

# 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

## ***BELIZE: HURRICANE IRIS***

23 January 2002

*Appeal No. 33/01*

*Launched on 12 October 2001 for CHF 655,000 for three months.*

*Beneficiaries: 4,350*

*Operations Update No. 3 Period covered: 1 November - 8 January 2002*

*Last Operations Update issued: 14 November 2001*

### ***“At a Glance”***

***Appeal coverage: 99.6%***

***Related Appeals: 01.32/01 Caribbean regional programmes***

***Outstanding needs: None***

***The Disaster/Situation: Life for the beneficiaries of the hurricane Iris operation is beginning to return to normal as homes are gradually repaired, corn seed planted and employment on banana and citrus plantations resumed. The Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS), supported by the Federation coordinator based in Belize City, has carried out five distributions of food and household goods to 820 families in 14 villages of the Toledo District. Furthermore, 59 partial housing structures are currently being constructed and rain water collection systems set up to ensure preparedness in the event of a future hurricane disaster.***

### ***Operational Developments:***

Hurricane Iris made landfall in southern Belize on 8 October at approximately 20.45 hours local time. In preparations, some 15,000 people had been evacuated from coastal areas. The eye of the category 4 hurricane passed over Independence and Placencia, small towns 130 km south of coastal Belize City, with wind speeds of up to 225 kph (140 mph). As a result of the compact nature of the hurricane, two districts, Toledo and Stann Creek, bore the brunt of its force as it swept away buildings, ripped up trees and electricity lines and flattened standing crops across an arc of coastal plain 60 km long and 30 km wide. The hurricane damaged numerous buildings in the towns of Placencia, Independence and San Antonio and destroyed large numbers of houses, mostly constructed of local materials, in small villages throughout southwestern Belize.

Statistics provided by the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) damage assessment sub-committee on 17 October indicate that 24 people died, 21,568 people were affected by the hurricane and 3,178 houses were damaged. Furthermore, 19 schools and 12 health posts were destroyed. Eighty-five per cent of banana plantations were damaged, together with shrimp farms accounting for 25 per cent of production.

Corn, rice, plantain, mango and cacao crops were also seriously affected, with damage to 5,512 acres of banana plantation and 3,581 acres of rice cultivation.

Many of the inhabitants of the affected area live in the isolated mountainous region and are subsistence farmers of predominantly Mayan Origin.

Beneficiary families have, in many cases, now repaired their homes and have planted corn seeds which were distributed by the Belize Red Cross Society; they expect to harvest the first crop in mid February. In addition, those who were employed on banana and citrus plantations are now beginning to return to work.

#### **Red Cross Red Crescent action w**

As of 10 October, the Belize Red Cross Society began distributing used clothing, food, water and other goods in Toledo and Stann Creek districts from its in-country stocks. A distribution centre in Punta Gorda, the Toledo district headquarters, was set up by the BRCS and the Federation, where a warehouse was rented for three months. More than 50 volunteers provided support and over 300 families benefited from this assistance. Distributions within the framework of the appeal have taken place smoothly and according to schedule. Five distribution cycles have been completed and before the holiday season, Christmas parcels were distributed to school children in the 14 villages where beneficiaries were selected.

On 28 October, an Federation team leader/programme coordinator arrived in Belize and is based in Belize City, working closely with the BRCS headquarters for the duration of the programme.

#### **Relief distributions w**

***Objective 1: Food Relief - To ensure adequate food supplies for 800 families for a period of three months, reducing the risk of malnutrition or reliance on survival strategies with long-term negative consequences.***

An assessment team identified 820 families from 14 villages in the Toledo district as beneficiaries of the assistance outlined in the Federation's appeal. These families are made up of approximately 4,350 persons. It was decided to reduce the number of target beneficiaries referred to in the appeal (4,800) in order to avoid, in the event of the selection of an additional village, not being in a position to cover all those who met the beneficiary criteria.

After comparative bid analysis, a local supplier was selected for provision of food aid, with the aim of avoiding unnecessary transport costs and handling. The goods are loaded directly from the supplier to the distribution truck on the day of the distributions.

To date, five food distributions have been carried out by BRCS volunteers from the Toledo branch in Punta Gorda. Food packages are provided at two week intervals and are based on an average family size of six persons. The most recent distribution took place on 8 January 2002.

Outside of the framework of the appeal, the BRCS is also distributing relief items funded through direct donations to five villages in the Stann Creek district. These include food packages, various construction materials and household goods.

***Objective 2: Non-Food Relief - To ensure access to essential household supplies and implements, allowing scarce available resources to be directed towards rebuilding of homes and recovery of agricultural activity.***

Since mid October, kitchen sets, an in-kind donation to the Federation's appeal from the German Red Cross, have been distributed. In addition, water jugs, an in kind donation from the American Red Cross, are to be distributed shortly.

