

# DREF operation



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Syria: Drought

DREF operation n° MDRSY001  
GLIDE DR-2009-000149-SYR  
3 August 2009

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

**CHF 320,856 (USD 300,340 or EUR 212,435) has been allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC) in delivering immediate assistance to some 40,000 beneficiaries (8,000 families). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

### Summary:

Syria is currently experiencing the dramatic effects of a drought that has been affecting the country since 2006. As a consequence of climate change, the severity of the ongoing drought has now reached a level which forces people to change their coping techniques or to leave the affected region.

According to the government of Syria and United Nations assessment missions<sup>1</sup>, some 1,3 million inhabitants of Eastern Syria have been affected by this disaster, out of which 803,000 have lost almost all of their livelihoods and face extreme hardship. One of the most visible effects of the drought is the large migration from the affected areas that has increased substantially over the past months. Figures for migration range from 40,000 to 60,000 families, with 36,000 of them being from the Hassakeh Governorate alone<sup>2</sup>. SARC has mobilised its intervention teams and carried out assessment studies in the most affected regions. The assessment's findings indicated that the villagers started to sell their belongings in order to buy food items. Data from the clinics of SARC indicate that children up to the age of three years are lacking proper nutrition and have a low level of protein and other nutritious agents necessary for proper growth. Many parents are withdrawing their children from elementary schools and are sending them to work to bring income to the families.

The implementation of the DREF operation proceeds with procurement of food items and the registration process of the most vulnerable families in the drought affected areas. The aim is to start the distributions while food items from the Syrian government and the World Food Programme (WFP) become available. SARC and the International Federation are planning to launch an Emergency Appeal focusing on



Shola, one of the affected villages in the rural of Deir Ezzor Governorate, was full of trees a couple of years ago. Photo: Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society.

<sup>1</sup> Syria United Nations Country Team dispatched two inter-agency assessment missions in 2009 to the drought affected areas: a Pre-Harvest Assessment Mission in May 2009 and an UN Joint Needs Assessment Mission in June 2009.

<sup>2</sup> The information in this section is based on the United Nations Syria Drought Response Plan.

population movement, humanitarian relief and risk reduction and recovery as well as provision of purified potable water.

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed in the beginning of November 2009; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by the beginning of February, 2010).

[<click here for the DREF budget, here for contact details, or here to view the map of the affected area>](#)

## The situation

The drought of 2008-2009 follows a severe drought of 2007-2008, when the main crops decreased by over 50% and the livestock sector suffered widespread damage. The drought led to drastic erosion of livelihoods and threatened the food security of some 1,3 million inhabitants. The Eastern governorates of Al-Hasakeh, Deir-Ezzor, Ar-Raqqa and Homs have been already severely affected by the 2008-2009 drought, having implications on almost the entire population of this area. Having said that, the disaster has had the most devastating effects on the lives of small-scale farmers and herders. The recent waves of drought resulted in many farmers having no crops for two consecutive years, while many medium and small herders have lost over 80% of their flock due to lack of pasture and fodder.

Out of a total of 1,3 million people affected by the drought, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform (MAAR) and the UN in Syria estimate that some 800,000 people corresponding to 75,641 households have been severely affected. Over the past three years, their income has decreased by 90% and their assets and sources of livelihood have been severely compromised.

Governorate	Population	Severely affected
Rural Damascus	1,765,622	2,500
Homs	2,033,337	20,500
Hama	1,997,870	98,000
Ar-Raqqa	934,897	155,000
Dair-Ezzor	1,566,691	41,000
Al-Hasakah	1,495,276	486,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,793,693</b>	<b>803,000</b>
<b>Total households</b>		<b>75,641</b>

Out of the severely affected population, approximately 20%, 160,000 persons, may be considered as highly vulnerable. This group, according to mission findings, includes women headed households, pregnant women, sick and handicapped, children (0 – 14 years), elders and families with large number of children.

