

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 2
Glide No. TC- 2007-000157;
25 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.2; Period covered: 12 September to 24 September 2007; Original Appeal target: CHF 992,673 (USD 825,165 or EUR 601,620); Revised Appeal target: CHF 1,105,000 (USD 918,537 or EUR 672,141). Appeal coverage: approximately 95%.

Note: the updated donor report will be available on the Federation's website shortly.

[Click here to go to the Revised Appeal budget](#)

Appeal history:

- On 6 September 2007 an emergency appeal was launched for CHF 992,673 (USD 825,165 or EUR 601,620) to assist 26,200 beneficiaries (4,850 families) for 9 months.
- Final report is due on 3 September 2008.
- CHF 300,000 (USD 249,377 or EUR 182,482) 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, the Red Cross National Societies of 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. There is also a need for Psychosocial Support and other health activities.

Response to this Emergency Appeal has been generous, with coverage standing at nearly 95 percent. The National Societies of Canada, Hong Kong, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United States have contributed directly to the Appeal, while the Canadian and Costa Rican Red Cross Societies have made in-kind contributions. The International Federation is also showing continued support through the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Central America and Mexico Regional Representation Office in Panama.

Since the launch of the preliminary appeal the Canadian, Italian, Netherlands, Norwegian, Spanish and Swiss Red Cross Societies have expressed interest in doing bilateral work with the National Societies of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. For instance, In Guatemala, the Norwegian Red Cross has reached an agreement with the Guatemalan Red Cross to carry out water and sanitation and health and care activities in response to this appeal. Negotiations are also taking place to assist these National Societies in accomplishing other Health objectives.

This Operations Update number two features a new appeal target of CHF 1,105,000 (USD 918,537 or EUR 672,141). The difference in the budget is due to several reasons, mainly the bilateral nature of some on the contributions and the identification of a greater need for mobilization and transportation costs for National Society and regional staff. At the outset of the operation, it was not foreseen that the need for regional technical assistance would be large, but as more detailed assessments started to come in, the National Societies requested that more Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members be deployed throughout the

duration of the operation. This naturally implies an increase in costs associated to staff and mobilization. This update outlines the basic activities planned and accomplished up-to-date. Currently, the main focus is on the continuous provision of relief items and early recovery and rehabilitation 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>

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



Evacuation activities due to floods in El Progreso, in Honduras. Source: International Federation

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 **Honduras** and **Nicaragua**. On 5 September, Felix was downgraded to a tropical depression, but still managed to severely affect the countries of **Honduras**, **Nicaragua**, and **Guatemala** with heavy rainfall.

The near proximity of Hurricane Felix caused continuous rain and floods in **Guatemala**. The government agency for Disaster Reduction (Coordinadora Nacional de Reducción de Desastres, CONRED) reported major floods in 17

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communities in the municipalities of Puerto Barrios and Puerto Morales. These municipalities confirmed having major basic sanitary infrastructure damages in their sewage systems and lack of drinking water. Consequently, drinking water was contaminated creating health problems, especially in children. There are 781 families (3,905 people) affected and 914 houses destroyed by the floods.

Furthermore, CONRED distributed food parcels, jerry cans, blankets, drinking water and mattresses to those most affected.

In **Honduras**, the departments of Yoro, Cortés, and Gracias a Dios were severely affected by constant rains and flooding. The government commission for contingencies (Comisión Permanente de Contingencias, COPECO), conducted damage and needs assessments and estimates losses for USD 6,579,290.90 (CHF 7,812,924.46) in the agricultural sector. The Sula Valley reports damages in corn, bean, sugar cane and African palm plantations as well as vegetable, fruit and livestock farms. Bridges, roads, houses and schools were damaged by floods and landslides. Water contamination and proliferation of diseases are foreseen due to infested flood waters. A total of 32,216 people were evacuated and approximately 2,361 families were affected by the hurricane.

On 5 September, heavy rains severely affected **Nicaragua**, specifically in the community of Sandy Bay, 15km north of Bilwi (in Puerto Cabezas, 500 km northwest of Managua), a region that is periodically affected by hurricanes. After moving through the Northern Atlantic Region, the hurricane affected other departments and municipalities on its path. Some communities are very difficult to reach since there are no roads and can only be reached by air or water.



