

Operations update

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MEXICO: FLOODS

Appeal N° MDRMX002
GLIDE no. FL-2007-000200-MEX
Operations Update n°2
20 November 2007

Period covered by this Operations Update:

14 November to 20 November 2007;

Original Appeal target: CHF 1,208,000 (USD 1,042,278 or EUR 722,056);

Revised budget: CHF 1,540,000 (USD 1,328,732 or EUR 920,502);

Appeal coverage: 91% [<click here to go directly to the revised budget, or here to link to contact details >](#)

Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on a preliminary basis on 6 November 2007 for CHF 1,208,000 (USD 1,042,278 or EUR 722,056) for four months to assist 40,000 beneficiaries.
- **Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF):** CHF 200,000 (USD 173,563 or EUR 119,546) was initially allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the National Society's response.
- This Operations Update features a revised budget due to more income than originally foreseen. This allowed for a third objective to be included. This objective focuses on Early Recovery and seeks to address the needs of 3,000 families.
- Through the bilateral contribution made by the Swiss Red Cross, a new objective was included in Operations Update n°1. Due to the increase in the budget, this Update n°2 augments this objective to 7,000 families to receive cleaning kits and 10,000 children to receive school kits.



Flood waters have not receded in the city of Villahermosa. Source: International Federation

Summary: Since the onset of the emergency in the states of Tabasco and Chiapas, the Mexican Red Cross (MRC) activated its national response system, coordinated with local authorities, provided information for the Federation's Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) and has been working arduously to provide relief aid to the affected population. The MRC headquarters in Mexico, F.D. dispatched a Rapid Intervention Unit (RIU) consisting of specialized personnel in disaster response, rescue equipment and vehicles. The National Rescue Director was deployed to Tabasco and led the operation with support from the Tabasco state delegate.

Some 6,500 volunteers have participated in the emergency operation by carrying out among other things search and rescue activities and receiving and dispatching relief items. In addition, some 150 volunteers together with other agencies are carrying out needs and damage assessments with a particular focus on

health, logistic, food security and education. The MRC has received food items such as one million canned beans and 1,620,000 litres of water donated from a Mexican private company. A total of 5,000 tons of food and bottled water has been distributed to the affected population. To date, the MRC local branches have recollected a total of 8,000 tons of humanitarian aid.

The situation

Tabasco

Torrential rains have been pestering Mexico's State Tabasco since 28 October, due to two cold fronts and the effects of Tropical Storm Noel. These rains caused serious flooding which in its turn have had a severe impact on the population of the State.

Reportedly, one million people were affected, and agricultural crops and livestock were completely destroyed. 16 of the 17 municipalities in Tabasco have sustained damages, which translates to some 1,063 towns in the state. 965 shelters are still open, currently housing 81,863 people. The Mexican army is in charge of all shelter operations and is conducting a census.

The authorities are attempting to relocate people to the larger shelters, because that would facilitate the provision of relief items logistically and would in general facilitate the relief assistance. But there is some resistance to this, as families prefer to stay together in smaller settings.

Through the Civil Protection System, the Federal government has declared that the search and rescue phase has come to an end and that the activities are currently focused on rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The water levels continue to recede with pumps being employed in a 24/7 effort. According to the state governing body in Tabasco, it is estimated that some eight million cubic meters have to be drained; currently, water is being pumped at a rate of 12,6 cubic meters/sec. The centre of Villahermosa, Tabasco's capital city is expected to be drained and dry in about four days. A total of 57 pumps are currently being used.

Authorities are worried about the potential outbreaks of diseases at this stage of the emergency. Efforts must therefore be made to focus actions on prevention of these outbreaks and on health promotion and education with an aim to reduce the risk of illnesses. The Secretary of Health has organized various brigades to assess and assist with sanitation, water purification (chlorination), fumigation (prior to the disaster, a risk of a dengue epidemic had already been identified), epidemic control and vaccinations (contra amongst others, hepatitis A, tetanus, diphtheria, flu and tuberculosis). Health campaigns through sources of media are helping to inform people on how to reduce health risks. The Secretary of Health reported isolated cases of dengue (54 persons) and two unconfirmed cases of leptospirosis.

A large group of doctors has been deployed to the affected area to attend the affected population. In addition, every official shelter has a health facility. One of the areas of concern is psychosocial assistance and mental health care. UNICEF has indicated that it will conduct a workshop with mental health specialists to address this.

