

DREF operation



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Serbia: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRRS003
GLIDE n° FL-2010-00042-SRB
4 March, 2010

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 and Red Crescent emergency response. 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.

CHF 286,219 (USD 267,260 or EUR 195,609) has been allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 3,150 beneficiaries and to replenish emergency stocks. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: Heavy rains and rapid snow melting have caused floods in the eastern and central part of Serbia damaging and flooding 1,306 households several times and affecting more than 3,150 people. The houses are still under water according to latest assessments. Based on the situation, the Red Cross of Serbia will provide basic food and non-food items to 1,500 vulnerable people and will assist some 3,150 people in reducing the risk of water-borne diseases and in returning to normal living.



Flooded streets of Zaječar. Photo: Red Cross of Serbia/Zaječar branch

This operation is expected to be implemented over six months, and will therefore be completed by the end of August, 2010. A Final Report will be made available by 30 November 2010 (three months after the end of the operation).

[<click here for the DREF budget or here for contact details>](#)

The situation

After heavy snowfalls in the second week of February 2010, the temperature in Serbia quickly rose, reaching 15 degrees in less than a week and causing rapid snow melting in mountainous areas. This contributed to a rapid rise in the water levels of many rivers, particularly in the central and eastern parts of the country and in the river systems of Sava and Morava. Floods, flash floods and landslides followed, threatening the livelihood of hundreds of families in several municipalities across the eastern part of Serbia.

In the municipality of Zaječar only, which is the most affected municipality, 650 houses have been flooded since 20 February leaving more than 1,000 people in urgent need for assistance. Although the level of water in the Beli Timok River which flooded Zaječar settlements started to ebb on 23 February, heavy rainfall on 24 and 25 February reversed this course of development and caused further flooding. On 27 February a third flood wave hit the affected areas, preventing the population moving back into their houses. Between 20 and 23 February almost 300 people were evacuated. On 23 February 70 inmates in the city jail in Zaječar were evacuated.

In comparison with the floods in November 2009 which occurred mainly as flash floods and where the water has not stayed for a long time, this time the affected houses have been under water for more than seven-eight days and the houses were flooded two or three times within a period of ten days with water withdrawing and then flooding the houses again. According to the latest assessment the houses are still under water.

In Zaječar there are also two artificial lakes above the town and water is released from these lakes which increases the level of waters in the rivers.

In terms of material damage, a first estimate on 24 February by local authorities indicate the overall damage exceeding one billion Serbian dinars¹ in Zaječar and other municipalities.

In other parts of Serbia the water level of the Sava, Drina, Mlava and Morava rivers keeps rising while smaller rivers are also reaching record water levels. Between 22 and 23 February the water level in Sava River increased by 112 cm in the municipality of Šabac and keeps rising. In Vršac, Doljevac, Požega and Ub municipalities more than 6,000 acres of agricultural land are heavily affected by the floods and high levels of subterranean water. More than 204 families in 20 villages are affected in the municipality of Aleksinac with 150 people evacuated and 72 houses damaged as of 23 February. In Priboj municipality a huge landslide affected the Pribojska banja spa where 14 people were evacuated. In the municipality of Ub the Tamnava river damaged 200 houses and flooded 20 houses. In Boljevac municipality the Mlava river flooded and damaged 100 houses with ten people being evacuated. In the municipality of Kruševac, 80 houses were damaged by the water and there is a mudslide endangering the main road.

Municipality	Flooded houses	Evacuated people
Zaječar	650	370
Doljevac	150	-
Aleksinac	120	150
Kruševac	80	-
Ub	25	-
Leskovac	70	-
Rekovac	51	-
Boljevac	50	10
Požega	40	-
Priboj	30	50
Žitorađa	25	-
Novi Pazar	15	-
Total	1,306	580

Table 1 shows a summarized picture of the number of flooded houses and evacuated people in the most affected municipalities. The three most affected municipalities are Zaječar followed by Doljevac and Aleksinac. As of 1 March more than 1,300 houses were still flooded or heavily damaged by water. More than 3,150 people have been directly affected with 170 people still residing outside their houses. Totally 580 people have been evacuated.

The needs among the affected people include among others canned food, kitchen sets, safe water, hygiene parcels, baby parcels, disinfection, pumps for drainage, dehumidifiers, blankets and rubber boots.

Table 1: Number of flooded houses and evacuated people in most affected municipalities. *Source: Red Cross of Serbia*

Coordination and partnerships

Following the recently adopted State Law on Protection and Rescue, the lead agency role in response to disasters in Serbia is assigned to the Ministry of Interior. However, as this law only comes into power in June, local municipal authorities are leading the response, while the ministry is assisting the rescue and response efforts by the municipalities.

The government of Serbia has allocated 77 million Serbian dinars² for assisting people in the affected areas. This is the first instalment of assistance and the final amount will only be known after the situation is assessed in detail.