Hurricane damage in Krukira, a village on Nicaragua's Mosquito Coast. Source: Alex Wynter/International Federation

The National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention (Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres - SINAPRED) from Nicaragua indicates that approximately 37,745 families (188,726 people) have been affected. Damage and needs assessments report that 10,145 houses and 13,438 latrines were destroyed. 11,519 wells have been contaminated due to dead animals and stagnant water. Official buildings such as schools, health posts, the main pier in Puerto Cabezas and the control tower of Bilwi airport were damaged. The number of people and facilities affected could still rise as damages have not been fully assessed in the areas of Siuna, Bonanza and Rosita. Power and telephone lines as well as drinking water connections have not yet been re-established. There were 13,500 people evacuated, 102 casualties and 86 people are still missing. 64,184 acres of land were destroyed and 5,063 heads of cattle have been lost. People living in

these areas live on a subsistence economy, which puts their livelihoods at great risk as a result of this storm.

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 of small health awareness activities carried out 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 damage and needs 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 were to evacuate people in high risk areas, provide search and rescue teams, first aid care, carry out item distributions and damage and needs assessments. The GRC mobilized one National Intervention Team (NIT), specializing in Health and Water Sanitation and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) deployed a

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Coordination delegate and one general RIT person to support the GRC in all relief activities. The GRC has been coordinating these activities with municipal offices and other National Society local branches. To date, distribution of hygiene kits has been done to the 200 families included in the plan of action. International agencies such as OCHA and the World Food Programme (WFP) are providing relief aid in coordination with the GRC, and supported by Ericsson Response. Partner National Societies (PNS) such as the Netherlands, Norwegian and Spanish Red Cross Societies have assisted the GRC in preparing and carrying out activities included 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 as well as Choluteca in the Southern region, to respond to the emergency. The HRC created regional warehouses to simplify the distribution of relief items. Due to the increase in levels from several rivers, more than 220 HRC volunteers from the local branches helped with evacuation activities and distributed their own relief items like drinking water, medicines and food to those affected. Their revised plan of action focuses on assisting the most vulnerable, which amounts to 1,950 families (11,700 beneficiaries). To date, non food items have been distributed to 494 families. PADRU in coordination with the Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) in Panama sent a container with non food items for 400 families (2,400 beneficiaries). These goods were distributed in the Department of Yoro by the HRC and supported by a PADRU DM delegate. The HRC supplied the rest of the 94 families with non standard kitchen kits. There is a need to replenish the HRC warehouses due to the distributions they carried out initializing this operation.



Nicaraguan Red Cross volunteers distributing relief items. Source: International Federation.

The Canadian, Italian, Netherlands, Spanish and Swiss Red Cross Societies are supporting relief activities through the provision of technical, logistics and finance personnel.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC)** coordinated with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud - MINSA), and provided direct support to the evacuation of 12,000 people in the affected area of Puerto Cabezas. There are now 35 volunteers of the NRC local branch in Puerto Cabezas supporting relief activities. Costa Rican Red Cross sent a team specializing in search and rescue of 25 volunteers to Puerto Cabezas, along with five ambulances and three trucks. The mobilization of this team is covered within this Emergency Appeal. There is a PADRU delegate specialized in communications and one Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member assisting operational activities in the area. The NRC plan of action will assist the people affected from the Northern Atlantic region, especially in Sandy Bay. PADRU in coordination with

the RLU sent a container with relief goods for 1,000 families to Nicaragua.

The NRC received donations from the Spanish Red Cross, the Italian Red Cross, blankets from the Canadian Red Cross and a general support team was sent from the Netherlands Red Cross to Puerto Cabezas. The World Food Programme (WFP) is providing food parcels for up to 100,000 beneficiaries. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in coordination with the Nicaraguan government has launched a flash appeal in order to continue all relief and recovery activities such as health, shelter and water and sanitation among others. Furthermore, the NRC and all its local branches along with PADRU and present PNS are coordinating all emergency relief activities to the affected areas with UN agencies, other donors, embassies and government agencies.

Red Cross action - objectives, progress, impact

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

Objectives and activities planned

Emergency relief

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Objective 1: 3,850 affected families will benefit from the provision of relief items to immediately recover from the effects of hurricane Felix (200 families in Guatemala, 950 families in Honduras, 2,700 families in Nicaragua,).

The **Guatemalan Red Cross** (GRC) plans to provide 200 families (1,000 people) with relief items like hygiene kits, cleaning kits and mosquito nets. Hygiene kits have already been distributed.

