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DREF operation update Niger: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRNE011 GLIDE n° FL-2012-000141-NER Update n°1 – 14 December, 2012

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) 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.

Period covered by this update: 28 September to 30 November 2012.

Summary: CHF 284,456 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Red Cross Society of Niger (RCSN) in delivering immediate assistance to 1,500 households affected by floods.

This DREF operation was launched on 6 September 2012, following the heavy rains that caused severe flooding in the regions of Dosso, Niamey, Agadez, Zinder, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéry and Diffa, affecting over 530,952 persons.



Cleaning and disinfection of affected areas. IFRC / RCSN

RCSN initiated their response with performing rapid needs assessments and developed a plan of action, in coordination with the authorities and other humanitarian organizations.

With the support of the DREF, the National Society could provide immediate assistance to flood affected families, including non-food items (NFIs) from pre-positioned stock, and assist in the evacuation and medical treatment of injured persons. In total 760 household kits have been distributed so far, out of the planned 1,500. 3,500 persons have been reached with health education and epidemic prevention awareness raising activities, while 7,000 more persons will be reached during the coming weeks. Furthermore, the RCSN has provided safe water and improved sanitary conditions to the flood affected families. Delay in project activities has been due to the need to relocate some of the beneficiaries targeted by this DREF, following the rise of the waters of Niger River, bringing about the need to evacuate temporary sites hosting the displaced population. This has posed unexpected challenges for the government leading the exercise as some families were unwilling to relocate to a new site. Some went back to the disaster affected area and since the government guidelines required agencies to provide assistance to the displaced only in the appointed sites, implementation of some of the activities were delayed

The original DREF operation was intended to be completed after three (3) months in December 6, 2012. However, due to delay in project implementation there is a need to extend the DREF with two (2) months in

order to complete the NFI distribution activities and health education and epidemic prevention awareness raising. The DREF operation will thus be finalized 6 February 2013, with a final report issued 6 May 2013.

This DREF has been replenished (100%) by DG ECHO, Belgian Red Cross/Government, the Netherlands Red Cross/Government and Canadian Red Cross/CIDA. The IFRC, on behalf Red Cross Society of Niger would like to extend thanks to all partners for their generous contributions. Details of DREF contributions can be found on: http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/Active/MAA00010_2012.pdf

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The situation

During the months of August and September 2012, heavy rains caused severe floods in the regions of Dosso, Niamey, Agadez, Zinder, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabéry and Diffa across Niger. According to figures provided by United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) from October, the number of affected people reached 530,952 and 91 deaths. After a few weeks regions such as Agadez brought the number of affected people down to 14,931 compared to 38,045 as was first estimated in September. Other regions saw their figures rise dramatically, such as Zinder with officially 88,869 people affected while the first estimates were announcing 13,185.

Table 1: Summary of the floods consequences in the 8 regions of the country

Region	People affected	Collapsed houses	Number of death
Niamey	45,464	7,766	10
Dosso	130,227	15,701	6
Zinder	88,869	7,202	30
Diffa	6,249	1,029	4
Agadez	14,931	644	6
Tillabéry	209,916	2,874	2
Tahoua	20,183	1,415	13
Maradi	15,113	403	20
Total	530,952	37,034	91

Source: OCHA & Niger Government 10.10.12

To add to the situation, a cholera epidemic spread rapidly in Tillabéry region, and gradually in Tahoua region. In end of October 2012, the total number showed 4,972 cases and 103 deaths according to OCHA. Additionally, malaria incidents increased severely with several deaths.

Each year, between the months of December and January, Niger faces the rising river. This year the water level had already reached unusually high levels (400 cm) in October in several districts in Diffa region, a level which had not been reached in 60 years. The alarm level is 530 cm, and currently (December 2012) the water level reached 514 cm and rose up to two (2) cm every three (3) days. Villages and homes have been flooded and agricultural fields covered with water. The regions affected by the rise of the river are Niamey, Diffa, Dosso and Tillabéry (three of the four regions were covered by the DREF operation).

