

Operations update

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Colombia: Floods

Emergency appeal n° MDRCO006
Glide No. FL-2009-000052-COL
Operations update n° 1
26 March 2009

Period covered by this Operations Update: 11 March to 26 March 2009.

Appeal target (current): CHF 1,110,665
(USD 957,924 or EUR 757,518)

Appeal coverage: 28%; [<click here to go directly to the updated donor response report, or here to link to contact details >](#)

Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on a preliminary basis on 11 March 2009 for **CHF 1,110,665 (USD 957,924 or EUR 757,518)** for six months to assist 25,000 beneficiaries.
- **Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF):** CHF 177,000 (USD 152,369 or EUR 118,932) was initially allocated from the Federation's DREF on 26 February 2009, to support the Colombian Red Cross Society in delivering immediate assistance to 1,000 families.



Colombian Red Cross Society National Intervention members drawing up distribution lists. Source: CRCS

Summary: The department of Nariño has been affected by two natural hazards this year: volcanic activity and floods due to heavy rain. On 16 February 2009, the Mira River overflowed, severely affecting the residents in the south-west of the Nariño department in Colombia. Based on the urgency of the situation, a preliminary emergency appeal was launched on 11 March in response to a request from the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS). The plan of action focuses on providing appropriate and timely assistance to the affected families that includes relief, shelter, water and sanitation and health support. The DREF support has enabled the National Society to kick-start the relief activities, but longer-term funding support is needed to sustain the relief operation. This operations update n° 1 shows the activities accomplished by the Colombian Red Cross Society, and the mobilization of non-food items by the Federation's Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) from Panama to Colombia.

The Colombian Red Cross Society and the International Federation would like to thank the Participating National Societies (PNS) which have responded to this appeal with cash and in-kind donations. To date, the Canadian Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross Society, Norwegian Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross and the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent have contributed cash donations to this appeal. In addition, the Canadian Red Cross, British Red Cross and the American Red Cross have supplied in-kind donations that include non-food items. Currently, there are other Partner National Societies interested in contributing to this appeal and their contribution will be confirmed in the next operations update. Nevertheless, in order to accomplish early

recovery actions, crucial for the reestablishment of livelihoods of those those affected by the floods as well as capacity-building activities, additional funds are required.

This operation is expected to be implemented over six months, and will therefore be completed by end September 2009; a Final Report will be made available by the end of December 2009, three months after the end of the operation.

The situation

The department of Nariño, has been affected by two natural disasters this year: volcanic hazards from Galeras volcano and floods due to intense rains. On 16 February 2009, the Mira River overflowed and covered over 10 km. of the surrounding areas flooding the Pan American highway that links Pasto to Tumaco. The Mina River begins in the Andean region in the municipality of Tumaco and flows towards the Pacific Ocean. The floods have affected the municipalities of Tumaco, Barbacoas, Roberto Payán and Magui Payan. The Tumaco municipality has an approximate population of 169,464 people and was the hardest hit within the Nariño department. For this reason, on 23 February, the Colombian government declared a disaster alert for this municipality.



Colombian Red Cross Society water and sanitation technicians providing clean water. Source: CRCS

Colombian Red Cross Society reports indicate that 31,250 people have been affected, 22 people are missing and 1 person has died. Floods washed away houses, crops, livestock and agricultural infrastructure, and also affected the fishing industry. The African palm crops, a significant resource in the region, were greatly affected. In addition, health centres, schools, water systems and also some government buildings sustained damages.

Table #1 Damages	
Houses destroyed	1,125
Houses damaged	1,400
Crops affected	20,000 hectares
Districts flooded	62
Districts destroyed	16

The municipal authorities carried out search and rescue activities in the affected area with support from the Civil Defence and the Colombian Red Cross Society. Other authorities such as the Colombian Armed Forces, the Fire Department and the National Police have provided immediate response to the emergency. Out of the 13 temporary shelters opened since the emergency started, 2 have now closed. However, an estimated 1,045 people are still housed in the temporary shelters. The government has provided immediate assistance to the people in temporary shelters that includes: food items, water, mattresses, hygiene items and kitchen kits. This assistance was supported thanks to funds from the Regional Committee for Disaster Prevention and Response (Comité Regional de Prevención y Atención de Desastres - CREPAD).