The **Honduran Red Cross** (HRC) is providing relief assistance to a total of 950 families (5,700 beneficiaries). There are 400 families who will be provided with kitchen kits, hygiene kits and blankets. There are 400 families who already received assistance by the HRC and other donors who will only receive blankets. 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:

| Department | Total Families | Hygiene Kits | Kitchen Kits | Roofing Materials | Blankets (3 per family) | Observations |
|----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Yoro | 400 | 400 | 400 | | 1,200 | These items were distributed on 16 September |
| Cortés | 400 | | | | 1,200 | |
| Gracias a Dios | 150 | | | 150 sets | | Donated by Exxon Mobil |

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross** plan of action will provide relief assistance to 2,700 families (13,500 beneficiaries) located in the Northern Atlantic region with food and non food items.

The items will be distributed as follows:

| Items | Amounts |
|---------------|---|
| Blankets | 8,100 (3 per family) (in kind donation by Canadian Red Cross) * |
| Kitchen kits | 2,700 |
| Hygiene kits | 2,700 |
| Water buckets | 5,400 (2 per family) |
| Food parcels | 2,700 ** |

*Note: The in-kind donation sent from Canada by the Canadian Red Cross was of 10,500 blankets. The NRC will keep the remaining 2,400 blankets, and they will do further assessments to determine if there are families who might require additional blankets.

**Note: The composition and price of the food parcels – which were procured locally - varied significantly from the original budget at the time of purchase.

Based on the information available 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.

Livelihoods and infrastructure in Honduras and Nicaragua were severely affected. The **Honduran Red Cross (HRC)** in coordination with the government commission for contingencies, COPECO, will assist in rehabilitation activities in the agricultural sectors damaged by the hurricane in the department of Yoro. The HRC will provide technical assistance, logistics and distribution of provisions such as fertilizers and seeds to the affected people so they can recuperate their corn and bean crops. This plan will assist 1,000 families (6,000 people).

| Department | Rehabilitation of Farms and Plantations |
|------------|---|
| Yoro | Seeds, fertilizers and technical assistance |
| | 1,000 sets |

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC)** in coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will reconstruct schools in the Northern Atlantic region. Several PNS and other international agencies have demonstrated an interest in assisting in the rehabilitation of livelihoods that were destroyed by the passing of Felix. The agricultural sectors, especially corn crops, were totally destroyed, as well as all fishing equipment fishermen need in order to subsist.

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** will provide psychological first aid to all the affected communities and NRC volunteers who were also affected, especially in the Northern Atlantic Region, with an aim to help them cope with the stress they have been subjected to as a result of this disaster. This National Society seeks to accomplish this objective through bilateral contributions working with international agencies such as Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), UNICEF, WFP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

HIV and AIDS awareness

Objective 2: Vulnerable populations affected by the hurricane in Guatemala and Nicaragua have increased awareness on HIV and AIDS.

Prevention and awareness programmes on HIV and AIDS will be carried out by the National Societies of Guatemala and Nicaragua within their plans of action with an aim to reduce or minimize infection with HIV during this emergency.

In **Guatemala**, the GRC there will be HIV and AIDS awareness workshops in branches for volunteers and affected families. These actions are planned to be accomplished multilaterally under the framework of this appeal.

In **Nicaragua**, as an initial step, the NRC has already distributed information pamphlets on HIV and AIDS to affected people in shelters. The completion of this objective will be sought through bilateral actions.

Water and Sanitation

Objective 3: Vulnerable families will be sensitized on key health messages through a health awareness campaign related to vector control and water borne diseases.

After 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.

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The National Societies of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua with the support of several PNS will carry out health awareness campaigns related to vector control and waterborne diseases.

The **Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC)** in coordination with the Norwegian Red Cross will provide those affected by the floods with water and sanitation activities, rebuilding of latrines and water wells and delivery of drinking water.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC)** volunteers with assistance from UNICEF will work in sanitizing water wells for human water consumption.

Federation Coordination

The Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Central America and Mexico Regional Representation Office in Panama have been in close contact with Partner National Societies (PNS) from Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain, and the National Societies in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) based in Panama coordinated with the Canadian Red Cross, the delivery of 10,500 blankets to the victims of the hurricane in Nicaragua. The RLU also dispatched two containers with relief items to Nicaragua and Honduras in coordination with the National Societies.