Helicopter flights have been reduced by 70 percent and as of this point, assistance is only to be expected by boat or land transportation. This, so the normal flight schedules could resume their activities.

One of the most affected sectors of these floods has been the education sector. Tabasco counts 5,302 schools, of which 2,067 are affected and 219 used as temporary shelters, according to the Government. The schools in the centre of Villahermosa are most affected. The school materials require special attention, as many have been



Distribution activities are taking place in affected areas.

Source: International Federation

destroyed or damaged. In addition, it is hoped to include a psychosocial aspect in the material, so the children can benefit from psychosocial assistance. Currently, schools in five municipalities are operating again. According to preliminary assessments, more than 200,000 children were affected in this disaster.

Chiapas



The Mexican Red Cross distributing relief items.
Source: International Federation

Chiapas was also heavily affected by the floods. Initial estimates from the Civil Protection indicate that over 330,000 people in Chiapas have been affected. This number included all the people living in areas that were either directly affected by flood waters or in areas that were cut off from the main access roads due to infrastructural damages. A more detailed assessment will establish what portion of the population has been directly affected and what their actual needs are.

The situation in the shelters is relatively well controlled. The government is coordinating the swift return of people in shelters to their homes: most shelters are located in schools and these schools need to re-establish their school programs as quickly as possible. This means that the number of people in shelters is quickly decreasing.

Just as in Tabasco, health staff in Chiapas is also focusing on the prevention of the outbreak of diseases and epidemics related to the conditions in the affected areas. To date, the deployed field staff only reported cases of respiratory infections, diarrhoea, dermatitis and trauma. Preventative measures, as spraying and larva control in high risk areas, have been put in place.

One week after the disaster, state authorities and civil society agreed on the preventative evacuations of 1,300 people in 33 communities from the municipalities of Ostuacán and Tecpetlán, located beside the Rio Grijalva. These people will be relocated to temporary shelters, according to the Subsecretary of Civil Protection of the state.

Damages were reported in 32 educational centres in 16 municipalities: seven kinder gardens and 25 primary schools.

The Government has established the Contingency Operations Center (COC) in Tabasco under the State Governor's office. Since 28 October, the COC has been monitoring, coordinating, planning and responding to the needs that arose from the emergency.

On 6 November, several UN missions, like OCHA Regional Office and a UNDAC team started to arrive in Tabasco. In addition, World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Department of Safety and Security UNDSS have mobilized emergency resources including staff to the areas affected by the floods. Experts from several international Non Governmental Organizations (NGO) are also participating in the response and recovery activities along with Mexican authorities, international organizations and civil society.

Coordination and partnerships

Movement coordination:

The Federation is supporting the MRC through the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), and through the Regional Representation Office for Central America and Mexico in Panama. PADRU is coordinating a second shipment of relief goods to be sent to Mexico within the next few days. PADRU has also been supporting the MRC in coordination meetings held with national and local authorities and international relief organizations. Currently, a Disaster Management (DM) officer is in Mexico, supporting relief activities.

The MRC has mobilized approximately 5,000 tons of humanitarian aid, consisting mainly of food and water (30 percent of aid received has been bottled water); more than 650,000 relief packages have been delivered to the most affected people. The MRC in coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) created a web site: www.familylinks.icrc.org in order to reunite those affected with their families. Ten volunteers in shelters are working on this specific activity, performing duties like gathering data from the victims in the shelters. To date, this link has received 50,000 registers of affected people. The MRC has also established an emergency phone line (01 55 1084-4534) where people in and outside of Mexico can call to obtain information.

6,500 volunteers have been participating in the operation, carrying out several activities: receiving and dispatching relief supplies, packaging, transportation and distribution of relief items, providing first aid care and establishing family links. In addition, volunteers are carrying out damage and needs assessments, although to date these cannot be undertaken in all of the affected areas due to the flood waters. In Tabasco, some 750 volunteers are currently providing emergency relief aid. The MRC has dispatched volunteers from 14 local branches to Tabasco to support the operation.