In Niamey, the authorities have been preparing for the water to exceed the alarm level. The government has identified and agreed with landowners to provide an area to function as relocation/evacuation site. Furthermore, the government has provided 100 tents and released money for assistance. Police and firefighters remain on high alert, and a river brigade has been set up for evacuation of stranded persons. 1733 families have been registered by the government for assistance since the floods have forced them to evacuate.

In Tillabéry, the authorities have set up a relocation/evacuation site for the floods victims. RCSN visited the site where 15 families had already been installed, and performed a needs assessment which has been shared with the government and other actors involved.

The rise of the Niger River has led to the need for the second evacuation and relocation of some of the beneficiaries in Niamey targeted by this DREF operation, which caused delays for the RCSN implementation of the DREF operation, in particular in Niamey and Zinder. Apart from the delays due to the whole relocation exercise, further interruptions occurred when the government met unexpected challenges during relocation of the displaced families who were reluctant to leave the school premises where they were temporarily staying and move into the new appointed site. RCSN and other agencies were required to follow the guidelines from the government to only provide the assistance at the relocation site and not elsewhere. After increased information from the government the displaced families slowly started to move into the relocation sites.

Several United Nations (UN) agencies, International organizations and non governmental organizations (NGOs) (OCHA, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Organization for Migration (IOM), IFRC, RCSN, Oxfam, World Vision etc) currently participate in the government led emergency response coordination meetings and are involved to respond to the needs of the affected families.

Coordination and partnerships

The RCSN is taking part in the national and regional emergency response mechanisms for flooding. This mechanism together with the Humanitarian Cluster coordination mechanisms, in particular the WASH cluster, has proved very useful in dividing responsibilities, covering gaps in assistance and mobilizing resources for the flood response activities.

To support the affected families that were forced to leave their homes due to the flooding, the Niger authorities provided 3.4 tons of grains and mobilized 1.38 million USD to assist the families affected by the floods with housing and complementary food. .

RCSN signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with WFP for distribution of cash to 9000 most vulnerable persons in 26 communes in Dosso region, and 9000 most vulnerable persons in Tillabéry regions (50 USD per household). In total 249,850 USD were distributed in 27 villages in Tillabéry and 21 villages in Dosso. Furthermore, these vulnerable households (4,997 households) (2857 families in 27 communes in Tillabéry, and 2140 families in 21 communes in Dosso) received food support (cereals). Additionally, an agreement was made with the health centres to provide free access to medical care for these specific families.

The RCSN DREF operation provided flood victims in the regions of Tillabéry, Niamey and Zinder, with NFIs and medical assistance. Furthermore health education and epidemic prevention awareness raising have been carried out as well as water and sanitation activities, in the targeted areas.

Four weeks after launching the DREF operation, the Luxembourg Red Cross (LRC) signed a MoU with the RCSN to assist 1000 flood affected households with basic household items in Tanda and Yelou (Gaia County) in Dosso Region. As additional support, 500 of the worst affected households of the targeted 1000 households will receive shelter support. Also, UNICEF has contributed towards this response with 1,562 kitchen kits and 5,000 mosquito nets for the households.

The Spanish Red Cross has conducted its flood response operation in Ayeru in Tillabéry and aims to reach 3,200 families. The Irish and French Red Cross National Societies are in contact with the RCSN and the IFRC, and are regularly updated with information of the floods response.

The IFRC continues to hold Movement meetings monthly as previously, and ICRC participates in the coordination meetings.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) donated 395,000 USD while the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) donated 600,000 USD for support to the flood victims.

UN Development Programme (UNDP) will receive One (1) million USD in order to rehabilitate 1,000 health centres damaged by the floods, mainly in Dosso and Tillabéry regions.

A Shelter Box Response Team (SBRT) is currently working to deliver vital lifesaving equipment to families in need in the outskirts of the capital city Niamey. Some 497 households benefited from shelter kits provided by the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED).

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Throughout this DREF operation, RCSN has been working very closely with the IFRC through its integrated Country Representation, and regional office. The country and regional IFRC office has been providing technical and logistical support, and through its regional warehouse sent NFIs for distribution. A water and sanitation RDRT arrived in Niamey in end of September and started to work immediately with the National Society. The plan of action was concluded and implementation was initiated rapidly.

