

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

ERITREA: DROUGHT

2 September 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 05EA002; Operations Update no. 3; Period covered: April to August 2005; Appeal coverage: 50.1%; ([Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website.](#))

Appeal history:

- Launched on 28 January 2005 for CHF 5,210,000 (USD 4,380,000 or EUR 3,360,000) for 12 months for 55,000 beneficiaries. Refer to http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA002.pdf
- Operations Update no. 1 dated 4 March 2005 - http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA0021.pdf
- Operations Update no. 2 dated 21 April 2005 - http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA00202.pdf
- This Operations Update amends the number of beneficiaries from 55,000 to 40,000.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 300,000.

Outstanding needs: CHF 2,601,936 (USD 2,048,769 or EUR 1,678,669).

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Eritrea 2005 Annual Appeal no. 05AA001 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA001.pdf

Operational Summary: The successful rehabilitation of nine boreholes and the construction of two water ponds by the Red Cross Society of Eritrea¹, with support from the Federation and partner national societies, improved the water situation to the benefit of 16,150 people. The populations now have access to water, for domestic use and for their animals, within shorter distances and at increased quantities.

The food situation, however, continues to be an issue of concern due to a shortfall in funding. Consequently, the planned target (to distribute 300 metric tonnes of sorghum seeds and 30 metric tonnes of beans to 10,000 households) was reduced to only 15 metric tonnes of peer millet to 1,168 households. Moreover, only 5.8 metric tonnes of the new target could be procured due to limited stocks in the country. The food rations, accordingly, were reduced to two fifths of the Sphere standards.

The coverage of the appeal to date is 50.1%. Donor response is encouraged to boost the operation and to enable the repayment of the CHF 300,000 allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

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¹ Red Cross Society of Eritrea- <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=188>

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Background

Following five consecutive years of drought, the humanitarian situation in Eritrea deteriorated, prompting the launch of this appeal (05EA002) on 28 January 2005. Prior to the launch of appeal 05EA002, the Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation had implemented two successive Emergency Appeals, no. 33/2003 and 04/2004². The latter was scheduled to end after the crop harvesting season in September/October 2004 but a poor harvest from another failed rainy season forced the national society to conduct an assessment in December 2004, with the Federation's support. Results of the assessment highlighted the worsening food crisis and proposed longer-term humanitarian action.

To continue responding to the immediate needs of a target population of 55,000 beneficiaries in Hagaz sub-Zoba and other adjacent villages, this appeal focuses on short term food distribution, rehabilitation and construction of water resources coupled with long term activities in water, food security, dry land farming and improved health practices.

Operational developments

According to the National Food Information System's (NFIS) May report, low rainfall was recorded all over Eritrea during the Azmera rains season (March to May). There is hope that the received rainfall will sustain the planting of long-cycle crops such as maize, sorghum and finger millet as it has moistened the soil to ease land preparation. Many farmers, however, cannot use oxen ploughing as they sold most of their animals due to the preceding shortage of animal fodder. The result has been an escalated demand for tractors, resulting in shortages and the rates for hiring the tractors shooting up by 56%. Though the recent rains have improved pasture and water conditions for nomadic pastoralists, full regeneration of pasture will take time. Gash Barka received no rain at all and further reports indicate that more than 40,000 animals have died in the Gash-Barka zone, also used by people from Hagaz, due to lack of water and pasture.

According to an April report of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there is a shortage of 5,000 metric tonnes of seeds and lack of sufficient agricultural inputs. The shortage, compounded by unreliable rainfall, casts doubts on the possibility of getting a dependable harvest in 2005. A market assessment conducted by the Red Cross Society of Eritrea in Hagaz showed over 100% increase in the price of wheat, grain, lentil and oil within a year's period. The Eritrea Food Early Warning System report of 4 August 2005 confirmed that cereal prices still remain high in all major markets. Considering that wages remain unchanged and civil servants' salaries are still based on pre-1998 living standards, the high prices translate into direct losses in access to food by the urban and semi-urban populations. The high prices put the food beyond reach of the poorer rural households that depend on the purchases.

Due to the low response to the appeal, only two-month food rations were procured out of the six-month rations bid. This necessitated the Red Cross Society of Eritrea, under the guidance of Eritrea Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC), to amend the number of beneficiaries from 55,000 to 40,000 and reschedule the period of distribution. The quantity of seeds and the number of beneficiaries for seeds distribution have also been revised. The new tax on imported relief and non-relief items imposed on NGOs by the Eritrean government, effective from 1 June 2005, delayed the clearance of food donated by the Finnish government/Finnish Red Cross, greatly affecting the July and August distribution.