#### **Shelter w**

***Objective 1: Emergency shelter - To address immediate shelter needs for 800 families, reducing exposure to a harsh environment during the rainy season, increasing resistance to disease and supporting the maintenance of community and family life.***

The BRCS, through a bilateral donation from the Canadian government, is funding the construction of 59 houses, made of six concrete posts, seven wooden roof frames and zinc sheeting in three villages in the Toledo district. The next phase involves the provision of concrete floors and plywood for 42 and 17 houses respectively. The houses will not therefore be finished structures, and beneficiaries will need to complete them. In addition, the National Society received donations of construction materials in kind from various local donors. These have been distributed to beneficiaries in the Stann Creek district. Contributions included a donation from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China of construction materials including zinc sheets for roofing, sheets of plywood, nails and paint, which were distributed to beneficiaries in Seine Bight and Dangriga.

### **Water and Sanitation w**

***Objective 1: Water purification - To ensure access to safe drinking water and reduce the risk of water-borne diseases.***

Although proposed in the appeal, the provision of chlorine will not take place since, despite early fears, the hurricane did not result in flooding and water supplies were therefore not affected.

The available resources from the appeal will be allocated to fund rain water collection systems in those communities where this is not available. Therefore, in addition to undertaking basic reconstruction for shelter, water containers will be set up to collect rain water and/or strategically placed wells will be sunk in order to secure potable water. Many of the streams used by the local population for drinking water were contaminated as a result of the hurricane by leaves, fallen trees and debris. In order to be prepared in the event of a future hurricane, such water collection points are being set up in the communities to ensure the provision of potable water in the first hours/days of a disaster.

### **Agriculture w**

***Objective 1: Agricultural support - To assess the need for and feasibility of support in agricultural reactivation and food security for subsistence farmers who have lost crops through hurricane damage.***

Corn seed, from private donations, have been distributed to the beneficiaries selected in relation to the size of their plot of land and the number of family members. Selection was carried out in close cooperation with the community leader of each village.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w**

The BRCS provided volunteers to ensure distribution of relief items in the affected communities and to run the distribution centre in Punta Gorda. Given the experience gained by the National Society during the Hurricane Keith operation in 2000, the team leader is working exclusively with local staff and volunteers of the BRCS to ensure completion of the operation.

### **National Society Capacity Building w**

Community based disaster training will be provided to representatives of 25 communities in the Toledo and Stann Creek districts and preparations are currently taking place. Posters are being printed as well as booklets entitled "Hurricane Preparedness: What you need to do before, during and after a Hurricane". These posters and booklets will be distributed during the training sessions. Some 350 people will participate from the local community, including health workers. In initial sessions, National Society trainers will train Red Cross branch volunteers who will then take over the training courses in the communities. The first training session will be held on 29 January and training of all communities is envisaged to take place prior to the end of February. The radio system of the Punta Gorda branch of the BRCS will be upgraded. This involves erecting an antenna mast at the branch and the installation of a more powerful antenna at the repeater site. Following the upgrade, radio communication will be possible between Punta Gorda and the headquarters in Belize City. A local telecommunications company which is involved in similar projects in Belize is to undertake these installations.

In addition to the in kind donations received locally, the BRCS received financial donations for the hurricane Iris operation which fall outside the framework of the appeal.

The total funds donated to the BRCS by the end of October amount to more than BZD 400,000 (approximately USD 200,000). Among the donors are:

InterAmerican Development Bank  
 Belize Electricity Ltd.  
 USAID  
 American Red Cross  
 Canadian Government  
 Embassy of the People's Republic of China

### **Federation Delegation w**

The team leader/programme coordinator based in Belize City is working closely with BRCS staff and volunteers, who have solid experience given their involvement in the hurricane Keith operation in 2000.

### **Coordination**

The National Society is liaising with other agencies, in particular those which made contributions to the BRCS in the wake of the hurricane. A meeting is being organized for mid February in order to publicly thank donors and citizens of Belize for their support and to provide an overview of the work of the National Society and give details as to how contributions have been used to assist those affected by the hurricane. The National Emergency Management Organization, NEMO, together with the BRCS, will be carrying out an assessment shortly to evaluate the aid received by the communities and their future needs.

*For further details please contact:*

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*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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<b>Belize - Hurricane Iris</b>						ANNEX 1
<b>APPEAL No. 33/2001</b>		<b>PLEDGES RECEIVED</b>				22.01.2002
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>655'000</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 99.6%</b>
CASH CARRIED FORWARD						
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID		68'627	GBP	161'960	23.10.2001	
CANADIAN - GOVT		100'000	CAD	102'400	16.10.2001	
ECHO (01002)		200'000	EUR	295'700	27.09.2001	
ICELANDIC - RC		200'000	ISK	3'310	12.10.2001	
JAPANESE - RC				21'615	18.12.2001	
NORWEGIAN - RC		50'000	NOK	9'274	24.10.2001	
PRIVATES				2'752	20.11.2001	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				597'011	CHF	91.1%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
GERMAN GOVT	Kitchen sets	1'000		43'560	18.10.2001	Direct to Belize RC
GERMAN GOVT	Water containers	1'300		11'567	18.10.2001	Direct to Belize RC
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				55'127	CHF	8.4%
<b>ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	