

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

## **MEXICO: HURRICANE ISIDORE**

8 October 2002

*Information Bulletin N° 4/02*

*Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 88,000*

*This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 88,000 has been released. Donor support for the reimbursement of DREF funds is urgently sought. The Mexican Red Cross (MRC) and the Federation are considering the launch of an international appeal to assist the most vulnerable affected by the hurricane.*

### ***The Situation***

On 23 September, the category 3 hurricane Isidore hit Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula; winds of 200 km/hour uprooted trees and tore roofs from houses. A total of 70,000 people were evacuated from high risk, coastal areas. Whilst the impact of the hurricane was particularly severe in Yucatán, it also affected the states of Quintana Roo, Campeche and Chiapas. According to initial assessments, in Yucatán alone, over 590,000 people were affected by the passage of hurricane Isidore and in Campeche and Chiapas, an additional 39,000 and 10,000 people respectively. A total of 38 shelters were set up, of which 18 in Mérida, however, all but one have now been closed. The water system, affected by the failure of electricity in the impacted area, is now functioning at 50% of total capacity. In addition, a ship with some 250,000 litres of clean drinking water arrived in Puerto Progreso on 4 October.

The Mexican Red Cross led a damage and needs assessment in the 74 affected communities in Yucatán which began on 25 September and was completed on 5 October. According to the assessment, the worst hit areas, in addition to the city of Mérida, are Motul, Concal, Sinanche, Cemul, Zinzamtum, Muchupic, Canasin, Tecach and Puerto Progreso. In addition, the entire maize and bean crops and 40,000 hectares of fruit trees have been lost in Yucatán, and poultry and pig farming activities, which account for a third of national production, have been totally wiped out. The evaluation in Yucatán indicated that there are 22,901 houses without roofs and 12,800 houses have been destroyed.

### ***Red Cross Action***

The President of the Mexican Red Cross visited the disaster affected area with the President of the Republic of Mexico, several government ministers and the Secretary of Defence. They participated in several distributions of emergency relief items at Mexican Red Cross Society distribution centres throughout the disaster stricken area. The two day visit revealed that many communities in the states of Campeche and Yucatán continue to experience high flood waters and are inaccessible. The Mexican President, Vicente Fox, announced the start of the rehabilitation phase and pledged USD 190,000,000 towards the repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction of 83,000 homes. The Mexican armed forces,

working alongside the civil protection agency, are controlling the disaster affected areas and providing for the rehabilitation of major infrastructure. Electricity is scheduled to be restored to full capacity within the next 90 days.

The Mexican government is providing sheets of tin roofing material to alleviate immediate housing needs. The MRC continues to receive donations of food, water and non food items through the concerted efforts of several of the major retail chains. These relief items are being transported to the disaster affected area by a combination of MRC transport and donated airspace and are also being delivered through the contribution of the use of a container ship. To date, the Mexican Red Cross has received and distributed close to 500 tons of in kind donations, consisting mostly of food and bottled water, and is expecting to receive another 500 tons of in-kind contributions.

The MRC, through the coordination of the Federation, is considering the launch of an appeal for international assistance. Planning meetings in view of a potential appeal were also supported by the Spanish and German Red Cross Society representatives. The regional delegation in Guatemala, the Federation regional communications delegate based in Mexico and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), through the assignment of a disaster management delegate, are ensuring coordination with the Mexican Red Cross. PADRU's disaster management delegate is currently in Mexico and is continuing the assessment of immediate and medium-term needs; on 8 October, he will travel to Campeche in order to assess damage and needs in areas which, to date, have not been evaluated, given continued difficult access.

The MRC is also coordinating closely with Caritas, which is distributing food aid in the affected areas in Yucatán. The British and the Finnish Embassies have contributed funds directly to the MRC Mérida state branch. In addition, Belgian Embassy has donated food and the German Red Cross has donated food and milk.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

*For further details please contact :*

- *Isaac Oxenhaut, Mexican Red Cross National Headquarters; Phone (52-55) 3951111 Fax (52) 5 3951598, Mobile (52-55) 91090779 , email [cruzroja@mexporta.com](mailto:cruzroja@mexporta.com)*
- *Fabricio López, Federation Representative in Mexico, Phone: (52-55) 5255 4355; Mobile (52-55) 31431687; e-mail: [fabricio1@cruzroja.org](mailto:fabricio1@cruzroja.org)*
- *Josephine Shields, Guatemala Regional Delegation, Mobile (502) 301-0070, Fax (502) 363-1449, email: [ifrcgu04@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcgu04@ifrc.org)*
- *Olaug Bergseth, Phone 41 22 730 45 35; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email [bergseth@ifrc.org](mailto:bergseth@ifrc.org)*

*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

John Horekens  
Director  
External Relations

Santiago Gil  
Head  
Americas Department