The Ministry of Health in Colombia has reported an increase of diseases in the affected areas including: seasonal influenza, intestinal parasites, urinary tract infections, acute respiratory tract infections and diarrhoea. In addition, the water systems in Tumaco and in the surrounding areas of Barbacoas and Roberto Payán have

been severely damaged. Authorities are contemplating the relocation of homes and communities, since some families will not be able to return to their homes after the emergency due to the level of damage in certain communities. Medium and long term programmes are needed to reactivate and rehabilitate the social and economic situation in the affected areas.

Coordination and partnerships

Since the beginning of the emergency the Colombian Red Cross Society through its municipal and sector branches has been supporting the actions of the CREPAD, the Local Committee for Disaster Prevention and Response (Comité Local de Prevención y Atención de Desastres – CLOPAD) and the National Secretariat for Risk Management (Dirección Nacional de Gestión de Riesgo - DNGR). The DNGR has provided ten metric tonnes (MT) of relief aid, including: 1,500 hygiene kits, 1,500 kitchen kits, 3,000 food parcels, 30 rolls of plastic sheeting and 2 MT of water to the most affected people. CLOPAD is in process of elaborating a plan of action, as stated in the preliminary appeal, to rehabilitate the affected areas in coordination with local institutions and with the National Disaster Prevention and Response System (Sistema Nacional para la Prevención y Atención a Desastres (SNPAD)).

Participating National Societies working and supporting the CRCS in the country continue to participate in regular coordination meetings. PNS currently working and supporting the National Society are the American Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross Societies. The American Red Cross is supporting the operation through logistics and with in-kind donations. In addition, the British, Canadian, Japanese, Norwegian, Swedish Red Cross Societies and the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent are contributing with cash and in-kind donations. Moreover, the Spanish Red Cross has made a bilateral contribution to the CRCS of EUR 20,000 for the response to the floods in Nariño.

Private companies such as Ecopetrol have been involved in the emergency through the provision of relief items and cash donations. Non-governmental agencies present in the field, including Doctors Without Borders, the

Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations' Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo – AECID). Moreover, the United States' Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has provided USD 100,000 to the CRCS to repair two water plants in the Tumaco municipality that will provide safe drinking water for 300 families.



CRCS members preparing humanitarian relief items to distribute to affected families Source: CRCS

The International Federation through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation for Andean Countries have been in constant communication with the CRCS since the onset of the emergency. The Regional Shelter Advisor and a Disaster Management Delegate were deployed to support the

National Society in preparing its international appeal. The Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) in Panama is coordinating the first shipment of non-food items to Colombia with the CRCS.

As part of the coordination mechanisms, meetings of the Movement coordination steering committee are held every two months between the CRCS, the ICRC and the Federation and a tripartite agreement will be signed shortly. The ICRC has been coordinating with the CRCS, particularly at the field level (Pasto, Nariño) with logistical support through different existing coordination mechanisms since the onset of this emergency, as well as strongly encouraging close security coordination at field level with the ICRC field office in Pasto. The ICRC has raised concerns about the security in general and the threat of mines in particular. According to the roles

and responsibilities granted by the Multilateral Agreement on Security and Coordination signed in Colombia, the ICRC will promptly carry out a security assessment in the area of the operation to seek, through its contacts with armed groups, information on required security guarantees. The ICRC is ready to support this operation, lending expertise and capacities.