Due to the bilateral donation made by the Swiss Red Cross, a second objective was added to the appeal in the first Operations Update. However, as the budget of the appeal has been augmented, the number of beneficiaries was increased. The Swiss Red Cross mobilized an emergency expert from Honduras for a period of one month to provide assistance to the MRC in logistic procedures needed in this operation.,

The Spanish Agency for International Aid (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional – AECI) through the Spanish Red Cross donated two water treatment plants to the MRC. This equipment is part of the MRC program for equipment replenishment. The MRC can utilize these plants as they deem necessary and either for the current emergency or for future emergency operations.

The MRC received a bilateral contribution from the Swiss branch of “Doctors without Borders” (Medecins Sans Frontieres – MSF). This contribution consists of 6,000 mosquito nets and a complete water and sanitation equipment (the economic value of this adds up to CHF 78,052 (USD 68,746 or EUR 47,600).

External coordination:

The MRC along with the International Federation has coordinated emergency response activities directly with representatives from the European Commission, Doctors without Borders (Medecins Sans Frontieres – MSF), UNDAC team and all agencies pertaining to the United Nations system. Several meetings have been held in order to share information, establish frameworks for activities in the emergency and avoid duplication of efforts.

UNDAC team closed their On Site Operations Coordination Center (OSOCC) in Tabasco and has settled in Mexico City until the operation is completed. The coordination meetings will now be led by the Planning Sub Secretary and will be scheduled twice a week.

UN agencies present in the field are:

- The World Food Programme (WFP);

- The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)
- The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO);
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA);
- United Nations Disasters Safety and Security (UNDSS)

The Mexican military has installed eight community kitchens in Tabasco. Each kitchen can produce food for 3,000 people per day. The majority of the food that is processed in these community kitchens is supplied by the MRC. Authorities plan to install three more kitchens in the upcoming days; one of them will be in the community of Gaviota in Villahermosa which was deeply affected.

Since 10 November, six organizations including the MRC, started damage and needs assessments and an official needs analysis. These assessments and an official needs analysis are still on going; there have been 150 volunteers supporting this activity and concrete results are expected to be completed shortly.

The Italian government responded to this emergency appeal by contributing EUR 50,000 to the Federation's Appeal, arranged through its General Directorate for Development Cooperation. This contribution will enable the MRC to accomplish the objective set out.

The MRC maintains strategic alliances which have facilitated the overall process of the operation. The Walmart Foundation has donated food parcels and logistic services. The Bancomer Foundation has also donated food parcels as well as other local companies and people have donated resources like trucks, personnel and boats. These resources have supported the MRC in the entire emergency operation.

National Society Capacity Building

The MRC has a long history of responding to disasters and has developed a strong capacity. They will be better prepared to respond to this and future emergencies through the further development of existing management and response structures. Mexico has been affected by four hurricanes so far this year - Dean, Felix, Henriette, and Lorenzo - as well as by several tropical depressions, all of which have been efficiently managed by the National Society. At the onset of this emergency the MRC was well prepared with pre-positioned stocks in their local branches in Tabasco and Chiapas ready to be distributed to the affected population. Although the MRC plan of action is focused in immediate emergency relief, this appeal will enable the procurement of items to replenish MRC relief stocks, therefore strengthening and re-establishing their response capacity for future relief operations.

Red Cross action

Overview

The MRC is working arduously to meet the basic needs of the affected population and is distributing initial food and water items, carrying out search and rescue activities and coordinating relief activities and distributions with local, national and international authorities and organizations. However, the operation is facing some delays in the distribution of relief items, as damage and needs assessments are still ongoing and the water levels are receding quite slowly: a complete overview of the needs is lacking to date. However; a first plane with relief items has been sent by the Federation's PADRU and a second shipment will be sent on 25 November by sea. The sent items are still being kept in the MRC warehouse in Tabasco until the water levels have receded and then distributions will take place.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: Objective 1: 8,000 families (40,000 beneficiaries) affected by the current flooding who have not yet been assisted will receive the needed relief items. Procurement will also replenish MRC relief stocks, therefore strengthening and re-establishing their response capacity for future relief operations.

Progress:

PADRU in coordination with the Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) in Panama deployed the first plane to Villahermosa enclosing non-food items, consisting of 1,300 hygiene kits, 2,640 jerry cans (10 liters), 1,300 kitchen kits, 2,600 impregnated mosquito nets and 1,300 plastic buckets. This cargo was received by the MRC and the IFRC and is being kept in the MRC warehouse in Villahermosa. Of the 8,000 beneficiary families of this appeal, 1,300 will benefit from this first shipment of relief goods. These goods will be distributed once the water levels recede. PADRU's next cargo will be made by ship.