With the exception of one hand dug well, the planned short-term water intervention activities were finalized and the consultant deployed by the Swedish Red Cross to follow up on their implementation left after completing his five-week mission. Bidding for the construction of gabions, a middle-term project, has begun.

² Emergency Appeal no. 33/2002, Eritrea Drought - http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?02/3302.pdf
Emergency Appeal no. 04/2004, Eritrea Drought - http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?04/0404.pdf

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress and impact.

Emergency food and water assistance

Objective 1: To immediately improve livelihood and food security by provision of monthly food distributions to 55,000 people for 8 months.

The food which was procured in February, comprising 1,318 metric tonnes of wheat, 110 metric tonnes of lentil and 93.8 metric tonnes of oil, finally arrived in Eritrea on 29 April 2005. There was a shortfall of 2 metric tonnes of wheat grain and 12 litres of oil, though, which the agent company was asked to compensate. During the transportation of the food, an accident occurred along the Keren – Hagaz road, resulting in the loss of 6.7 metric tonnes of wheat and 171 Kg of oil. No one was injured in the accident.

With the arrival of the stock, the Red Cross Society of Eritrea returned 578 metric tonnes of wheat and 42 metric tonnes of lentils that it had earlier borrowed from the WFP and some 33 metric tonnes of oil to ERREC. The national society had found it necessary to borrow the food to avoid delays in distribution.

The distribution aimed at providing reduced rations to 40,000 beneficiaries in 17 identified administrative villages of Hagaz in April, May and June. The table below summarizes the distribution.

Food distribution: April to June

Administrative village	No of beneficiaries		Food distributed (in metric tonnes)			
	Households	Individuals	Wheat	Lentil	Oil	Salt
Edamr	334	1,678	52.857	3.777	3.021	0.504
Enchinak	365	1,732	54.558	3.897	3.117	0.52
Fana	313	1,196	37.674	2.691	2.154	0.36
Adi Fakai	496	1,836	57.834	4.131	3.306	0.55
Awanjeli	287	1,437	45.267	3.234	2.586	0.432
Ghilas	553	2,165	68.199	4.872	3.897	0.65
Golia	290	1,433	45.141	3.225	2.58	0.43
Badob	426	1,882	59.283	4.236	3.387	0.564
Shenghin	251	1,228	38.682	2.763	2.211	0.368
Hashishai	874	3,201	100.833	7.203	5.763	0.96
Hagaz /Adalet	1,380	5,200	163.80	11.70	9.36	1.56
Shebek	353	1,605	50.553	3.612	2.889	0.482
Adi Arei	442	2,321	73.113	5.223	4.179	0.696
Adi-Omer	311	1,127	35.502	2.535	2.028	0.338
Hagaz /Harnet	1,441	6,264	197.316	14.094	11.274	01.88
Firdighi/Beghu	652	2,725	85.839	6.132	4.905	0.818
Shafteck/Ashera	661	2,970	93.555	6.684	5.346	0.892
Total	9,429	40,000	1,260.006	90.00	72.003	12.00

Though the number of targeted people and the rations decreased, the distributed food has contributed towards reducing economic stress on families by preventing them from selling their animals for immediate consumption. It has also improved their nutritional status.

Constraints

Slow and uncertain response to the appeal, however, affected the planning and scheduling of food distribution after June. The arrival of the food was further delayed by the taxation imposed by the government on imported relief and non-relief items.

Objective 2: To improve sustainable livelihood and food security by provision of monthly food distributions to 27,500 people for 4 months depending on crop yields in September 2005.

Activities under this objective will be implemented between October 2005 and January 2006, in close coordination with WFP. The Federation's delegation is continuously monitoring and assessing the outcome of the 2005 crop harvest.

Objective 3: To reduce morbidity and vulnerability to water related diseases by improving access to safe drinking water.

The rehabilitation of nine water points and two water ponds was finalized, as outlined in the table below.

Status of water projects

Villages/project name	Beneficiaries	*Planned Activities	Achievements
Felhito and Karwat	500 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehabilitation of the existing borehole and equipping it with a solar/hand pump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of solar pump was cancelled due to shortage of funding. A new hand pump was installed instead.
Adi Omer	600 people and 400 heads of livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of the existing borehole (solar system). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehabilitation of solar system is complete. Existing reservoir, which was completely destroyed, is now fully rehabilitated.
Enchinak	4,200 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water trucking Rehabilitation of a hand pump 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment with regard to water trucking and other feasible alternatives was done. The rehabilitation of a hand pump was transferred to the middle-term projects.
Dembe Adi Tsegai	500 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of a water chamber Assessing whether the rehabilitation of the solar pump or the installation of hand pumps is feasible, based on water yield. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The solar pump installation was cancelled because the level of water is too low. It will be reconsidered subject to the performance of rain in July.
Muruni River	1,500 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of a solar pump and a solar panel A public water tap, for human consumption. River bank construction Modify reservoir 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of a solar pump was cancelled due to funding shortage. The bore hole was instead rehabilitated and equipped with a hand pump and cover. Remaining activities were moved to medium-term projects.

