from the Spanish Red Cross (SRC), blankets from the Canadian Red Cross (CRC) and a general support team from the Netherlands Red Cross in Puerto Cabezas.

Red Cross action - objectives, progress, impact

This Emergency Appeal seeks to support response activities in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala.

Objectives and activities planned

Emergency relief

Objective 1: 4,650 affected families (23,250 beneficiaries) will benefit from the provision of relief items to immediately recover from the effects of hurricane Felix (200 families in Guatemala, 1,450 families in Honduras, 3,000 families in Nicaragua).

The **Guatemalan Red Cross** (GRC) is planning to provide 200 families (1,000 people) with relief items like food parcels, hygiene kits, mosquito nets, blankets and jerry cans. They will also provide assistance in the area of health, specifically in water sanitation.

The **Honduran Red Cross** (HRC) will provide relief assistance to a total of 1,450 families (7,250 beneficiaries). The 1,300 worst affected families will be provided with food parcels, hygiene kits, kitchen kits and blankets (1,000 families in the department of Cortes, 100 families in the department of Olancho, 100 families in the department of Santa Bárbara and 100 families in the department of Atlántida).

Another 150 families, located in the department of Gracias a Dios will be provided with roofing material in order to repair their houses and accelerate the return to proper housing. The items will be distributed as follows:

| Area | Families | Hygiene Kits | Kitchen Kits | Blankets (6 per family) | Food Parcels | Roofing Materials |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Department of Cortés | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 6,000 | 1,000 | |
| Department of Santa Barbara | 100 | 100 | 100 | 600 | 100 | |
| Department of Atlántida | 100 | 100 | 100 | 600 | 100 | |

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|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------|
| Department of Olancho | 100 | 100 | 100 | 600 | 100 | |
| Department of Gracias a Dios | 150 | | | | | 200 sets |
| TOTAL | 1,450 | 1,300 | 1,300 | 7,800 | 1,300 | 200 sets |

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross** plan of action will provide assistance to 3,000 families (15,000 beneficiaries) located in the Northern Atlantic region with food and non food items.

The items will be distributed as follows:

| Items | Amounts |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Blankets | 9,000 (3 per family) |
| Kitchen kits | 3,000 |
| Hygiene kits | 3,000 |
| Water buckets | 6,000 (2 per family) |
| Tarpaulins | 6,000 (2 per family) |

Based on the information from the affected locations, activities to reach this objective will likely include:

- Identification and registration of the most vulnerable families with special emphasis on gender inequities and disability conditions.
- Coordination with national, regional, provincial and local authorities.
- Warehousing, dispatch and transportation of relief items from local headquarters to the final destinations.
- Regular detailed reporting on the distribution.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Early recovery

Objective 1: Early recovery and rehabilitation activities are assessed, planned and implemented together with the affected communities and key local, national and international stakeholders.

The Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC) will provide two temporary shelters for those affected by the hurricane.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) will provide their volunteers with temporary shelter, especially to those who were affected by the hurricane. Rehabilitation and recovery activities will be programmed once further assessments prepared by the national society are completed.

Health - Psychosocial support

Objective 1: The affected communities will benefit from psychosocial support (PSP) to assist them in recovering from the effects of the hurricane.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC)** plan of action will provide psychological support. The NRC will provide support to all the affected communities by providing short term shelters. First Aid care will be primarily given to all volunteers who have been working with the NRC and who have also been affected by the hurricane.

Activities planned to reach this objective include:

- Needs assessments with the affected communities.
- Carry out needs assessments in target communities.
- PSP services in affected target communities in consultation with local authorities.
- Training of National Society staff and volunteers in PSP techniques.
- Training of Trainer workshops for national society and partners.

Objective 2: Vulnerable families will be sensitized on key health messages through a health awareness campaign related to vector control and water borne diseases.

With the passage of Felix, floods and a continued threat of greater rainfall continues. Based on this situation and the fact that these countries have a history of dengue outbreaks there is even a greater threat for waterborne diseases. The Nicaraguan Red Cross will therefore carry out a health awareness campaign related to vector control

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and waterborne diseases. Posters and media spots will be used to communicate appropriate messages related to vector control and personal hygiene practices.

Activities planned to reach this objective include:

- Production / replication of educational material with key prevention messages.
- Educational visits to target communities and sharing of key health messages.
- Media campaign through passing of key health messages.
- Community workshops for volunteers on personal hygiene practices.

The other National Societies included in this operations update will be encouraged to develop and execute similar psychosocial support or health activities to the affected population.

Coordination

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Central America Regional Representation in Panama are in close contact with the National Societies in the affected countries. PADRU and the Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) based in Panama are in coordination with several Partner National Societies (PNS), who have expressed the intention to send assistance to those National Societies affected by the hurricane.

Coordination meetings have taken place between the Federation, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to discuss participation in any joint coordinated response operation. Red Cross National Societies have been and continue to be in close contact with their respective national disaster response agencies. Communication is open and information is constantly shared with stakeholders such as Movement partners and European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

Communications – Advocacy and public information

Maintaining a steady flow of timely and accurate information between the field and other major stakeholders is vital for fundraising, advocacy and maintaining the profile of emergency operations. During an operation, communications between affected populations and the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as with the media and donors, is an essential mechanism for effective disaster response and the cornerstone to promote greater quality, accountability, and transparency. There has been close coordination and support to the NS to increase the visibility of their actions in regards to the communication through PADRU, the Regional Representation Offices and the Communications department of the Federation's Secretariat in Geneva.

Regular situation reports have been issued by Red Cross National Societies through the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) on the global Federation website. Several articles about Felix were posted on the website of the International Federation. Press releases have been issued by the Nicaraguan Red Cross in order to raise funds and develop a better understanding of the mission of International Federation of the Red Cross and the activities the organization undertakes in serving affected communities. In the same line, local and international media were provided with interviews directly from the affected National Societies.

Capacity of the National Societies

During the pre-hurricane meeting that took place in Panama from 14 to 17 May 2007 National Societies from countries prone to hurricanes in the Americas participated actively in the development of a Contingency Plan for the Region. The development of the Regional Contingency plan helped explore disaster preparedness tools, available capacities within the region, possible response strategies and operating procedures, which provided participants with hands-on practice.

In general, the National Societies affected by hurricane Felix were well prepared with pre-positioned stocks, radio networks both within county and between National Societies in the region, trained personnel and pre and post emergency coordination meetings. All the National Societies have a place in the National Emergency Operations Centre and have specific roles within their country's National Disaster Plan.

Capacity of the Federation

PADRU, in coordination with the Central America Regional Representation, is providing support to the affected National Societies in the response needs such as organizing the provision of initial relief items, development of

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Plans of Action, logistics and human resources as needed. Three Disaster Management Delegates have been deployed, one to each country, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to help with the relief distributions and the development of the Plan of Action in coordination with other partners. There have been two Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members deployed to the affected areas.

Monitoring and evaluation

PADRU together with the Central America Regional Representations will ensure regular monitoring of the implementation of the operation. Regular reports on the operation will be published on the Federation's website. In addition, an evaluation with direct participation and involvement of the beneficiaries will be carried out once the operation has finished in order to review achievements and constraints and to ensure the identification of lessons learnt for future relief operations.

[the donor coverage report will be available shortly; click here to return to the title page and contact details.](#)