The RLU in Panama has coordinated a second shipment of relief goods to be sent to Mexico on 25 November.

When all the relief goods have arrived, the following quantities will be distributed:

Relief items	Per family:	Total number:
Hygiene Kits	2	16,000
Kitchen Kits	1	8,000
Jerry Cans	2	16,000
Buckets	2	16,000
Mosquito nets	2	10,000*

* The other 6,000 were provided through the bilateral contribution of the Swiss branch of MSF

Impact:

Distributions of the relief items have not yet taken place.

Challenges:

The distributions in Mexico have not taken place due to the following reason: the official needs and damage assessments performed by 150 MRC volunteers started on 10 November and will probably be completed in a week. Once these assessments are accomplished, it will be easier to identify the more specific needs and to establish the distribution points. Once the water recedes and people can move back to their homes, the supplies will be ready for distribution.

Since Villahermosa's airport does not have the capacity to receive heavy airplanes, the quantity of goods (20 tons) sent by PADRU will benefit only 1,300 families out of the 8,000 families this appeal seeks to assist. In the future, goods will be sent by ship.

Although the draining of flood waters has begun, the water is receding slowly, which delays the distribution of relief supplies. Cleaning activities have not yet begun since the food and water distribution activities have not yet been completed.

Objective 2: 7,000 families will receive cleaning kits and 10,000 children will receive school kits in order to initiate their schooling in the state of Tabasco.

Part of this objective will be covered bilaterally with the support of the Swiss Red Cross (SRC) and the items will be procured locally following the Federations procurement standards. The table is as follows:

Items	Total to be distributed	Covered by SRC	Covered by Appeal
Cleaning kits	7,000	2,000	5,000
School kits	10,000	3,600	6,400

The MRC increased the number of beneficiaries for this objective after reviewing the preliminary report from damage and needs assessments and the official needs analysis.

The cleaning kits will contain the following items:

- 1 plastic broom
- 1 trash collector
- 1 squeegee
- 1 cleaning cloth for mops
- 1 plastic bucket (10 liters)
- 1 gallon of Clorox
- 1 gallon of disinfectant
- 1 detergent bag (2 kg.)
- 1 pair of plastic gloves

The school kits will contain the following items:

- 1 notepad (letter size)
- 2 notebooks
- 1 crayon box
- 2 colored pencils
- 2 pens
- 1 pencil sharpener
- 1 glue jar
- 1 glue stick
- 1 plastic ruler (30 centimeter)

Early Recovery

Objective 1: 3,000 affected families (15,000 persons) from the rural area will benefit from the distribution of tools, contributing to the initiation of agricultural activities.

The majority of families affected by the flooding have lost their crops, increasing their short and medium term needs for food significantly impacting on their livelihoods. In order to assist with recovery activities, the MRC's Plan of Action will ensure the distribution of tools in order to help affected families re cultivate their crops. Each family will receive one toolkit.

Each tool kit to be provided will contain the following items:

- 1 rake
- 1 shovel
- 1 traditional shovel
- 1 Machete
- 1 Machete file

Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Surveys and the identification of affected communities.

- Local purchase, warehousing, transport and identification of the distribution points
- Distribution tools by MRC volunteers.
- Monitoring and evaluation by the MRC headquarters

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Maintaining a steady flow of timely and accurate information between the field and other major stakeholders is vital for fundraising, advocacy and maintaining the profile of emergency operations. During an operation, communications between affected populations and the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as with the media and donors, is an essential mechanism for effective disaster response and the cornerstone to promote greater quality, accountability, and transparency. There has been close coordination and support to the Mexican Red Cross to increase the visibility of their actions in regards to the communication through the Federation's PADRU, the Central America and Mexico Regional Representation Office and the Federation's Communications Department in Geneva. Furthermore, the communication activities targets five main target audiences: the media, the Red Cross Movement, beneficiaries, local authorities and donors.