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Villages/project name	Beneficiaries	*Planned Activities	Achievements
Hashisay	10,000 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of 3 boreholes. • Upgrading and improving piped water supply system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation work for three boreholes was completed and they are functioning well. • Rehabilitation of solar pump is complete.
Gizgiza	3,550 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation of 2 existing bore holes. • Completion of existing hand dug well • Construction of two water ponds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two bore holes completed. • Animal trough outstanding. • 13 m dug and 2 m of water has been obtained. • Ring construction is underway. • Check dam is completed.

**The planned activities are based on the proposal developed by the assessment team from the mission conducted in March 2005 (Details in Operations Update no. 2- See the title page for the hyperlink)*

Based on the results of the March 2005 assessment, it was suggested that a water trucking service is introduced to the aid of the Enchinak community as their situation was critical. On considering the cost of water trucking and the difficulty in stopping it once started, the WatSan coordinator of the Red Cross Society of Eritrea, together with the relief coordinator recommended other alternatives. The most viable alternative was to pump water from a well near the village and fill it into a bladder tank for distribution to the community. While the procurement of a dewatering device was in process, the rains started and the situation for the community has temporarily improved. The rehabilitation of the well is, therefore, included in the middle term projects.

48 participants, selected from six administrative areas, received five-day training in functional and financial management of water supply, installation and maintenance of hand pumps, and hygiene and sanitation. The participants were from areas where the Red Cross Society of Eritrea had implemented short term projects.

Impact

The rehabilitation of the nine boreholes has ensured that 16,150 beneficiaries are getting water from shorter distances and in increased quantities. Previously the communities of Muruni had to fetch water from a water source 4 hours walk away, with steep and rugged topography. With the rehabilitation of the wells, however, the distance has been shortened to an hour's walk from the remotest village.

Whereas residents of Felhito, Karwat and Adi Omer used to walk for 2km and contend with long queues, they can now obtain water a kilometre away from their villages. In Hashishay, 10,000 people have benefited from access to safe water and less congestion. Though the rehabilitated wells in Gizgiza yielded salty water, which is not suitable for human consumption, the wells are serving the community for non drinking purposes. Previously the populations bought water for all use from an expensive private water trucking service. The two newly constructed water ponds are serving a population of 3,550 in Gizgiza and their animals.

Medium term food security, sustainable livelihoods and integrated health

Objective 1: To increase medium term food security through distribution of seeds and farming tools to 10,000 households.

Due to shortage of funding, the appeal's plan to distribute 300 metric tonnes of sorghum and 30 metric tonnes of beans to 10,000 households was reduced to 15 metric tonnes of peer millet to 1,168 households. Assisted by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Red Cross Society of Eritrea locally procured 5.843 metric tonnes of drought resistant

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seeds. However, only 5.843 metric tonnes were procured as the entire 15 metric tonnes could not be found in the country.

The distribution was carried out in June. The most vulnerable villages were selected, mainly those that had lost their traditional seed reserving mechanism. The distribution is depicted in the following table.

Seed distribution in the most vulnerable villages

Most vulnerable villages	No. of households	Seeds distributed (in metric tonnes)
Hagaz /Adalet	100	0.500
Hagaz/Harnet	100	0.500
Adi-Faklai	88	0.443
Badob	160	0.800
Hashishai	120	0.600
Fana	160	0.800
Enchinak	140	0.700
Ghilas	140	0.700
Awanjeli	160	0.800
Total	1,168	5.843

Objective 2: To promote food security through the improvement of farming practices.

No progress was made under this objective because the Swedish Red Cross's consultant identified to undertake the activities was assigned to other missions.

Objective 3: To reduce morbidity and vulnerability to water related diseases by improving access to safe drinking water.

Five administrative villages were identified for the medium-term projects, including the construction of two check dams, two sub-surface dams, and the rehabilitation of a hand dug well. The procurement process for the gabions begun, with the invitation for bids published in a local national newspaper. The national society's bidding committee has identified the best supplier and is now resolving a few issues regarding pricing and quality.