From the start of the disaster, the RCSN were closely monitoring the situation and participated in national, regional as well as local emergency response coordination mechanisms, and humanitarian cluster coordination structures, in particular shelter, NFI, and WASH. The cholera situation in Tillabéry still requires attention and the epidemic of malaria is evolving with several deaths recorded, thus monitoring is ongoing.

RCSN performed needs assessments in the areas of intervention which formed the basis for the plan of action. 200 RCSN volunteers (140 covered by the DREF and 60 covered by LRC) were mobilized and trained in epidemic control, water treatment and conservation, as a way of preparing them for community sensitization and water and sanitation interventions.

So far, the RCSN has distributed basic household items, including mosquito nets, to flood affected families in the targeted regions. These items were part of the IFRC pre-positioned NFIs available in RCSN's warehouse. Furthermore health education and epidemic prevention awareness raising have been carried out as well as water and sanitation activities.

ICRC supported the NS to provide basic household kits to 200 families in Tillabéry and 200 families in Agadez region.

For the worsening situation with the rise of the Niger flood water in December 2012, the RCSN is involved in assessing the situation and identifying persons affected by the floods in need of assistance. RCSN is also already involved in setting up shelter for displaced families in the government relocation/evacuation site in Niamey region, and installing garbage management infrastructure.

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distribution (food and basic non-food items)
<p>Outcome: The immediate basic non-food items of 1,500 flood affected families are met within three months in four regions of Niger (Niamey, Dosso, Zinder and Tillabéry).</p>
<p>Outputs (expected results): Basic non-food items are distributed to targeted families affected by the floods.</p>
<p>Activities planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct assessments, selection and registration of 1,500 families.• Develop plan of action with community participation in planning and distributing relief items.• Procure basic non-food items for 1,500 families (50 tonnes of food, 3,000 blankets, 1,500 kitchen sets, 3,000 sleeping mats and 3,000 tarpaulins).• Distribute the food and non-food-items to the identified 1,500 families.• Monitor, conduct impact evaluations and report on the timeliness and appropriateness of relief items.

Progress:

Needs assessment were conducted in the affected areas, and a plan of action developed based on the information collected. The identification and selection of 1500 beneficiaries were based on the level of damage on their house structures, i.e. the families who had their homes completely destroyed were selected for assistance.

All RCSN regions have received the 1,500 household kits and distribution is on-going, as per the plan indicated in the table 2 below. In total 760 household kits have been distributed so far. Each household kit includes: 2 blankets, 1 kitchen set, 2 pieces of tarpaulin, 2 mosquito nets, 80 Aqua tabs, 11 Oral Rehydration Solution sachets (ORS), 2 mats, 1 Jerry can. The NFIs were taken from the emergency stock in Niamey and replenished from IFRC Dakar Logistical centre. 3000 Blankets, 750 kitchen sets, 3000 sleeping mats and 3000 tarpaulins were received from the regional emergency stock in Dakar.

Additionally, RCSN distributed 50 tonnes of rice to 1000 families in Dosso, Tillabery and Zinder – the rice was taken from RCSN stock. The remaining distribution in Niamey is being planned for and organized

Table 2: Plan of distribution

Regions	Number of households	Date of distributions	Results
Niamey	500	To be distributed during the installation in the sites	Planned
Zinder	500	20 October, 2012	In progress
Dosso	300	20 September, 2012	Done
Tillabéry	200	1 November, 2012	Done

Table 3: Details of the items distributed

Regions	Quantity	Tillabéry	Dosso	Niamey	Zinder
Blankets	3,000	400	600	1,000	1,000
Jerry cans	1,500	200	300	500	500
Kitchen sets	750	200	300	250	200
Mosquito Nets	3,000	400	600	1,000	1,000
Tarpaulin	3,000	1,000	500	1,000	500
Aquatabs	150,000	50,000	30,000	40,000	30,000
ORS	23,200	5,800	5,800	5,800	5,800
Sleeping Mats	3,000	400	600	1,000	1,000
Soaps	3,000	800	200	1,000	1,000
Deltametrine	120	40		40	40
Bleach	100	30		40	30

Challenges:

The rise of the Niger River posed challenges to implement the activities, when some of the targeted beneficiaries had to be relocated /evacuated to new areas. This caused delay in implementing some of the activities including NFI distribution and health education awareness raising.

