

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

GEORGIA: DROUGHT

20 August 2001

Appeal No. 31/00

Launched on 10 October 2000 for CHF 4,720,000 for 10 months. Programme extended until December 31, 2001.

DREF Allocated: CHF 100,000

Beneficiaries: 270,000 (220,000 with WFP-procured food, and 50,000 urban-based)

Operations Update No. 2; Period covered: February - June 2001 (last Ops Update issued: Situation Report No. 1 on 7 February 2001).

"At a Glance"

Appeal coverage: 30.3%

Related Appeals: 01.58/2001; The Caucusus (2001 Annual Appeal)

Outstanding needs: CHF 3,286,176

The Disaster/Situation: The appeal launched by the Federation envisaged to address the immediate affects of the year 2000 drought on a total of 270,000 of the worst affected beneficiaries (220,000 with WFP-procured food distribution as well as 50,000 urban-based with direct Federation food parcels). With the limited level of support received in response to the Federation's drought appeal, assistance in the form of food aid has been delivered to some 178,100 beneficiaries.

Operational Developments:

Georgia continues to experience serious economic problems, and is facing widespread food shortages as a result of a prolonged and severe drought since the winter of 2000, which has damaged 60 to 95 per cent of the cereal crops (including potatoes, vegetables, fruits, vineyards, oilseed, fodder and livestock production), as well as significant portion of pastureland in Georgia. Among the areas most severely affected are districts in Kakheti, Kvemo Kartli, Imereti and Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Responding to the situation and the Government request for international assistance, the Federation elaborated a response strategy, which included as a priority food aid to the most vulnerable. The Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation, in addition to other contributions from donors, have enabled the Federation to mount a quick and effective response to this crisis. With the limited level of support received in response to the Federation's drought appeal, assistance in the form of food aid has been delivered to some 178,100 beneficiaries.

Vulnerable groups, however, remain marginalised and with a continuing fiscal shortfall, little is being done to assist them. The huge economic decline in early years of transition has not yet been reversed. The situation in the country is dominated by crushing poverty, very high unemployment rates and rising prices. Add to these the changing demography with increasing numbers of elderly people and the decreasing fertility rate leading to a decrease in the proportion of youth and the economically active age groups, and the situation becomes even more bleak. The country can claim even less success in tackling poverty and reforming the social support system. Corruption, smuggling and the inability to mobilise tax revenues have reached epidemic proportions. In May, the International Monetary Fund suspended any dealings with Georgia until such a time as the government is able to demonstrate improvements in tax collection and financial administration. As a result, the Georgian budget has been starved of a vital source of revenue. Real GDP growth of 1.9 in 2000 was the lowest rate since 1995, and was below the government's target of 3.8 %. The drought caused agricultural sector production to drop from 24.5% in 1999 to 21.1% of GDP in 2000. As a result of increase in food prices caused by the drought, annual consumer price inflation rose from 4.6 % in December 2000 to 5.8% in March 2001.

The most recent assessments of the situation clearly confirmed that the plight of the Federation's 'traditional' groups of beneficiaries (elderly living alone, IDPs, refugees, handicapped, patients with chronic diseases, female headed households) has not improved and, in many instances, has become even worse. The beneficiaries of the current operation were prioritized by the Federation as particularly vulnerable due to the effects of both the drought as well as Georgia's deteriorating social welfare system, who would not recover without external support.

Red Cross Red Crescent action w

With the donors' support the Federation has been able to continue its response to the crisis. During the reported period, the programme focussed on the following activities:

- procuring and distributing food parcels to 31,000 urban-based vulnerable persons in the entire country who are considered by the Federation as particularly vulnerable due to the affects of both the current drought as well as Georgia's deteriorating social welfare system;
- assisting the World Food Programme as an operational partner by distributing WFP-procured bulk food to 146,600 beneficiaries living in the rural southern regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, and monitoring the distribution operation. This activity is complementary to the first Federation objective of providing assistance to the 31,000 urban-based beneficiaries.
- procuring and distributing food parcels to the 3,500 urban-based pensioners, mainly bed ridden and homebound as the most vulnerable amongst those targeted by the appeal.

Following an injection from the government of Norway/Norwegian Red Cross, the Federation will be able to further address the outstanding needs of the most vulnerable in Georgia specifically related to the needs of the elderly living alone. The full extent of the Federation's intervention, however, depends on an adequate donor response.

Objective 1. To prevent or reduce malnutrition by procuring and distributing food parcels to the 50,000 urban-based most vulnerable persons who are prioritized by the Federation as particularly vulnerable due to the affects of both the current drought as well as Georgia's deteriorating social welfare system.