Affected populations in different governorates (source: MAAR, UN Needs Assessment Mission)

According to the government of Syria, as of June 2009, an estimated 36,000 households originating from Al-Hasakeh (200,000 – 300,000 persons) have

migrated to urban centres of Western Syria, notably Damascus, Dara'a, Hama and Aleppo. This move further increases a strain on resources, public services and limited job market, already affected by the presence of some one million Iraqi refugees<sup>3</sup>.

Similarly to other effects of climate change and global warming, the drought in Syria will severely affect the living conditions of the local affected population unless adequate measures are adopted to mitigate the effect of the disaster. Drought-induced movement of population is expected to hinder local and national development in at least four ways: a) by increasing pressure on urban infrastructure and services; b) undermining economic growth; c) by increasing the risk of social instability and/or triggering further movement through illegal migration; and d) by leading to worsened health, educational and social indicators among the migrated population.

Small scale farmers and rural households have lost their crops and 80 per cent of their animal stock with no alternative income sources. Food supplies, clean water, health support and maintaining livelihoods are the urgent needs. In addition, those who have been migrating and their host families may require humanitarian support.

<sup>3</sup> The information in this section is based on the United Nations Syria Drought Response Plan.

## Coordination and partnerships

SARC participated in the coordination meetings with the government, UN agencies - including Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), WFP - and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Deir Ezzor and other local branches have been asked by the government to participate in food distributions. In addition, Action Against Hunger is conducting a detailed drought assessment and will plan activities with SARC.

SARC sent an official letter to the International Federation's MENA Zone office, requesting a DREF allocation in order to enable SARC and its volunteers to distribute food parcels to the most vulnerable people in the mentioned region.

The MENA Zone office, through regular contacts with SARC, OCHA, interested partner National Societies and other stakeholders will facilitate the information sharing and resource mobilisation process in order to support the operation led by SARC. The MENA Zone disaster management steering committee (consisting of seven National Societies and the Zone office) has been alerted to support SARC in its response operation.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Already in 2008, SARC, in cooperation with local authorities, participated in distributing 29,000 food baskets in the east of the country. SARC has now requested support from the International Federation and partner National Societies for food items.

SARC branches in the affected region follow their plan of action to support the most vulnerable families affected by the drought. In addition, SARC has mobilised three mobile clinics. Complementing the existing infrastructure of the SARC health centers, these mobile clinics will offer the most affected population primary health services and provide information and education to the population.

SARC mobilised three of its mobile clinics to provide health support to the population in the most affected regions

The SARC national intervention team is alerted to start food distributions. This will include the identification and registration of the most affected families. The distribution will be coordinated closely with the local government and UN agencies, especially the WFP. Simultaneously ongoing assessments will be conducted focusing on water and sanitation, nutrition and health conditions. This will be combined with vulnerability and capacity assessments.

SARC is planning to distribute food to beneficiaries in the drought affected areas and also in places where the migrated population is temporarily settled. It will also carry out awareness campaigns to help the population cope with the effects of drought and prevent.

In the mid to long-term, SARC will reinforce its disaster risk reduction programme.

## The needs

**Beneficiary selection:** Extreme hardship is forcing many families to migrate to major cities (25 to 40 % of the affected population has migrated). Schools are being closed and health conditions are deteriorating. Groups of migrants have established camps around Rural Damascus and in Dara'a. Due to the severe crisis, traditional migration patterns have significantly changed. While previously men were migrating in search of income-generating activities, now entire families are migrating to the cities. Many of them live in poor conditions with lack of basic services like health, education, and water and sanitation. Measures to support these groups need to be designed in order to facilitate their voluntary return and to alleviate the precarious living conditions<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> The information in this section is based on the United Nations Syria Drought Response Plan.

SARC intends to support 8,000 families, approximately 40,000 persons, through the distribution of food baskets. The food baskets will include rice, sugar, tea, lentils, pasta, tomato sauce, vegetable oil and dry beans, amounting to 25 kilograms in total. The utilisation of public health centers run by SARC, NGOs, and the local authorities is crucial in order to screen the health status of the population, to provide health services, and conduct health promotion campaigns.