Despite the assistance provided and/or planned from Red Cross Society of Niger, RC/RC Movement, government and other agencies partners, there are still needs not being addressed in terms of NFI assistance. The gaps identified so far includes basic household items and aqua tabs, as indicated in detail in below table 4:

Table 4: Gaps NFI assistance

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>GAPS</i>
Blankets	51,748
Buckets	10,559
Mats	47,180
Mosquito nets	52,712
Jerry cans	5,125
Tarpaulins	73,079
Aqua tabs	557,000
Soaps	83,000

Emergency health

Outcome: The immediate health risks related to 1,500 flood-affected families is reduced over three months in four regions of Niger (Niamey, Dosso, Zinder and Tillabéry).

Outputs (expected results): Targeted disease prevention and health promotion activities are conducted.

Activities planned:

- Identify 160 volunteers on Epidemic Control for Volunteers methodology.
- Organize and implement information, education and communication campaigns on water-borne and communicable diseases across the four regions for 10,500 beneficiaries.
- Procure and distribute 3,000 mosquito nets for 1,500 families.
- Conduct outreach activities focused on water-related diseases and the use of mosquito nets to 1,500 families.
- Purchase and distribute 45,000 sachets of ORS to 1,500 families.
- Procure personal protection equipment for Red Cross volunteers (160 waterproof jackets, 160 pairs of boots, 2,000 masks and 160 pairs of gloves).
- Screen all children aged 6 to 59 months and pregnant women living in the sites, and refer malnourished mother/children to integrated health centres.
- Monitor, conduct impact evaluations and report on the timeliness and effectiveness of the outreach activities.

Progress:

140 mobilized RCSN volunteers (60 in Niamey, 50 in Tillabéry, 30 in Zinder) were trained in epidemic control, water treatment and conservation, covered by the DREF. 60 additional RCSN volunteers in Dosso were similarly trained, covered by Luxemburg Red Cross. The volunteers were equipped with waterproof, boots, masks and gloves.

Their acquired skills and knowledge from the training was used in community health education and awareness raising campaigns on the prevention of water-borne and communicable diseases. From 20 August to 2 September 2012, 60 trained volunteers went door to door in the communities around Niamey raising awareness on personal hygiene and environmental sanitation, cholera and diarrheal prevention as well as the management of waterborne diseases. 3,100 people (942 families) were reached by these outreach activities.

Out of the 3,000 mosquito nets received from IFRC Logistic centre in Dakar, 1520 nets have been distributed so far to 760 families. 45,000 ORS are being distributed through the integrated health centres in the communities.

More than 250 children and 110 lactating and pregnant women were screened in the relocation sites, however since none of them showed signs of severe malnutrition no one was referred to the health centres. Their status was continuously monitored as some signs of malnutrition were identified.

Challenges:

Due to the need for second evacuation/relocation of some of the displaced families part of the health education and awareness raising activities were delayed, since the government required these activities to take place only in the relocation sites.

Despite cholera prevention activities, including awareness raising and improvement of sanitary conditions, there was an increase in deaths due to cholera during the course of the DREF operation. 81 deaths were reported 11 September 2012, and 102 deaths were reported 10 October 2012. According to the Ministry of Health (MoH) the situation has been stabilizing, however an epidemic of malaria continued to rise in the targeted areas causing several deaths. RCSN has emphasised the need for extension of the health education and hygiene promotion activities towards agencies involved in these areas.

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

Outcome: The risk of waterborne and water related disease are reduced for 10,500 persons through the provision of water purification items and adequate sanitation as well as hygiene promotion over three months in four regions of Niger (Niamey, Dosso, Zinder and Tillabéry).