Activities to achieve this objective:

The initial plan foresaw four distributions (a total of 200,000 food parcels, each one intended to provide a two-month ration for 50,000 worst affected vulnerable from the urban population). Due to the limited response to the appeal and also to an intensive analysis of the beneficiary lists, one distribution round was carried out to 31,000 urban-based and vulnerable persons. The implementation stages included:

Preparation of the lists of beneficiaries: The lists of beneficiaries submitted by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) of Georgia were checked and cross-checked by Federation monitors and reduced to 31,000 of the most vulnerable. The beneficiaries were selected based on the following criteria: destitute urban households headed by elderly people, female headed households with young children, lone elderly and disabled people without family support, facing additional hardship due to drought.

Procurement and delivery of the required food commodities to Georgia: The commodities were an in-kind donation from the Government of Germany. Procurement of the required food commodities (see table below) was arranged by the German Red Cross.

Food Composition Table

Commodity	Ration/2mths. (g)	Ration/day* (g)	Kcals/day	Protein/day (g)	Fat/day (g)
Wheat flour	6,000	100	350	11.5	1.5
Beans	2,000	33.3	111.5	7.32	0.5
Sugar	1,000	16.7	66.8	0	0
Oil	2,000	33.3	294.7	0	33.3
Pasta	2,000	33.3	121.54	4.16	0.4
Tinned fish	1,600	26.7	58.74	5.6	4
Iodized salt	100	1.66	0	0	0
Total	14,700	244.96	1'003.28	28.6	39.7

NB: Table based on 50% RDA of Kcals, protein and fat for the temporary maintenance of an adult who is sedentary or doing only light work. * based on 30 days per month

The Federation arranged for the regional procurement of the packing material, including carton boxes, plastic bags and tape, as well as printing of the leaflets to be included in the boxes.

Warehousing & Packing: The food commodities started to arrive in Georgia in mid January 2001. The last item was delivered on 4 February 2001. Following customs clearance, all goods i.e., 186,000 kg. of wheat flour, 62,250 kg of beans, 61,920 kg of pasta, 62,010 kg of vegetable oil, 124,032 kg of tinned fish, 31,000 kg of sugar, and 3,100 kg of salt were stored in the Federation warehouse in Tbilisi. The stored commodities were then repackaged into 31,000 food parcels by workers contracted by the Federation.

Transport to the Districts: As sufficient numbers of parcels were packed, the food parcels were delivered by Federation trucks to regional distribution points.

Distribution Method Used: The distribution of food parcels was carried out in four cities: Tbilisi (21,285), Rustavi (3,065), Kutaisi (4,787) and Batoumi (1,863) through the MoLHSA staff and volunteers. The distribution started on 8 February 2001 and was completed on 28 February 2001.

Monitoring: The Federation's team of monitors ensured proper planning, implementation and monitoring during and after distributions to make sure that the inputs reached the targeted beneficiaries. In order to achieve this, new levels and modalities of monitoring were worked out and adopted: MoLHSA provided updated beneficiary lists on a regular basis to Federation. After collection, the lists were compared with the Federation's existing data base. Necessary adjustments were made, very few though (e.g., adding the names of new beneficiaries and excluding those who had died or moved, removing double names, removing those not eligible for assistance). The Federation was using 5 % sample for monitoring purposes, although spot checks covered up to 5.5 % at times in selected areas. Thus, 1,715 beneficiaries were monitored before the operation started. In addition, the Federation representatives were present at the distribution points to ensure the project objectives were met. Beneficiaries expressed their satisfaction with the contents of the food parcels. They expressed gratitude for the attention and support during this time. Food provided within the framework of the operation offered the minimum level of sustenance and dignity for this vulnerable group in Georgia.

Objective 2. As an operational partner with WFP, to distribute bulk food during 8 month period to 220,000 drought victims in the two worst affected southern regions of Georgia - Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli.

Activities to achieve this objective:

On 31 January 2001, the WFP signed a Letter of Agreement with the Federation within the framework of its project Emergency Operation GRC 6302.00, whereby it intends to supply certain quantities of various commodities for distribution, and pay the landside transport, storage and handling costs associated with the

agreed pledged commodities. WFP has agreed to have these commodities distributed in support of drought-affected rural vulnerable population in Georgia (143,600 beneficiaries living in the rural southern regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti (Adigeni, Akhaltsikhe, Borjomi, Aspindza, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda) and Kvemo Kartli (Tsalka, Tetri Tskaro, Dmanisi, Bolnisi, Marneuli and Gardabani) in a just, impartial, accountable and prudent manner. The Federation agreed to co-operate with WFP as an operational partner by providing services for reception and handling, secondary transport, distribution and monitoring of WFP food aid commodities.

