

# DREF operation



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Paraguay: Dengue and Yellow Fever Outbreak

DREF operation n° MDRPY003  
GLIDE EP-2008-000022-PRY  
12 February 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 78,000 (USD 72,222 or EUR 48,447) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Paraguayan Red Cross in a nation-wide dengue and yellow fever awareness campaign to benefit approximately 600,000 people at risk of contracting the dengue and/or yellow fever viruses. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** Paraguay is experiencing an outbreak of dengue and yellow fever, 350 cases have already been detected. Five cases of yellow fever have been detected and one person has died of the disease. A specialized Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member in Public Health in Emergencies (PHE) has been requested by the National Society and is currently being recruited. The Ministry of Health has issued a nation-wide alert as a response to this situation

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed by 11 May 2008; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 11, August 2008).

[<click here for contact details, or here to view the map of the affected area>](#)



**Neighbours in the Central area of Roque Alonso have started clean-up activities. Source: ABC Newspaper online**

## The situation

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoH) of Paraguay issued a dengue outbreak alert on 28 January for the entire country, exactly one year after a similar situation occurred in Paraguay. Currently, 600,000

people in Paraguay are considered to be at risk of being bitten by the *Aedes Aegyptis* and / or *Haemagogus* mosquitoes, vectors that carry the viruses that cause dengue and yellow fever respectively.

One year ago in Paraguay, there was a similar dengue outbreak during which 17 people died due to the hemorrhagic strain of dengue virus and 54 people contracted the less dangerous strains of the disease. This year the Ministry of Health has prioritized the areas of Alto Paraná, Itapúa, Central, San Pedro and Asunción. These areas share a border with Brazil, where 25 cases and 13 deaths from dengue have been confirmed so far this year.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the cases of dengue, authorities have confirmed that one person has died due to yellow fever in the department of San Pedro, and five other cases of this disease have been confirmed. This disease - also spread by a mosquito - is more deadly than dengue and is also on the rise in the Americas. Though a vaccine has been available for the past 60 years, a vast majority of the population is not immunized.

The MoH states that the most pressing need at this moment is for awareness-raising in at risk populations through messages by radio and television and by distributing printed material in order to educate and prevent these diseases.

On 8 February, the Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC), along with local authorities performed clean up activities in order to destroy as many *Aedes Aegyptis* and *Haemagogus* breeding places as possible.

At this moment in Paraguay, there are 350 cases that have been identified and being treated as possible dengue infections.<sup>2</sup>

## Coordination and partnerships

PRC local branches are constantly informing local authorities about activities carried out in communities. 25 volunteers are active in the department of San Pedro along with two National Intervention Team (NIT) members in order to provide support to the local branch in health activities. At central level, the Health Department of the PRC is closely coordinating with the MoH to ensure that strategies developed are complementary. At regional level, branches are closely working with the MoH and municipal authorities in community clean-up operations, as well as with civil organizations in other related activities.

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) in Panama and the Lima Regional Representation are also providing support to the National Society. A Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specializing in Public Health in Emergencies (PHE) has been requested by the National Society for a period of one month, and is currently being identified.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The PRC was one of the main actors working in dengue prevention during the 2007 outbreak, carrying out two awareness campaigns at national and community levels, opening two medical centres and donating mosquito nets to MoH public health centres. The national awareness campaign, "Gotas de Amor" (Drops of Love) focused on voluntary blood donation and was broadcast in national media (television, radio and written press). The community awareness campaign "Prevenamos el Dengue" (Let's prevent dengue) focused on issues such as the prevention, transmission, detection and care of the disease. Notably, the PRC community awareness campaign continued after the outbreak had been controlled in June 2007, in order to maximise the number of people benefiting from the talks conducted by volunteers. The community campaign was more successful and had more reach than the national campaign.

Since the current outbreak alert was issued by the government, the PRC has been working arduously through its local branches in providing support to local health centres. Clean-up operations have been initiated by the PRC in order to destroy all *Aedes Aegyptis* and *Haemagogus* breeding places. In addition, the San Pedro branch has initiated an awareness-raising campaign aiming to reach the population most at risk.

## The needs

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<sup>1</sup> ABC newspaper- 5 February

<sup>2</sup> Paraguayan Red Cross

In close coordination with the MoH, the PRC identified that the immediate needs are to prepare a radio media campaign and visibility material to raise awareness on dengue and yellow fever prevention to reach the departments of Itapúa, Concepción, Amambay, Alto Paraná and San Pedro. The local branches in these Central Department localities aim to provide support to local health centers in prevention efforts.

Incorporating experience gained from the 2007 campaigns, the PRC will focus on prevention and awareness raising using radio as a cost-effective media in order to ensure that the campaign's messages reach as broad an audience as possible, given that a large percentage of the most vulnerable groups live in rural and peri-urban areas with limited or no access to other types of media.

Currently under development, the campaign's messages will aim to raise the general population's awareness regarding the cause, prevention, detection and patient-care of these diseases.