The Red Cross of Serbia is cooperating with local crisis headquarters in the affected areas. In the most affected areas, such as Zaječar, the Red Cross is already taking active part in the response efforts including distributing relief and assisting in assessing needs. In other areas the Red Cross participates in information sharing. Municipal Red Cross branch secretaries are members of municipal crisis headquarters in most of the affected areas.

¹ Equalling approximately CHF 14,600,000 or EUR 10,000,000

² Equalling approximately CHF 1,125,000 or EUR 770,000

The Red Cross of Serbia and the International Federation have already established contact with some potential partners for support and cooperation in providing relief and helping the affected population to return to normal living. These include USAID, the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC) and the Danish Red Cross.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Red Cross of Serbia has until 2 March been responding to the floods using its own resources. The National Society has distributed food and non-food items, equipment for house cleaning as well as other items to assist the affected people in coping with the effects of the floods. Table 2 shows the relief items distributed in Zaječar municipality on 22 and 25 February and 2 March respectively.

ITEM		TOTAL	22/02	25/02	02/03
Fish can 125 g	pcs	1,900	100	1800	-
Meat can (beef) 150 g	pcs	1,300	100	1200	-
Meat pate cans 150 g	pcs	1,000	100	900	-
Ready to eat meals	pcs	1,000	100	900	-
Meat can (pork) 150 g	pcs	600		600	-
Tea 1/20	pcs	300	100	200	-
Kitchen set (5 persons)	pcs	80	-	50	30
Family hygiene parcel	pcs	220	-	220	-
Hygiene parcel	pcs	200	-	-	200
Baby parcel + baby bath	pcs	10	-	10	-
Baby parcel	pcs	10	-	10	-
Water tank (1000 l)	pcs	3	-	-	3
Raw water pump normal/large	pcs	20/1	-	-	20/1
Hand pumps for disinfection	pcs	5	-	-	5
Dehumidifiers	pcs	25			25
Disinfectant 1/1	litre	300	-	200	100
Plastic bucket/can for water	pcs	200	-	100	100
Rubber boots	pairs	540	40	300	200
Leaflets water-borne diseases	pcs	2,000	-	2000	-
Red Cross of Serbia vest/cap	pcs	10/10	-	10/10	-

Following the needs assessment by the municipal crisis headquarters the Red Cross branch of Zaječar released relief items, mainly food, from its emergency stock on 22 February. On 25 February additional relief items were dispatched from the National Society's central disaster preparedness warehouse to address additional needs caused by the increasing flooding. Distribution lists were prepared by the municipal crisis headquarters. Priority groups were people living in older households. Totally 280 families were assisted on 25 February. The crisis headquarters are estimating the need for this assistance at 350 families as of 25 February (including the 280 already assisted). Items included food and non-food items and cleaning tools. On 2 March the society dispatched additional items, mainly equipment for cleaning, covering the Zaječar municipality.

Table 2: Relief items distributed by the Red Cross of Serbia until 2 March. *Source: Red Cross of Serbia*

The distribution of leaflets explaining the risks of water-borne diseases and preventive measures were undertaken to reduce the likelihood of epidemics of yellow fever and dysentery.



Red Cross assessment team in Visnjar.
Photo: Red Cross of Serbia

As part of the distribution activities, on 25 February the International Federation disaster management coordinator in Serbia accompanied the National Society's disaster management team to Zaječar. The team met with the town mayor and reached an agreement saying that the society will provide 25 dehumidifiers and a number of raw water pumps to assist people in dehumidifying their flooded houses. The mobile technical team of the Red Cross of Serbia is being dispatched with the equipment to assist the affected households. Furthermore according to the agreement the secretary general of the Zaječar Red Cross branch will be a member of the municipal crisis headquarters.

The Red Cross of Serbia headquarters dispatched a three-member rapid assessment team on 2 March to conduct a more thorough assessment for finding out about needs among

people to ensure that the support will meet real and not perceived needs. Assessment findings will also help

the National Society in developing beneficiary selection criteria. The team is joined by local branch volunteers and is divided into three smaller units in order to speed up the work as well as to cover larger areas.

The needs

As of 2 March the Red Cross of Serbia has provided relief assistance to the population in Zaječar as described above. It has also acted to prevent new needs arising by distributing leaflets containing messages on water-borne diseases to prevent any outbreak of epidemics which possibility is likely to increase under humid conditions.

Nevertheless, still more than 3,150 affected people need to be assisted with food, hygiene items and safe water. Following the assessment which started on 2 March the needs for further assistance related to food and hygiene as well as safe water will be better defined. The municipalities of Ub, Aleksinac, Leskovac, Kruševac, Požega and Priboj will also need relief distribution, but the exact amounts will be determined after the assessments in the first week of March.

Findings from the ongoing assessment will help the National Society to identify people to be reached according to criteria. Among the most vulnerable and likely priority groups are older people, single mothers and socially marginalised families. In order to meet all needs the National Society expects that distributions have to be conducted in two rounds to ensure the health and food security of the affected population.

