

# DREF operation final report

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Lebanon: Internal Disturbance

DREF operation n° MDRLB001  
31 October 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the International 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 70,000 (USD 66,995 or EUR 42,950) was allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 12 May 2008 to support the Lebanese Red Cross (Lebanese RC) in delivering assistance during internal clashes.

The clashes started on 7 May and placed the country on the brink of civil war following months of a political impasse. While the clashes were the worst seen since the end of the civil war, the pressure placed on the factional leaders by a swift international call for dialogue eased the armed confrontations. As a result, the initially requested DREF amount of CHF 100,000 was reduced to CHF 70,000. The funds were used to support the activities of the Lebanese RC emergency medical service (EMS) which throughout the clashes remained on high alert with its capacity stretched to cover the rapid increase in the number of missions. The funds were directed to the 12 EMS stations in the combat areas and eight stations on high support alert. In total, during the active period, the EMS undertook 582 missions related to the conflict.



Generators were handed over for emergency medical service stations active in the internal disturbances. Photo: International Federation.

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## The situation

Lebanon was once again faced with armed internal clashes in May 2008, a painful result of months of political impasse and increasing sectarian confrontation which was eventually taken to the streets. This violent peak in the political paralysis did not come as an isolated event as the country had witnessed an increasing number of security incidents linked to the political void and an increased militarization of militia groups throughout 2007 and 2008 highlighted by an increased frequency of politically motivated assassinations and indiscriminate bomb attacks.

In May 2008, the decision by the government to investigate the legality of the communications network of Hezbollah as well as to remove the head of security at the international airport led initially to a blockade of the main access roads into Beirut, significantly the access road to the international airport. With little conciliatory action being taken by either side, an armed offensive started in western Beirut on 8 May rapidly spreading to the Mount Lebanon and the Bekaa areas as well as to the north of the country. The exact number of wounded and dead is difficult to come by; however, the statistics from the Lebanese RC can confirm 42 dead and 80 wounded as a result of the fighting.

A swift intervention by the Arab states to end the violence called for all factions to participate in a meeting in Doha, Qatar, to resolve the political crisis fuelling the armed confrontations. The outcome of the meeting resulted in the formal election of a president and the formation of a national unity government. Parliament was reopened and a fragile stability returned to the country. The excitement generated by the political solution however was soon undermined by continuous clashes in the north of the country and bomb attacks targeting the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout the following months. The Lebanese Armed Forces had maintained a neutral position throughout the factional clashes.

Despite ultimately a positive outcome, the militarization of the political crisis and the willingness to use force has had an underlying divisive impact on the country which could result in an unstable run-up to the elections in 2009.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Lebanese RC mobilised its EMS to respond to the emerging crisis. Initially, there was a notable increase in missions related to the blockade of the access roads. Patients with chronic diseases or other illnesses were required to request transportation to ensure safe passage to hospitals. This changed to cover urgent evacuations of wounded as well as the dead and the provision of emergency response on the spot as the intensity of the fighting increased and spread into different areas. At the height of the operation, the EMS had a total of 450 volunteers and 110 ambulances on 24 hour duty.

Date (May 2008)	Event	Dead	Wounded	Emergency Response and Transport	Transport of Civilians	Volunteers /Number of Ambulances	EMS Stations
7-8	Fighting in Beirut	0	3	35	5	300/75	Mreijeh, Spears
8-9		5	11	17	5	380/90	
9-10		7	15	70	23	380/90	Mreijeh, Spears, Baalbek, Tripoli, Halba
10-11	Fighting in southern Mount Lebanon, Western Bekaa and the north	12	17	55	34	450/110	Mreijeh, Spears, Tripoli, Halba,
11-12		12	29	32	33	450/110	Aley, Bekaata,
12-13		6	5	54	0	380/90	Kabr Chmoun,
13-14		0	0	58	0	380/90	Kab Elias,
14-15		0	0	33	0	300/75	Baalbek, Jeb Jennine

In total, the EMS had 582 additional missions related to the conflict. This was in addition to its normal ambulance service which continued to operate throughout the areas not directly affected by the armed clashes. The strain which was placed on the EMS operation was significant, particularly as the teams were often in the front line of the operations. The EMS station in Halba was caught in the middle of two factions and needed to be evacuated. The station was severely damaged as a result of the fighting. Tragically, also a Lebanese RC EMS volunteer was hit by shrapnel at his home following his duty. The volunteer suffered severe spinal injury.

## Progress towards objectives

### Emergency health

**Objective:** To assist and assure the capacity of the Lebanese RC emergency medical service to respond to an increased number of emergency calls.

**Activities planned:** The Lebanese RC requested emergency funds from the International Federation in order to cover the increased running costs of the ambulance service and to improve the functioning of the

stations during the emergency. As a result, the top priority for the funding from the DREF was the reimbursement of additional costs related to the increased number of missions; primarily covering fuel and station allowances and improved emergency preparedness through the contribution of generators and VHF radios.

The following contribution was ultimately made based on the request from the National Society:

Item	Beneficiaries	Total Quantity	Additional Information
5kva Diesel Generators	EMS Stations: Mreijeh, Furn el Chebak, Aley, Kabr Chmoun, Deir el Kamar, Baabda, Antelias, Kornet Chewan, Jal e Dib, Falougha, Baalbeck, Kob Elias, Tripoli, Halba, Batroun, Amyoun, Besharreh, Zghorta, Saida, Jensnaya, EMS headquarters	21	Purchased by the International Federation and delivered individually to each station.
Portable Radio Vertex VX-160	Handed over to the EMS central operations for delivery to stations during emergency situations.	30	Purchased by the International Federation and delivered to the EMS headquarters.
Fuel Expenses			Payment made through the Lebanese RC finance department.
Station Allowances	Stations as listed above, excluding Mreijeh and Furn el Chebak but including Spears station.	20	Paid out to the stations from the Lebanese RC finance department.