## The proposed operation

### Emergency Health

**Objective: Increased awareness and prevention of dengue and yellow fever through the description of the symptoms to the most vulnerable through a country-wide media campaign.**

The following communities will benefit from the media campaign:

Department	Communities
Asunción	10
Central	20
Alto Paraná	3
Itapúa	5
San Pedro	5
Concepción	5
Amambay	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>

### Activities planned:

- Draft terms of reference (ToR) for the campaign.
- Invite advertising agencies to formulate proposals for the campaign based on the ToR.
- Select an advertising agency and sign contract.
- Draft material for radio spots on dengue and yellow fever prevention, as well as related printed material.
- Produce 45-second spots providing essential information about dengue and yellow fever prevention, symptoms and care.
- Coordination of live radio interviews with doctors about the prevention of dengue and yellow fever.
- Publication in five newspapers and one magazine (weekly) of material related to the awareness-raising campaign.

## 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 number 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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[<map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



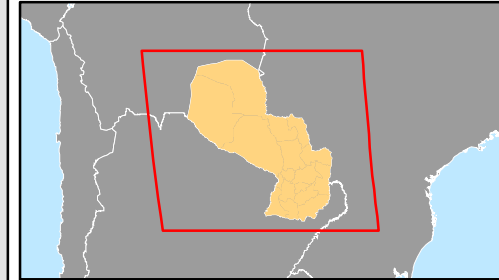
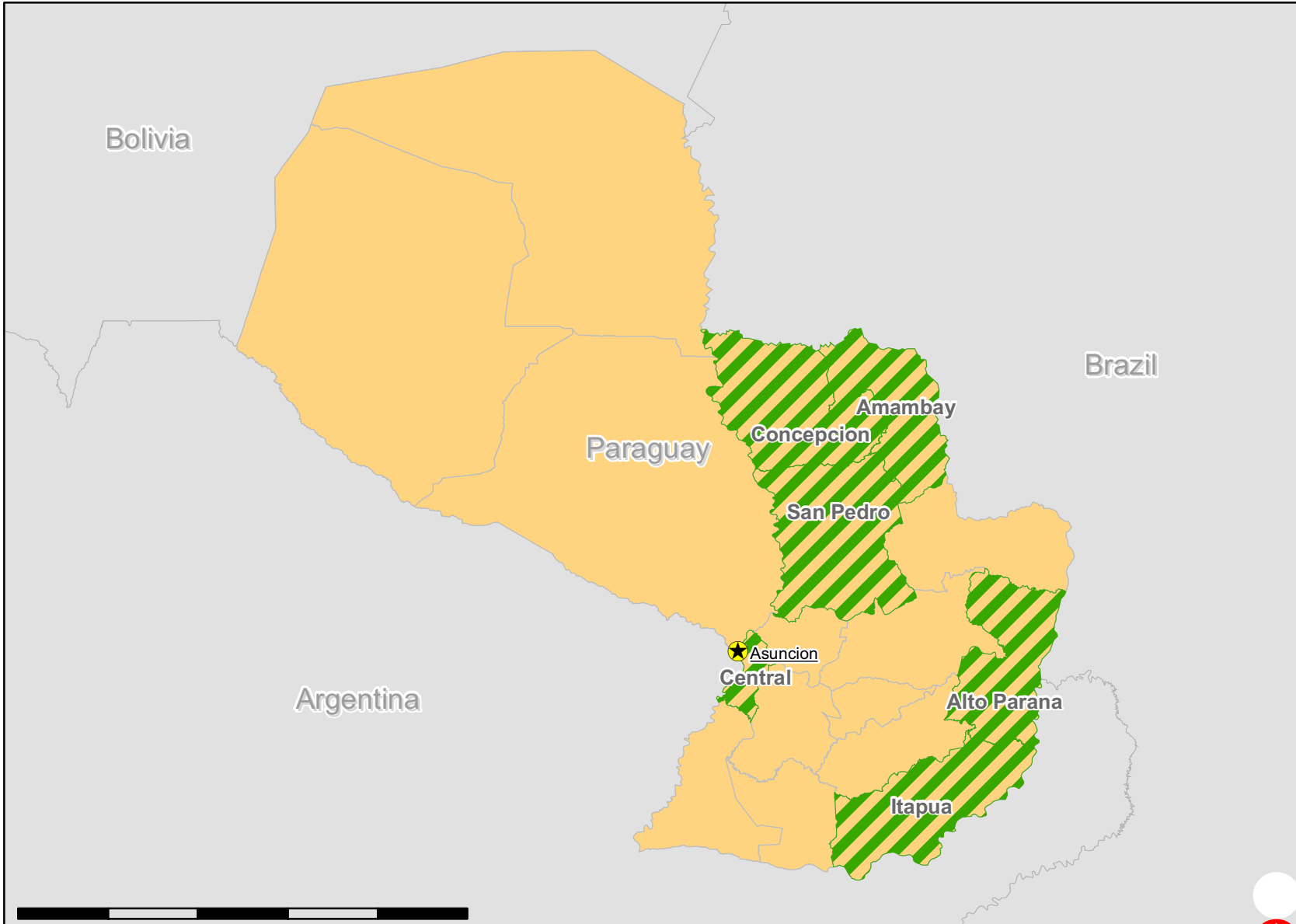
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 الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

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The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.  
 Map data sources: ESRI, DEVINFO, Federation Paraguay: Dengue and Yellow Fever outbreak



Capitals

Most vulnerable area