National Society Capacity Building:

The Colombian Red Cross Society was founded in 1915 and operates in 31 of the 32 departments of the country, including 195 municipal units and 45 support groups. The CRCS has an operational national network of 35,000 volunteers. Given this coverage, communities trust and accept the National Society at the local level. All branches and units of the CRCS make up the national relief system that facilitates relief operations using its expertise in logistics, transportation, warehousing and telecommunications. The CRCS branches, municipal units and support groups have been activated throughout the flood-affected areas. The CRCS activities in response to the floods will be carried out with the support of Red Cross volunteers at all levels. The CRCS is part of the national system that provides support to displaced people; and it also belongs to the National Disaster Preparedness and Response System. As a result, the National Society has a great deal of experience in helping vulnerable people affected by conflict or disasters, particularly in the areas of preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The CRCS has been constantly monitoring the evolution of the emergency and activated its crisis room where early needs assessments and decisions regarding the situation were made. The CRCS has extensive experience responding to emergencies of this nature and immediately activated its response mechanisms. The National Society is maintaining safe access to the affected areas by applying the institution's security norms and benefits from acceptance and respect on the part of all actors, including humanitarian volunteers and the beneficiary communities.

On 26 February, the International Federation allocated CHF 177,000 (USD 152,369 or EUR 118,932) from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in its initial response to deliver immediate emergency assistance to 1,000 families. This request for further international support reflects the increased number of affected people. The donation centre managed by the CRCS has received 594 tonnes of humanitarian aid, including food items (14T) and non food items (25T) directly assisting 14,000 people. The National Society has dispatched 150 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the affected zones. Early response actions focused on conducting initial damage and needs assessments in the municipality of Tumaco. The CRCS has provided technical support by deploying two relief workers to the affected areas. Additionally, a National Intervention Team (NIT) member specialized in health, and water and sanitation was deployed to the affected zone. The CRCS in coordination with the Social Protection Ministry has sent 970 units of hydration salts, sodium chloride and saline solutions to the Tumaco local hospital. The National Society has mobilized three loads of medical supplies so the aerial patrol can carry out medical support in Tumaco.

The CRCS also mobilized four 4 x 4 vehicles, trucks and one boat (with capacity for 15 people) to the affected areas. In addition, the National Society has seven radios (one VH base and six portable VHF) for telecommunication services.

The CRCS has until now mobilized 65 volunteers, among which 25 are from its national headquarters. Five volunteers with experience from previous operations and International Federation training have been assigned to the water and sanitation unit from Pasto to operate the water treatment plant. A CRCS staff member working in the area of finance will also be supporting the operation. In addition, a response group from Quindio specialized in emergency shelter management has been activated. Moreover, another group of volunteers is managing the local warehouse in Tumaco. The CRCS will also assign an operations coordinator during the six months of the operational timeframe.

Progress towards objectives

The CRCS continues performing further damage and needs assessments. On 22 March 2009, the Federation's Regional Logistics Unit in Panama dispatched a 40' HC container with relief items that included: kitchen kits, mosquito nets and jerry cans. These items were in-kind donations from the American Red Cross, the British Red Cross and the Canadian Red Cross Societies. The RLU is coordinating with CRCS the receipt of the items in the port of Buenaventura in order to dispatch the items by truck to Tumaco. For additional information to contribute

to this appeal a resource mobilization table has been drawn up and is updated on a regular basis in the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS). To access this table please visit the following link: https://www-secure.ifrc.org/DMISII/pages/03_response/0307_logistics.aspx

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)	
Objective: 2,000 families (10,000 people) affected by floods will benefit from the distribution of non-food items.	
Expected results	Activities planned
Approximately 2,000 families in the affected areas will receive essential non-food items (see detailed kit below).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct and complete further needs and capacity assessments. • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user. • Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

The following relief items will be distributed to the most affected families in the Tumaco area:

- 2,000 kitchen kits (1 per family).
- 4,000 personal hygiene kits (2 per family).
- 6,000 insecticed-treated mosquito nets (3 per family).
- 6,000 mattresses (3 per family).
- 6,000 bed sheets (3 per family).

Progress:

To date, the International Federation through the RLU has sent 2,000 kitchen kits and 6,000 long lasting insectice-treated mosquito nets by sea.

Shelter	
Objective (immediate needs): Provision of 1,500 shelter kits to 1,500 households with severely damaged houses, to complement the Government emergency shelter activities in the area.	
Expected results	Activities planned
1,500 families will receive shelter kits to repair their houses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Distribute shelter kits and control supply movements from point of dispatch to the user. • Provide supervision and support during the repair of damaged houses through CRCS staff and volunteers. • Develop an exit strategy.