Three administrative villages, within the project areas, were identified for the long-term projects. In integrating them within the annual plan of the Red Cross Society of Eritrea, the Danish Red Cross has drafted an application to the EU, on behalf of the national society. A final application will be submitted as soon as a call for the proposal is made.

Objective 4: To improve the health status of targeted communities through community-based first aid (CBFA), participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation (PHAST) and provision of basic sanitation installations.

A volunteer coordinator was recruited to coordinate and mobilize volunteers in the operational area. He has good back ground in health and the general Red Cross activities.

Constraints

Due to lack of funding, implementation of activities was delayed. However, funds have now been obtained and implementation will start as soon as the target group, currently involved in farming activities, is available.

Objective 5: To improve household economy and reduce environmental degradation through the provision of fuel efficient stoves.

Activities under this objective will be implemented together with the health promotion activities.

Advocacy and public information

Objective 1: To ensure that the needs and rights of the most vulnerable in relation to the drought situation are secured.

The Red Cross Society of Eritrea distributes food within each administrative village in close cooperation with the village leaders. The Federation representative in Eritrea has been regularly visiting the relief operation areas to witness and follow up the progress made in the distribution of food and in water projects. The Spanish and American partner national societies and other partners have also visited the operation areas.

Following an agreement reached by the national society, the Federation representative and an Eritrean film production company to produce a video film showing the situation of the drought affected people, the video has been finalized and officially handed over to the Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation representative. The video, a fundraising tool aimed at reviving donor interest in the operation, is being forwarded to the Federation's secretariat for further distribution to interested PNS.

The students from Swedish Folk High school, who visited Hagaz, broadcasted the situation of the drought-affected people in the Swedish Radio broadcast service so as to express the seriousness of the situation to the people of Sweden and to the world at large.

An article exhibiting the impact of the Red Cross intervention and the current situation was produced and published on the Federation's website on 1 June- read it on <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/05/05060101/>

Objective 2: To promote the Movement's fundamental principles and humanitarian values in the intervention area.

The Red Cross Society of Eritrea trained 84 candidates on Red Cross knowledge, voluntarism and relief management. The candidates were selected from the 17 administrative areas where the relief food is being distributed.

Capacity Building

Objective 1: To build the response and operational capacity of the national society at headquarters and branch level.

No progress has been made under this objective due to lack of funding. The Federation representative continues to provide technical support on the general implementation of the operation as well as advocacy and communication with partners.

Federation coordination

A task force involving the senior management of Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation representative is coordinating and evaluating the operation. The regional delegation also provides technical support while collaborating with national and international agencies involved in food security, water, sanitation, health and agriculture.

For better information sharing and coordination of operational decisions related to the drought response programme, the national society's relief coordinator and the Federation representative participate in monthly food aid and food security meeting for all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in food relief and food security.

The Finnish Red Cross gave an in kind contribution of 1,320 metric tonnes of wheat, 82.5 metric tonnes of oil and 110 metric tonnes lentils sufficient to be supplied to 55,000 beneficiaries for two months. The food started arriving in the country on 29 June 2005.

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The Netherlands Red Cross donated EUR 550,967 (CHF 853, 400) to cater for at least 20 % of the relief and 10% of the operation costs. With the contribution, enough food to assist the reduced number of beneficiaries and rations is secured to last up to December 2005.

The government of Eritrea published a legislation to regulate the operation of NGOs and further imposed tax on relief and non-relief items imported by NGOs. The proclamation also required the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare to take over the responsibilities of ERREC and came into effect as from 1 June 2005. The Red Cross Society of Eritrea has, however, obtained exemption from this tax and additional costs for the Finnish Red Cross-donated food were paid by the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare. Further, the ministry has written to the handling company informing it that they will pay the extra storage costs and demurrage.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

Eritrea - drought

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA002

PLEDGES RECEIVED

29/08/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					TOTAL COVERAGE	
				5,210,000		50.1%
JAPANESE - RC		144,500	USD	163,574	14.02.05	
MONACO - RC		20,000	EUR	30,970	27.01.05	
NETHERLANDS - GOVT		550,967	EUR	852,897	27.06.05	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		2,750,000	NOK	512,875	28.02.05	
SWEDISH - GOVT		800,000	SEK	136,800	31.01.05	TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT, PLANNING MISSION
SWEDISH - GOVT		1,000,000	SEK	171,000	26.04.05	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,868,116	CHF	35.9%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
FINNISH - GOVT/RC		479,241	EUR	739,948	06.06.05	WHEAT GRAINS, LENTILS, SOYA BEAN OIL, TRANSPORT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				739,948	CHF	14.2%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	