## The proposed operation

Relief distributions (food items)
<b>Objective: Food parcels for 8,000 families are distributed to the beneficiaries, according to the assessment and selection criteria.</b>
<b>Activities planned:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mobilise SARC national intervention teams to operate in the affected area</li><li>• Mobilise SARC's operation rooms to manage the response operation</li><li>• Assess the needs of families who left the drought affected regions and are now living in shelters or with host families</li><li>• Identify families in need in cooperation with the local authorities</li><li>• Start the registration systems for the affected families in the affected areas and in major cities</li><li>• Set up distribution points in coordination with local authorities and UN agencies</li><li>• Distribute food parcels</li><li>• Develop promotion materials</li><li>• Organise induction workshops for staff and volunteers</li><li>• Attend coordination meetings at national and local level</li><li>• Develop a monitoring system</li><li>• Continue ongoing assessment for emerging needs</li></ul>

## 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 Syria: Mr. Marwan Abdallah, Executive Director, Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society, Damascus; phone +963 11 4429662; email: [sarc@net.sy](mailto:sarc@net.sy)
- In Syria: Ms. Asa Erika Jansson, Country Representative, Damascus; mobile: +963 95 6543075; fax: +963 11 5357171; email: [asaerika.jansson@ifrc.org](mailto:asaerika.jansson@ifrc.org)
- In Jordan: Martin Faller, Acting Head, Middle East and North Africa Zone Office, Amman (temporary); phone: +962 6 5694911; fax: + 962 6 5694556; email: [martin.faller@ifrc.org](mailto:martin.faller@ifrc.org)
- In Geneva: Pablo Medina, Operations Coordinator, Operations Support Department; phone: +41 22 730 4381; fax: +41 22 730 0395; email: [pablo.medina@ifrc.org](mailto:pablo.medina@ifrc.org)

[<DREF budget and map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)