The Red Cross National Societies of Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras have been and continue to be in close contact with their respective national disaster response agencies. Meetings have been held between OFDA, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), UNICEF, WFP, UNDP and the Nicaraguan Red Cross to coordinate relief activities.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

The hurricane response operation is based on the principle of humanity. The selection of beneficiaries under the Appeal is based on the level of vulnerability of those affected, respecting cultural diversity and ensuring gender sensitivity. Activities planned for this appeal are based on the SPHERE standards, the humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response. All objectives put forward in the Appeal are in line with the International Federation's Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement. The International Federation strongly supports the rights-based approach for people affected by disasters. The Guatemalan, Honduran and Nicaraguan Red Cross and the International Federation are ensuring the inclusion of a participatory needs assessment to define the contents of recovery support measures, and based on direct observation and vulnerability criteria, will define the geographical areas of intervention for the next sustained phase of recovery.

National Society Capacity Building

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.

The **Guatemalan Red Cross**, the **Honduran Red Cross** and the **Nicaraguan Red Cross** have wide experience in disaster response, particularly as a result of the hurricane Mitch operation. National Intervention Team (NIT) training carried out in Guatemala and Honduras has increased the capacity of the National Societies; the Honduran, Guatemalan and Nicaraguan Red Cross Societies and their volunteers' capacities have been strengthened through their participation in providing humanitarian assistance during these relief operations. This experience has had a positive impact on the participating branches in all three countries and their volunteers.

In general, the National Societies affected by hurricane Felix were well prepared with pre-positioned stocks, radio networks both within country 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.

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

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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 International Federation's Secretariat in Geneva.

Regular situation reports were issued by Red Cross National Societies through the Federation's Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) on the global International Federation website during the emergency. Several articles about Felix were posted on the website of the International Federation; <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/07/07091802/>. Press releases were issued by the Nicaraguan Red Cross and Guatemalan 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 the affected communities. In the same line, local and international media were provided with interviews directly from the affected National Societies.

Revised Appeal Budget below;

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APPEAL BUDGET SUMMARY

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HURRICANE FELIX**MDR43002**

| | ORIGINAL | REVISED | VARIANCE |
|---|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| <u>RELIEF NEEDS</u> | | | |
| Shelter | 95,783 | - | 95,783 |
| Construction Materials | 30,075 | 30,075 | - |
| Clothing & Textiles | 121,082 | 82,532 | 38,550 |
| Food | 152,781 | 253,390 | 100,609 |
| Seeds & Plants | - | 74,706 | 74,706 |
| Water & Sanitation | 70,111 | - | 70,111 |
| Medical & First Aid | 25,263 | - | 25,263 |
| Teaching Materials | - | - | - |
| Utensils & Tools | 142,440 | 143,802 | 1,362 |
| Other Supplies & Services | 148,566 | 70,217 | 78,349 |
| Total Relief Needs | 786,100 | 654,721 | - 131,379 |
| <u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u> | | | |
| Land & Buildings | - | - | - |
| Vehicles Purchase | - | - | - |
| Computers & Telecom Equipment | - | 11,966 | 11,966 |
| Office/Household Furniture & Equip. | - | - | - |
| Medical Equipment | - | - | - |
| Other Machinery & Equipment | - | - | - |
| <u>TRANSPORT, STORAGE & VEHICLES</u> | | | |
| Storage - Warehouse | - | 4,812 | 4,812 |
| Distribution & Monitoring | 12,950 | 21,792 | 8,843 |
| Transport & Vehicles Costs | 87,819 | 86,255 | 1,564 |
| <u>PERSONNEL</u> | | | |
| International Staff | - | - | - |
| International Staff (Benefits and MSA) | - | 18,045 | 18,045 |
| Regionally Deployed Staff | 12,030 | 70,977 | 58,947 |
| National Staff | - | 18,045 | 18,045 |
| National Society Staff | - | 43,519 | 43,519 |
| Consultants | 3,609 | 16,842 | 13,233 |
| <u>WORKSHOPS & TRAINING</u> | | | |
| Workshops & Training | 3,609 | 24,686 | 21,077 |
| <u>GENERAL EXPENSES</u> | | | |
| Travel | - | 21,654 | 21,654 |
| Information & Public Relations | - | 14,117 | 14,117 |
| Office running costs | 15,416 | 16,135 | 719 |
| Communication Costs | 3,609 | 6,000 | 2,391 |
| Professional Fees | 3,008 | 3,609 | 602 |
| Financial Charges | - | - | - |
| Other General Expenses | - | - | - |
| <u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u> | | | |
| Programme Support - PSR | 64,523 | 71,824 | 7,301 |
| Total Operational Needs | 206,573 | 450,278 | 243,706 |
| Total Appeal Budget (Cash & Kind) | 992,673 | 1,105,000 | 112,326 |