Initially the operation envisaged assistance to 220,000 drought victims, however, the Household Food Economy Survey conducted by the WFP revealed the necessity to reduce the number of beneficiaries and focus particularly on the vulnerable due to the effects of both the drought as well as Georgia's deteriorating social welfare system.

Since the last report, Federation together with WFP representatives carried out a sensitization campaign on the coming distribution. The campaign included meetings and discussions with respective local authorities about their responsibilities during the operation, including:

- preparation of beneficiaries lists according to the predefined criteria,
- provision of secure warehouse/storage facilities,
- provision of volunteer distributors,
- provision of volunteers for loading/unloading, and
- informing beneficiaries on the nature of the Federation's operation, the target of the beneficiary groups and distribution details.

The Federation has adjusted the existing operational infrastructure and expertise to the needs of the large-scale food distribution programme. The logistics infrastructure has been upgraded and distribution points were established in cooperation with the government authorities.

The procurement and delivery of food commodities was arranged by WFP. The bulk food has started to arrive in early February and the distribution has commenced in early March 2001. To date, 6,273 Mt. of wheat flour, 319 Mt. of beans and 227 Mt. of vegetable oil have been received by the Federation. The food commodities were stocked at the Federation central warehouses in Tbilisi and Akhaltsikhe and were then dispatched to transit warehouses established by the Delegation throughout the region in order to ensure efficient delivery of the food aid to the project beneficiaries. The distribution has been progressing satisfactorily according to the pre-established distribution plan.

Within the first round of distribution, 1,578 Mt. of wheat flour, 41 Mt. of beans and 79 Mt. of vegetable oil have been distributed to 131,502 beneficiaries (85,593 beneficiaries in Kvemo Kartli and 45,909 beneficiaries in Samtskhe-Javakheti). There have been changes in the ration level since the commodities delivered by WFP were not in sufficient quantities. Subsequently, the first round of distribution in Kvemo Kartli was carried out with two items at hand: wheat flour and vegetable oil. The beneficiaries in Samtskhe-Javakheti received the complete food basket as envisaged initially by the operation: a daily ration per person consisting of 400 grams of wheat flour fortified with iron, 30 grams of beans and 20 grams of vegetable oil fortified with vitamin A.

The distribution is carried out by Federation distributors and volunteers identified by the local authorities, from 163 (83 in Kvemo Kartli and 80 - in Samtskhe-Javakheti) distribution points according to the lists prepared by local committees. The ration cards were filled in and distributed to beneficiaries in advance, before the distribution has started in order to make identification of persons on the list easy and less time consuming during the distribution.

The beneficiaries were informed about the quantity and type of food rations to be distributed in advance through leaflets printed by the Federation, as well as changes in the ration level caused by insufficient availability of food aid was discussed with the recipients through distribution committees and/or community leaders. Ration quantities were displayed prominently at the distribution sites, written in the local language so that people know their entitlements.

The first round of distribution in Kvemo Kartli was completed in early May 2001 while in Samtskhe-Javakheti the distribution round lasted till early June 2001. The Federation monitors carried out the post-distribution

monitoring in both regions to make sure that inputs reached the targeted beneficiaries and project objectives are met.

The second round of distribution has started on 7 June in three districts of Kvemo Kartli region: Gardabani, Dmanisi and Tetrti Tskaro. So far, 542 Mt. of wheat flour, 41 Mt. of beans and 27 Mt. of vegetable oil has been distributed to 45,138 beneficiaries. The distribution in Samtskhe-Javakheti is expected to commence shortly.

Objective 3. To prevent or reduce malnutrition by procuring and distributing food parcels to the 3,500 urban-based pensioners, mainly bed ridden and homebound as the most vulnerable amongst those targeted by the appeal.

Activities to achieve this objective:

The financial assistance of the Canadian government through the Red Cross International Aid Trust of Canada has enabled the Federation to fill in the gaps in the operation and sustain the most vulnerable population affected by the drought. Thanks to this donation, another 3,500 most vulnerable pensioners will be provided with food aid so necessary for them.

Procurement and delivery of required commodities to Georgia is arranged by the Logistics Department of the Federation Delegation in compliance with the Federation standard procurement procedures. Suppliers were identified through tender procedure: quotations from three different suppliers were requested, received and compared based upon price, quality, time of delivery, terms of payment and previous experience with the Federation.