**DREF OPERATION BUDGET**  
**SUMMARY**

Syria Drought

Annex 1

MDRSY001

**BUDGET CHF**

**RELIEF NEEDS**

Food and assembling food parcels	240,000
Teaching Materials	5,000

---

**Total Relief Needs** **245,000**

**TRANSPORT, STORAGE & VEHICLES**

Storage - Warehouse	5,000
Distribution & Monitoring	10,000
Transport	10,000

**PERSONNEL**

National Society Staff	20,000
------------------------	--------

**WORKSHOPS & TRAINING**

Workshops & Training	5,000
----------------------	-------

**GENERAL EXPENSES**

Information & Public Relations	3,000
Office running costs	2,000

**PROGRAMME SUPPORT**

Programme Support - PSR	20,856
-------------------------	--------

---

**Total Operational Needs** **75,856**

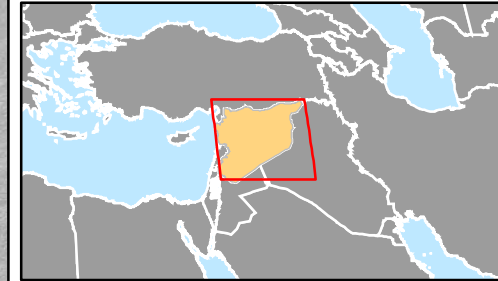
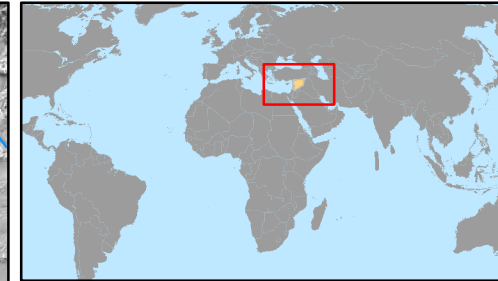
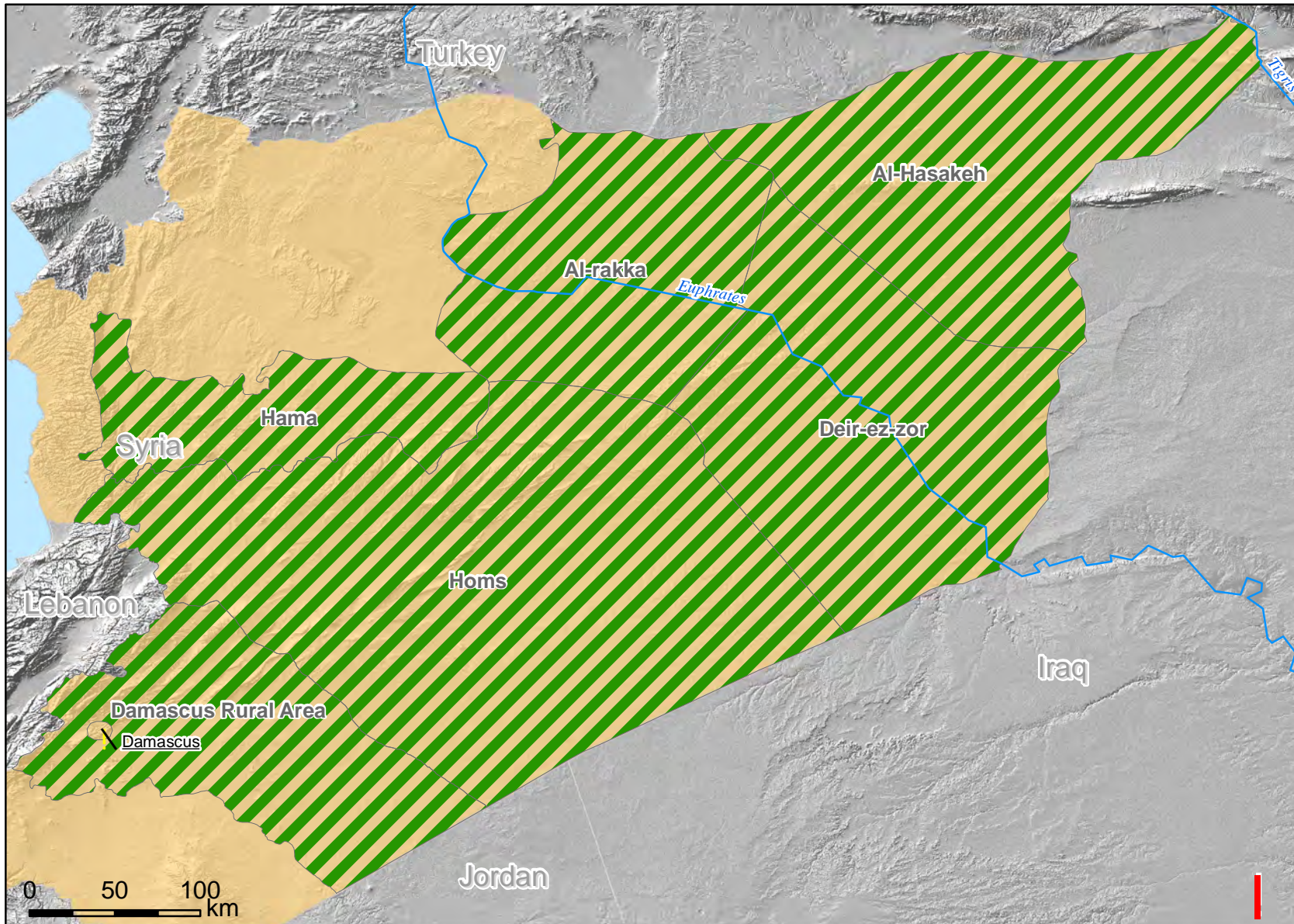
---

**DREF ALLOCATION** **320,856**

---



# Syria: Drought



Syria is currently experiencing the dramatic effects of a drought that has been affecting the country since 2006.

- Capitals
- Rivers
- Governorates affected
- Countries\_DEVINFO