The CRCS conducted needs and capacity assessments focusing on shelter in collaboration with the local Colombian authorities. Communities have been identified together with specific beneficiaries in coordination with the government and the assistance will be provided to those whose houses sustained most damage. More information on the communities identified will be detailed in the next operations update.

The shelter kit offers a rapid, flexible and cost effective way of providing shelter in Tumaco's most affected communities. The shelter kit is a package for repairing damaged houses and its distribution is a complementary activity to the Government's support whereby each household will receive a number of zinc sheets and wood. A total of 1,500 families will receive shelter kits to repair their homes and the households themselves will determine the type of repair needed, reflecting their specific needs, local standards and cultural preferences. Some of the items in the kit could also be used to prepare land for agriculture.

Each shelter kit contains the following items:

Specifications	Quantity per kit	Units
Tarpaulins	2	Pc
Rope	1	Roll

Hand saw	1	Pc
Roofing nails	0.5	Kg
Shovel	1	Pc
Hoe	1	Pc
Machete	1	Pc
Tin Snips	1	Pc
Nails	0.5	Kg
Tie wire	1	Roll
Claw hammer	1	Pc
Woven sack	1	Pc

Water and sanitation

Objective: Provide safe drinking water to 2,000 families in the affected areas through two Immediate Response Teams (Equipos de Respuesta Inmediata en Emergencias - ERIE) specialized in water and sanitation.	
Expected results	Activities planned
2,000 families affected by the floods receive safe drinking water.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify communities and specific beneficiaries coordinating with local government authorities. Supervise the installation of the water and sanitation plant Provide safe drinking water by opening two water treatment plants. Distribute 6,000 jerry cans (3 per family) for water distribution. Assess safe drinking water and basic sanitation conditions in public shelters. Provide Basic Hygiene instruction for the population.

More information on the targeted beneficiaries relating to this objective will be provided in future operations updates after the completion of damage and needs assessments by the CRCS and local authorities. Some 4,050 additional jerry cans will also be repositioned in the CRCS stocks, since a heavy rainy season is expected in the coming months.

Progress:

A total of 8,000 jerry cans, have been sent to Colombia by sea through the Federation's RLU. The CRCS has produced more than 153,200 litres of safe water that have benefited more than 700 people. In addition, 519,200 litres of water have been treated to supply 1,153 people housed in 4 temporary shelters.

Emergency Health

Objective: The negative impact on public health is reduced through social mobilization, community outreach, health information, education and sensitization and provision of basic health care services.	
Expected results	Activities planned
500 families will receive primary health care in the municipality of Tumaco, through medical service provided by two mobile health units and a health awareness campaign.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up mobile clinics in the municipality in coordination with government authorities and the Ministry of Health to provide basic health care to the beneficiaries. Provide psychosocial support. Health promotion and preventive health care activities with a special focus on good health practices, the environment, respiratory infections, diarrhoea and vector control. Provide training to CRCS volunteers on community-based health and first aid initiatives.

The implementation of planned activities related to this objective is subject to appeal coverage.

Disaster preparedness and risk reduction

Objective: The most vulnerable communities in Tumaco will be supported by their regional and local Red Cross committees in preparing for future disasters.	
Expected results	Activities planned

<p>A complete study on the Mira River will be carried out for future activities in disaster risk reduction.</p> <p>Disaster warning mechanisms (EWS) will be included in Contingency and Response Plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and employ a consultant for deployment to the affected areas to develop the most appropriate intervention strategy. • Define further interventions to reduce risk in the future. • Outline a strategy plan for rehabilitation. • Carry out advocacy and public awareness-raising. • Ensure dissemination and implementation of the result.
--	---

The implementation of planned activities related to this objective is subject to appeal coverage.