Outputs (expected results):

- Increased access to safe drinking water for 10,500 people.
- Improve hygiene knowledge and behaviour of 10,500 persons.
- Increased access to appropriate sanitation for 2,000 persons (60 latrines)

Activities planned:

- Refresher training for 160 volunteers on household water treatment and hygiene promotion techniques.
- Conduct hygiene promotion and sanitation awareness activities targeting 10,500 persons.
- Procure and distribute water transport materials for 1,500 families (1,500 jerry cans and 1,500 buckets).
- Procure and distribute 150,000 water purification tablets for 10,500 families.
- Procure and distribute 6,000 bars of soap to 1,500 families.
- Mobilize 30 community based volunteers to ensure permanence on the 8 sites in the targeted areas for orientation, counselling, screening and referral of children in Integrated Health Centres.
- Clean and manage garbage sites, public latrines, schools and still water points for vector and disease prevention.
- Conduct outreach activities focused on health.
- Procure 10 wheelbarrows for sanitation activities.
- Support in the cleaning 50 latrines and 10 health centres.
- Monitor, conduct impact evaluations and report on the timeliness and effectiveness of the WASH activities.

Progress:

140 RCSN volunteers were mobilized - 60 in Niamey, 50 in Tillabéry, 30 in Zinder (covered by the DREF operation) and 60 RCSN volunteers were mobilized in Dosso (covered by LRC) for water, sanitation and hygiene activities (including water treatment and conservation, hygiene promotion, hand washing etc).

6,000 bars of soap, 150,000 water treatment tablet (Aquatabs), and 1,500 buckets were procured in the local market, in line with national procurement guidelines, and sent to Niamey, Tillabery and Zinder region for distribution to affected households.

Hygiene promotion and sanitation awareness raising activities are being organized for the communities living in targeted areas. 3,500 persons in Niamey have so far been reached by the hygiene and sanitation awareness raising activities and another 7,000 persons will be reached covered by the DREF operation.

Table 5: Awareness raising plan targeting 10,500 persons.

Regions	Number of people to be reached	Period	Results
Niamey	3,500	24 August to 2 September, 2012	3,100
Zinder	3,500	24 October to 23 November, 2012	In progress
Tillabery	3,500	2 November to 1 December, 2012	In Progress
Dosso	3,500		Luxemburg Red Cross

Equipped with their protective material, (waterproof jackets, pairs of boots, masks and gloves) 60 volunteers performed sanitary cleaning and disinfection of schools and public latrines in Niamey, Tillabéry and Zinder.

In Niamey, the classrooms that were occupied by the displaced had to be evacuated before the cleaning of the school. A relocation exercise led by the government enabled some of the displaced persons to be settled with host families, and others were relocated to a new evacuation site. The Red Cross volunteers cleaned and disinfected 861 classrooms in schools and 306 latrines in 35 IDP sites in Niamey.

Table 6: Results of cleaning and disinfection activities in Niamey on September 2012

Districts	Number of sites	Number of affected households	Number of class rooms cleaned	Number of latrines disinfected.
1 st district	6	48	56	27
2 nd district	8	534	82	31
3 rd district	9	493	156	46
4 th district	12	1,742	169	52
5 th district	35	5,054	398	150
Total	70	7,871	861	306

Challenges:

Some of the displaced families were reluctant to evacuate from the school premises and relocate to the new appointed site. Some went back to the disaster affected area and since the government guidelines required agencies to provide assistance to the displaced only in the appointed sites, implementation of some of the planned activities were delayed.

Access to portable water remained a problem for the population. According to the WASH Cluster, many regions still need assistance regarding rehabilitation of wells. Furthermore, latrines are not available in many areas. The WatSan RDRT together with the National Society's DM coordinator identified 4 sites in Kollo where latrines were missing, causing concern for the health risks for the population.

Another challenge during the operation was the security situation, with high security risks for any staff and volunteer active outside Niamey region. This posed challenges for the monitoring and evaluation activities.

Table 7: Details on the flooding of wells

Regions	Number of flooded wells	Potential actors
Agadez	48	ICRC – CRF - Africare
Diffa	5	Water Aid
Dosso	107	Plan – Luxembourg Red Cross
Maradi	5	Water Aid
Tahoua	37	Acted – IFRC – Solidarite
Zinder	7	IFRC – CRF

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