All commodities i.e. wheat flour (21 Mt.), sugar (3.5 Mt.), vegetable oil (7,000 Lt.), iodized salt (0.4 Mt.), canned fish (14 Mt.), beans (7 Mt.) and pasta (7 Mt.), as well as packing material (carton boxes, plastic bags and adhesive tape) are expected to arrive in Georgia by early July 2001 and will be stored in the Federation warehouse in Tbilisi. The stored commodities will be then repackaged into 3,500 food parcels by workers contracted by the Federation. As sufficient numbers of parcels are packed, the food parcels will be delivered to homebound beneficiaries. Intensive and continuous monitoring will ensure proper implementation of the operation.

National Society Capacity Building w

Despite the fact that the development of the Georgian Red Cross Society is one of the priority areas for the Federation, this aspect of the programme suffered a setback when the Chamber of Control of Georgia initiated an investigation of the Georgian Red Cross Society (GRCS). The Federation temporarily suspended the transfer of funds to the GRCS. On 4 May 2001, 34 staff members of the GRCS resigned from their positions due to disagreements with the National Society leadership. The resigned staff members formed the Committee for the Revival of the Georgian Red Cross Society and demanded the resignation of the current President. To prevent any delays in programme implementation, short-term Federation contracts were offered to and signed with some of the above mentioned staff until the situation improves. There has been no interruption in the projects implementation, and it is hoped that the outcome will enable the Federation and national society to be better able to assist vulnerable groups in the future.

Federation Delegation w

The Federation Delegation in Georgia is one of the few operational organisations in the country. The Federation has built up the experience, infrastructure and capacity needed for such a relief operation. The required operational infrastructure has been already in place, including experienced staff. The current staff of expatriate delegates are well-trained emergency relief operators. The team is led by staff with 5 years experience in the southern Caucasus. Alongside Red Cross volunteers they provide effective support and assistance to targeted areas. Information and reporting officers, as well as Finance Administration Manager of the Federation Delegation in Georgia provide a vital support to the emergency operation both in Tbilisi and in the field. To best address the need for the operation, the Federation has rented additional warehouses in key regions and reinforced its monitoring team in order to make sure objectives of operation are satisfactorily met.

Coordination

The Federation continued to maintain an effective working relationship with its partners. It has been an active participant in the planning efforts in response to the damage caused by the severe drought. Special attention has been given to exchanging strategic information with the donor and counterpart agency community. The Federation has been attending interagency coordination meetings regarding the distribution of bulk food in the most affected regions. Regular consultations were carried out with local government representatives, and private households. The nature of the Federation's operation and the target of the beneficiary groups and districts have been co-ordinated with the MoLHSA, WFP, FAO, Counterpart International and other NGOs. A plan of action established by the Federation is an integral part and complementary to the operations planned by these organisations.

Outstanding needs

Despite the initial timely support, this appeal remains underfunded. Further contributions are needed to meet the planned objectives.

For further details please contact: Sylvie Chevalley, Phone: 41 22 730 42 76; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: chevalle@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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GEORGIA DROUGHT						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 31/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				16.08.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				4'716'085		TOTAL COVERAGE 30.3%
CANADIAN - GOVT		39'600	CAD	43'623	19.12.00	
CANADA - GOVT/CIDA		60'000	CAD	64'950	15.02.01	AS PER DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT
FINNISH - RC		50'456	EUR	76'799	04.12.00	
GERMAN - GOVT		87'300	DEM	68'670	29.01.01	ASSISTANCE TO URBAN BENEFICIAIRES
GERMAN - RC		31'639	DEM	24'887	29.01.01	
ICELANDIC - RC		200'000	ISK	4'235	11.10.00	
MONACO - RC		30'000	FRF	6'987	10.10.00	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		809'061	NOK	154'777	23.05.2001	PROVISION & DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD PACKAGES
SWEDISH - GOVT		500'000	SEK	88'050	15.12.00	
SWISS - PRIVATE		1'097	USD	2'000	22.11.00	
WFP		263'270	USD	465'856	15.12.00	DISTRIBUTION COSTS FOR WFP FOOD
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1'000'834	CHF	21.2%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
GERMAN - GOVT		545'480	DEM	429'075	29.01.01	WHEAT FLOUR, PASTA, BEANS, SUGAR OIL, TINNED FISH, SALT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				429'075	CHF	9.1%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
PGE561, PGE563, PGE564						