Early Recovery

Objective: Income generation opportunities for 1,000 flood-affected families in the Tumaco municipality will be improved.	
Expected results	Activities planned
<p>1,000 families in Tumaco will receive tools and materials to re-establish their lost or damaged livelihoods caused by the floods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct further need assessments. • Targeting of beneficiaries. • Establishment of follow up and monitoring committees.

Preliminary assessments carried out in Tumaco indicate that the majority of those affected have suffered damaging impacts to livelihoods which are based on crops, agricultural infrastructure, livestock, and in particular the fishing industry. Detailed early recovery needs will be assessed by the CRCS with support from the International Federation through PADRU and the Regional Representation for the Andean Countries and key local, national and international stakeholders in the coming weeks. The planning and implementation of early recovery actions will also be carried out by the CRCS with the cooperation of the International Federation in line with appeal coverage.

National Society Capacity Building

Objective 1: The capacity of the Colombian Red Cross (CRCS) in disaster response and preparedness will have been strengthened.	
Expected Results	Activities planned
<p>Volunteers of Colombian Red Cross Society local and regional branches will be identified and prepared for this and future emergencies through workshops on disaster preparedness.</p> <p>The capacity of the CRCS Tumaco Branch will be enhanced through the provision of radio and telecommunications equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of visibility materials (T-shirts, caps), computers, office equipment in Tumaco local branch • Disaster preparedness workshop for volunteers in Tumaco local branch and another workshop a regional level (Nariño) • Procurement of 50 tents for strengthened the capacity in disaster response at national level focus on emergency shelter • Procurement of 2 bladders tank to strengthen the ERIE specialized in Watsan • Procurement of medical equipment for first aid for the local branch in Tumaco • Procurement of one boat with engineers and 4X4 cars for the Tumaco local branch • Procurement of communication materials to improve the communication in the area of operations.

An existing challenge is the lack of communications equipment in the local CRCS branch in Tumaco. For this reason a signal repeater, a very high frequency radio base (VHF), a tool kit and three laptops will be provided to this CRCS branch to improve its capacities at the local level.

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 of quality,

accountability and transparency. There has been close coordination and support to the Colombian Red Cross Society to increase the visibility of actions with regards to communication through the Federation's PADRU, the Andean Regional Representation and the Federation's Communications Department in Geneva. Communications activities target five main audiences: the media, the Red Cross Movement, beneficiaries, local authorities and donors. The Colombian Red Cross Society has provided several interviews about the emergency to local radio stations and newspapers to raise awareness. Additional relevant up to date information about this emergency can be found on the following Red Cross web sites: <http://www.cruzrojacolombiana.org> and www.cruzroja.org. Information can also be found on the International website of the Federation: www.ifrc.org.

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 Colombia:** Carlos Iván Márquez, National Director of Operations and Relief, Colombian Red Cross Society, Bogotá; phone: (571) 4376300; fax: (571) 473-6301; email: carlos.marquez@cruzrojacolombiana.org
- **In Panama:** Ariel Kestens, Head of Pan American Disaster Response Unit; phone (507) 316 1001; fax (507) 316 1082; email: ariel.kestens@ifrc.org
- **In Panama:** Ghotai Ghazialam, PADRU disaster management delegate, phone: (507) 316-1001, fax: (507) 316-1082; email: ghotai.ghazialam@ifrc.org,
- **In Panama:** Ilir Caushaj, PADRU, Regional Logistics Coordinator phone: (507) 316-1001; fax: (507) 316-1347; Mobile: +507 6679 5355; email: ilir.caushaj@ifrc.org.
- **In Lima:** Giorgio Ferrario, Regional Representative for Andean Countries; phone: (511) 221 8151; fax: (511) 441 3607; email: giorgio.ferrario@ifrc.org
- **In Panama:** Maria Alcázar, Resource Mobilization Coordinator for the Americas; phone: (507) 380 0250; fax: (507) 317 1304; email: maria.alcazar@ifrc.org
- **In Geneva:** Pablo Medina, Operations Coordinator for the Americas; phone: (41 22) 730 42 74; fax: (41 22) 733 03 95; email: pablo.medina@ifrc.org

[<Click here to return to the title page>](#)