The station allowance covered food costs and other station requirements during the period of the emergency while the contribution towards fuel costs came also on the grounds of the exceptionally high fuel prices at the time in Lebanon as elsewhere in the region.

**Impact:** While Lebanon teetered on the verge of a civil war, the EMS of the Lebanese RC was once again on the front line providing emergency health services in the affected areas. Although there has been a lot of support to the EMS over the past years since the 2006 conflict, the DREF contribution was able to alleviate a considerable additional strain placed on a generally under funded service which provides the only emergency health care to the population of Lebanon. The EMS on a daily basis covers 80% of the emergency health needs in line with the mandate provided by the authorities. The service is run by volunteers who risk their lives to provide this service, with often limited resources.

The provision of the VHF radios and the generators have helped to assure an increased emergency preparedness of the stations which are situated in areas particularly vulnerable to internal clashes. The sectarian tensions continued in the north of the country despite the stabilization in the rest of the country for several weeks following the May events with the EMS station in Tripoli in particular being on continuous alert. Lebanon has witnessed over the past year fluctuating electricity supply and increasing costs. The generators will be able to provide the security to the stations to be able to operate with improved infrastructure throughout heightened emergency response periods while the contribution of the VHF radios will strengthen the communications network of the EMS as also outlined in its five year strategy.

The DREF contribution was closely coordinated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who provided additional supplies to the EMS as well as agreeing to cover the move of the destroyed Halba station to a new location.

**Challenges:** The main challenge to the operation was to assure an emergency preparedness and response able to cope with a highly fluctuating situation. While for many months there had been fears that the political stand-off would culminate in armed confrontations, it was an unpredictable scenario at all times. The events of May escalated beyond previous analyses and eased as fast as it had begun. For the EMS this posed a significant challenge on how to manage the operations. Furthermore, the division of neighborhoods into multi-factional control made it extremely difficult to manage contacts and ensure safe passage. Despite these challenges, the National Society was able to mobilize at an exceptional speed.

## Conclusion

### Lessons learned:

In a country which has been marked by instability and violence, the Lebanese RC has faced the most extraordinary operational challenges but despite this has been able to provide a vital function to the population providing emergency health services in times of conflict and on a daily basis. Over the years, its resources have been stretched and as recognition of the performance of the EMS volunteers, efforts have been made by the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) Movement partners as well as external partners to improve the resources available to the 2,600 volunteers, 43 stations, four operation rooms and the central headquarters. This support has been based on a five year strategy developed by the EMS in 2007 to improve its fleet base, station infrastructure and communication network as well as addressing standardisation in training and human resource management in general.

The internal disturbances which erupted in May 2008 highlighted the need to further boost the emergency response and preparedness of the stations and the EMS headquarters in order to avoid draining the already limited resources. In line with RC/RC Movement's coordination efforts, resources were allocated from the International Federation and the ICRC towards this operation and were in line with the five year strategy as well as the urgent operational needs.

While initially the amount requested by the National Society was CHF 100,000, the rapid developments in the field resulted in a downward amendment to the budget based through an adjustment to the proposed support developed jointly by the Lebanese RC and the International Federation in line with the needs linked to the implementation capacity and contextual developments.

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

MDRLB001 - Lebanon Internal Disturbance

Final Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2008/05-2008/07
Budget Timeframe	2008/05-2008/07
Appeal	MDRLB001
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>	70,000					70,000
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>	0					0
<b>Income</b>						
<u>Other Income</u>						
Voluntary Income	70,000					70,000
<b>C5. Other Income</b>	70,000					70,000
<b>C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)</b>	70,000					70,000
<b>D. Total Funding = B + C</b>	70,000					70,000
<b>Appeal Coverage</b>	100%					100%

## 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>	70,000					70,000
<b>E. Expenditure</b>	-70,000					-70,000
<b>F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)</b>	0					0

## 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>	70,000					70,000		
<b>Land, vehicles &amp; equipment</b>								
Computers & Telecom	6,700	6,721				6,721	-21	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipm.	25,000	23,562				23,562	1,438	
<b>Total Land, vehicles &amp; equipment</b>	<b>31,700</b>	<b>30,283</b>				<b>30,283</b>	<b>1,417</b>	
<b>Transport &amp; Storage</b>								
Transport & Vehicle Costs	1,200	1,279				1,279	-79	
<b>Total Transport &amp; Storage</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,279</b>				<b>1,279</b>	<b>-79</b>	
<b>General Expenditure</b>								
Information & Public Relation		281				281	-281	
Communications	2,080	1,820				1,820	260	
Financial Charges		130				130	-130	
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>2,080</b>	<b>2,231</b>				<b>2,231</b>	<b>-151</b>	
<b>Contributions &amp; Transfers</b>								
Cash Transfers National Societies	30,470	31,658				31,658	-1,188	
<b>Total Contributions &amp; Transfers</b>	<b>30,470</b>	<b>31,658</b>				<b>31,658</b>	<b>-1,188</b>	
<b>Programme Support</b>								
Program Support	4,550	4,550				4,550	0	
<b>Total Programme Support</b>	<b>4,550</b>	<b>4,550</b>				<b>4,550</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>				<b>70,000</b>	<b>-0</b>	
<b>VARIANCE (C - D)</b>		<b>0</b>					<b>-0</b>	