Local authorities in the affected municipalities, especially the most affected municipality of Zaječar, have approached the Red Cross and formally requested assistance in addressing the effects of the floods once the water has receded. In order to assist people in moving back to their houses and return to normal living the role of the Red Cross would be to:

- Assist in draining water from flooded houses and basements through the deployment of raw water pumps.
- Assist in dehumidifying damaged and flooded houses in order to enable people's return and to enable them to resume normal living as soon as possible through.
- Assist in cleaning households through provision of house cleaning kits consisting of disinfectant, mops, wall paint and toolkits.
- Assist in providing safe water through the provision of water well disinfecting sets.

The National Society recognizes that these activities will help people in the affected municipalities to return to normal living and represents a link to recovery activities which will be the main responsibility of municipal authorities.

Beneficiary selection: The situation is still developing with water level still rising in many rivers. Moreover heavy rain is forecasted in the next two days. Currently there are more than 3,150 people directly affected by the floods. Their houses, possessions as well as land are damaged or flooded. Current data collected comes from the crisis headquarters in the affected municipalities as well as local Red Cross branches. However, the ongoing assessment will provide more complete data including a comprehensive list of needs and activities and accurate figures of people in need and their specific sub-categories.

The proposed operation

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: 1,500 vulnerable people from the affected areas are provided with basic food and non-food items in order to preserve their health and ensure the appropriate food intake.	
Expected results	Activities planned
1,500 vulnerable people in the affected areas are well nourished immediately following the floods and evacuation. The provision of ready-to-eat-food and kitchen sets compensates for the lack of electricity and the inability to access food preparation facilities and food stock.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments. • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user. • Monitor and evaluate relief activities and provide reporting on distributions. • Develop an exit strategy. • Maintain contact and coordination with the local crisis headquarters in the affected areas.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: The risk of water-borne and water related diseases has been reduced through the provision of safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene promotion to 3,150 vulnerable people and they are assisted in their return to normal living within a period of six months.

Expected results	Activities planned
3,150 vulnerable people from the affected areas manage to preserve their health through the use of hygiene items, rubber boots, disinfectants and safe water in the two months following the flooding and evacuation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments. • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user. • Monitor and evaluate relief activities and provide reporting on distributions. • Develop an exit strategy. • Maintain contact and coordination with the local crisis headquarters in the affected areas.
Safe water is provided to 3,150 vulnerable people in the affected areas as damaged water systems are restored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage, distribution and trucking of safe water. • Distribution of 400 household level water storage (jerry cans) to 400 families (of 2-3 members, mainly older families). The rest of the families will be using the water tanks placed in the affected areas. • Distribution of 200 water well disinfecting sets to assist with ensuring safe water for the families with their own water wells. • Distribution of 10,000 Red Cross of Serbia leaflets explaining the risks related to water-borne diseases.
3,150 vulnerable people from the affected areas manage to resume normal living in their households within six months from the floods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments. • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Provide equipment for water drainage and house cleaning. • Provide house cleaning kits (disinfectant, mops, wall paint, toolkits). • Provide training to the municipal Red Cross disaster management teams in efficient response, use of equipment, internal and external communication, monitoring and reporting. • Conduct a lessons learned workshop for local responders, based on the work already done through the municipal disaster preparedness project. • Monitor and evaluate relief activities and provide reporting on distributions. • Develop an exit strategy. • Maintain contact and coordination with the local crisis headquarters in the affected areas.

Since the houses in the affected areas have been under water for more than seven-eight days and the houses were flooded several times within a period of ten days, the cleaning of more than 1,000 houses will take considerable time in order to ensure that these people can return to normal living conditions.

The replenishment of the goods already distributed from the emergency stocks is also considered.

Survey among people reached

The monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities will be complemented by a survey among people reached at the end of the operation. The survey aims to find out whether the Red Cross managed to cover people's basic needs caused by the floods as well as their opinion on how the services were delivered. Survey findings will be included in the final operation report which will be issued in November 2010. These findings, being the opinions of people reached through their participation in the survey, will furthermore help the National Society in developing its response activities and ensuring that people's needs are appropriately and sufficiently covered in its operations.

Budget

RELIEF NEEDS

Clothing & Textiles	18,000
Food	17,300
Water & Sanitation	69,900

Teaching Materials	2,500
Utensils & Tools	93,000
Other Supplies & Services	34,000
Total Relief Needs	234,700
<u>TRANSPORT, STORAGE & VEHICLES</u>	
Distribution & Monitoring	9,600
Transport & Vehicles Costs	5,100
<u>PERSONNEL</u>	
National Staff	5,250
National Society Staff	12,000
<u>GENERAL EXPENSES</u>	
Travel	900
Communication Costs	600
Other General Expenses	600
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>	
Programme Support - PSR	17,469
Total Operational Needs	51,519
Total Requested Allocation	286,219

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 the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The International Federation's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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