

# DREF operation



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Bolivia: Floods

**DREF operation n° MDRBO003**  
**FL-2007-000231-BOL**  
**28 January 2008**

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 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.

**CHF 125,000 (USD 110,132 or EUR 75,758) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Bolivian Red Cross (BRC) with providing immediate assistance to 6,000 beneficiaries. The situation changes constantly in Bolivia; therefore, the plan of action of the BRC is preliminary. Within the next few days, an update Bulletin will be published, with more information on this plan of action. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** Since November 2007, prolonged heavy rainfall in Bolivia has caused floods that gravely affected several communities in the central and southern regions of the country. Approximately 25,981 families have been affected. This DREF Operation is focused on distributing humanitarian aid to the affected people and to strengthen the National Societies' capacities in the affected departments.

This operation is expected to be implemented over 3 months, and will therefore be completed by 28 April, 2008; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 28 July, 2008).

[<click here for contact details>](#) [<click here to see a map of the affected areas>](#)



This road close to Pailon had to be opened, in order for the Rio Grande to be drained. Source: Médecins Sans Frontières

## The situation

Since November 2007, intense and continuous rains have been affecting several departments in Bolivia due to the La Niña climatic phenomenon. The rains have caused the overflow of rivers that therefore flooded several communities in the departments of Chuquisaca, Potosí, Cochabamba, Beni, La Paz and Santa Cruz.

The Civil Defense started assessing the situation and according to their preliminary reports of the affected zones and number of families affected, the heavy rains left 35 casualties, 3 people missing and some 25,981 families affected. Following the situation report issued by the National Civil Defense System (CONARADE),

the president declared a state of emergency (a red alert) on 21 January, in order to assist the affected people. The Civil Defense is managing the situation.



Heavy rainfall led to floods, which subsequently caused the devastation of many crops in the department of Santa Cruz. Source: International Federation

In response to the emergency, the Bolivian Red Cross is carrying out needs assessments and the local branches in Beni, La Paz, Cochabamba, Potosí and Santa Cruz have held meetings to assess the situation and where possible activate the Emergency Operation Centers in the affected areas.

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team arrived in Bolivia on 26 January and has been providing support to national authorities in terms of coordination and assessments. Joint field assessments teams (consisting of UN agencies, Médécins Sans Frontières, Civil Defense, the International Federation of the Red Cross – IFRC, International Organization of Migration and local authorities) have been organized to optimize and avoid duplication of efforts. To date, four of these joint fields assessments have taken place in the following departments: La Paz, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and Chuquisaca,

The following chart shows the latest figures provided by the Civil Defense:

Department	# of families affected
La Paz	2,940
Cochabamba	8,414
Oruro	805
Santa Cruz	5,530
Tarija	649
Chuquiasca	4,271
Potosí	2,426
Beni	915
Pando	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,981</b>

Source: DGEA

To date, the Civil Defense is responding to the emergency with the distribution of food items. 423 tonnes of food have been distributed so far, with the support of the World Food Plan (WFP) and other institutions.

The United Nations reports that in the department of La Paz, 12 communities were affected as a result of the overflowing of the rivers. As a consequence, two people died in the city of La Paz. Evacuations were carried out in various neighbourhoods and more floods are expected in the northern region. Water services have been interrupted for several days now since the main reservoir is damaged. Shelters have been opened in this region.

In the Department of Cochabamba, approximately 100 families were evacuated. The town of Puerto Villaroel is reportedly almost completely submerged. A big part of the main road between Cochabamba and La Paz has collapsed. It is also difficult to access roads between Santa Cruz and Beni. A main road had to be opened to facilitate the water drainage of the Rio Grande.

The Bolivian Road Agency (Agencia Boliviana de Caminos) is working arduously to rehabilitate the road network; this is asked for most by the affected communities.

In the department of Santa Cruz, the agricultural sector has been severely beaten, as 2,000 hectares of soybean have been lost. Soybean producers estimate their loss around USD 200 million. In addition, the

dam collapsed, and although the army has been able to repair part of it, the Rio Grande water level remains a threat to the community.

In the department of Tarija, the Rio Bermejo overflowed and swept away sugar plantations. In the department of Chuquisaca, several houses have collapsed and roads are blocked. In Oruro, hail destroyed crops and the high water levels of the Desaguadero River affected several communities.