To date, six DMIS reports have been published about this emergency. Relevant information for this emergency can be found in the following MRC web sites: <http://www.cruzrojamexicana.org.mx/>, www.cruzroja.org and www.ifrc.cruzroja.org. Information can also be found on the website of the Federation: www.ifrc.org. A press release and several stories from the field have been published about this emergency. A photo gallery with all photographs showing the MRC response to this emergency is being designed. The Red Cross and the International Federation have dispatched two information officers to the state of Tabasco which have facilitated information to the organization and to the public in coordination with the Media Services in Geneva, the Regional Representation office in Panama, counterparts from communication departments of the MRC and PADRU. The media in the United States started campaigns in order to recollect funds for the people affected. These proceeds will go to the American Red Cross so they can transfer it directly to the MRC. More than 100 radio and television interviews were offered in one week in the state of Tabasco. Interviews have been granted to local, national, regional and international media in English and Spanish. Although international media is quieting down, the communication team is increasing its efforts to maintain informing the development of the emergency operation to the local and international media.

The Federation is working with the MRC to assist the most vulnerable. Activities to be carried out in the planned operation are based upon the principle of humanity. Beneficiary selection is based on the level of vulnerability of those affected, respecting culture diversity and ensuring gender sensitivity. Activities planned for this appeal are based on SPHERE project, humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response.

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 numbers 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:

- In Mexico: Isaac Oxenhaut Guzco, Relief Director, Mexican Red Cross, phone (52)55 36 27 08 94; e-mail: desastres@cruzrojamexicana.org.mx
- In Panama: Stephen McAndrew, Head of PADRU; phone (507) 316 1001; Fax (507) 316 1082; e-mail: Stephen.Mcandrew@ifrc.org.
- In Geneva: Christine South, Operations Coordinator; phone (4122) 730 42 74; Fax (41 22) 733 03 95; e-mail: Christine.South@ifrc.org;
- In Panama: Fabricio Lopez, Acting Head of Central America and Mexico Regional Representation, Americas, Panama; phone (507) 317 1300; fax (507)317 1304; email: fabricio.lopez@ifrc.org.
- In Panama: Maria Alcazar; Zone Relationship Management Coordinator; phone (507) 317 1300; fax (507)317 1304; email: Maria.Alcazar@ifrc.org
- In Geneva: Carmen Corminboeuf; Officer Management Support Team; phone (41 22) 730 4278; Fax (41 22) 733 0395; email: Carmen.Corminboeuf@ifrc.org

[<Revised Budget attached below; click here to return to the title page>](#)

APPEAL BUDGET SUMMARY
MEXICO FLOODS

MDRMX002

	ORIGINAL	REVISED	VARIANCE
<u>RELIEF NEEDS</u>			
Shelter	-	-	0
Construction Materials			0
Clothing & Textiles	86,230	53,894	-32,336
Food		-	0
Seeds & Plants			0
Water & Sanitation		-	0
Medical & First Aid		-	0
Teaching Materials		111,264	111,264
Utensils & Tools	299,300	536,895	237,595
Other Supplies & Services	488,264	488,664	400
Total Relief Needs	873,793	1,190,716	316,923
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>			
Land & Buildings			0
Vehicles Purchase			0
Computers & Telecom Equipment		15,067	15,067
Office/Household Furniture & Equip.			0
Medical Equipment			0
Other Machinery & Equipment			0
<u>TRANSPORT, STORAGE & VEHICLES</u>			
Storage - Warehouse	5,795	5,795	0
Distribution & Monitoring	176,296	104,310	-71,986
Transport & Vehicles Costs	3,477	5,795	2,318
<u>PERSONNEL</u>			
International Staff			0
International Staff (Benefits and MSA)			0
Regionally Deployed Staff	10,431	11,590	1,159
National Staff	2,318	11,590	9,272
National Society Staff	25,498	57,950	32,452
Consultants			0
<u>WORKSHOPS & TRAINING</u>			
Workshops & Training			0
<u>GENERAL EXPENSES</u>			
Travel	8,693	10,431	1,739
Information & Public Relations	5,795	2,318	-3,477
Office running costs	9,272	15,299	6,027
Communication Costs	6,375	6,954	580
Professional Fees			0
Financial Charges			0
Other General Expenses	1,739	2,086	348
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>			
Programme Support - PSR	78,519	100,099	21,580
Total Operational Needs	334,207	349,284	15,077
Total Appeal Budget (Cash & Kind)	1,208,000	1,540,000	332,001