**The President of Bolivia (right) toured some of the areas which have endured months of flooding.**  
Source: AFP

Dengue outbreaks have been reported in Puerto Villaroel (Department of Cochabamba) and in some zones in Beni (Trinidad, Riberalta and Guayra). The Civil Defense has fumigated the zone. The World Health Organization and the Pan-American Health Organization reported a Hanta virus outbreak that already caused two deaths as well as 11 confirmed cases of malaria. The Ministry of Health and the Prefecture of Cochabamba are fumigating and reinforcing sanitary education.

Cochabamba (the Chapare region).

The heavy rains continue throughout the country, especially in the department of Santa Cruz; the central region, Beni; the northern region, La Paz; and the northeastern part of

Forecasts indicate that the situation might get worse in the coming days, as showers are expected to continue in the aforementioned regions until Sunday, 3 February which will cause the increasing levels of some major rivers (mostly in Beni and Santa Cruz).

## Coordination and partnerships

Internally, the National Society has been carrying out the response activities, supported by the International Federation. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) deployed a Disaster Management delegate to the field on 26 January. The communication between PADRU, the South American Regional Representation Office in Lima, and the Operations Support Department in Geneva has been constant and fluent.

The Bolivian Red Cross (BRC) is participating in meetings with the Civil Defense and is represented in the Emergency Operations Centre in Santa Cruz. In addition, the International Federation is coordinating closely with the UNDAC team and all the members of the United Nations present in the field. Joint evaluation teams have been programmed with UN members as well as with the Federation and other organizations in the field.

The BRC is participating in sectoral meetings regarding the coordination of food, nutrition and health activities with governmental, international and national organizations in order to optimize all resources available and avoid the duplication of efforts.

The national government has coordinated a meeting with all international cooperation agencies for Tuesday January 29, in order to present precise figures of damages, needs assessments and requirements of the situation.

An Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) meeting was held on 28 January regarding the possibility of the cluster approach activation. UN agencies, IOM and the Federation took part in that meeting.

UNICEF has a basic stock of supplies such as tents, mobiles, schools, water filters, chlorine tablets, recreational kits and educational kits, vitamins and supplementary food for children under five years of age to immediately respond to the most urgent needs.

Close coordination is maintained with International Organization of Migration regarding potential needs in shelter.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The BRC has activated their branches and is currently carrying out need assessments. Local branches are active members of the Emergency Operations Centers and are also participating in coordination meetings. Volunteers have been providing first aid care and evacuating people to hospitals. The Relief Department has held meetings to coordinate and follow up the actions with the Civil Defense.

The National Society designed a preliminary plan of action to provide humanitarian assistance to 1,200 families in Santa Cruz, Potosí and La Paz through the distribution of food parcels and non food items (hygiene kits).

On 26 January, IFRC-PADRU deployed a Disaster Management Delegate to Bolivia to provide technical support in assessment, coordination and initial response.

### Preliminary needs

According to Civil Defense field reports, main needs identified are food and non-food items (blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits, sheets, etc), shelter, water and sanitation, health and tools. Civil Defense will provide more accurate information in the meeting that will be held on Tuesday, 29 January with the International Community.

Early recovery activities will be needed as well: the agricultural sector has sustained major losses, both as far as cattle and crops are concerned; this might very well account for the most important damages and will affect the livelihoods of the affected families severely on the long term.

### The proposed operation

The Bolivian Red Cross Plan of Action aims to respond to the needs of 1,200 affected families in the affected areas of Santa Cruz, Potosí and La Paz Department.

### Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

**Objective 1: 1,200 affected families (6,000 persons) in the departments of Potosí, Santa Cruz and La Paz benefit from the distribution of food items which help them to recover from the effects of the floods.**

The complimentary food kit will provide a family of five people with items to last one month and will contain the following items:

Item	Quantity
Rice	15 kg
Sugar	10 kg
Noodles	10 kg
Flour	5 kg
Salt	2 kg
Coffee	1 kg
Cooking Oil	2 litre
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>45 Kg</b>

**Activities planned:**

- Conduct needs assessments, census and beneficiary targeting.
- Procurement of relief supplies according to Federation procedures.
- Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

**Objective 2: 1,200 families (6000 people) affected by the floods see their immediate needs met through the distribution of 1,200 hygiene kits to help them recover from the emergency.**

The hygiene kits will be distributed to each family and will cover their needs for 30 days and will contain:

Item	Quantity	Observations
Toothpaste	3	Units of 150 gr
Toothbrush	5	1 each
Soap	3	Units of 200 gr
Medium towel	2	1 each
Detergent	3	Bags of 250 gr
Sanitary Pads	3	10 unit package
Toilet paper	10	rolls

**Activities planned:**

- Conduct needs assessments, census and beneficiaries targeting.
- Procurement of relief supplies according to Federation procedures.
- Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

## 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:

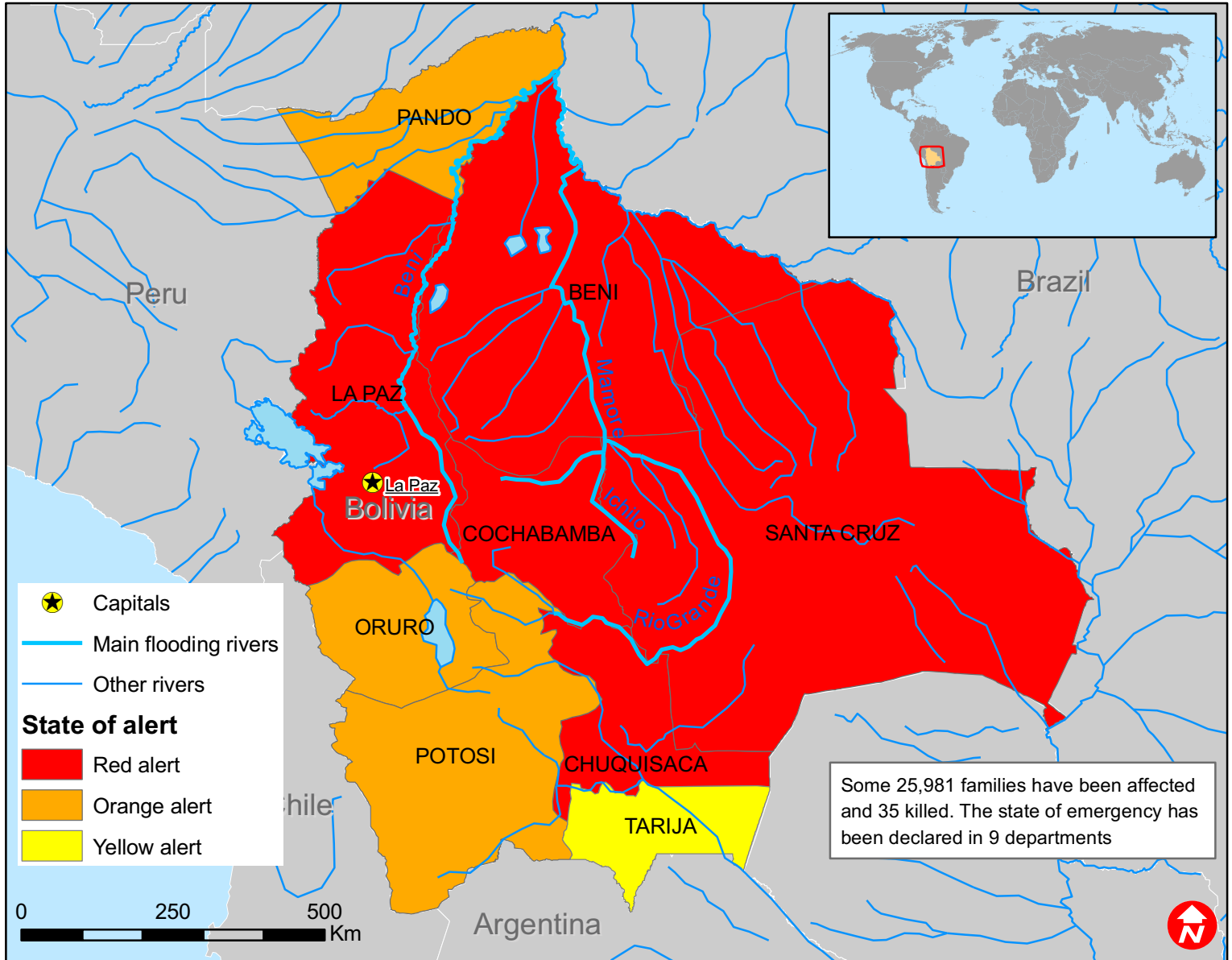
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Families affected

