

# MINOR EMERGENCY



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

## BOLIVIA: FIRE

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**Update no. 1**  
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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

**CHF 30,000 (USD 23,620 OR EUR 19,500) HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) TO RESPOND TO THIS OPERATION.**

**UN earmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

### The situation

A fire that has already destroyed over 250,000 acres (more than 100,000 hectares) of tropical forest burned out of control close to the border with Brazil in the Bolivian Amazon. The blaze is centred 15 miles (25 kilometres) from the city of Riberalta in the department of Beni, which is some 520 miles (850 kilometres) northeast of the capital city of La Paz. The government has declared a state of emergency in the departments of Beni and Pando, while similar measures are being evaluated in the department of Potosi. The cause of the fire has not yet been determined though farmers often burn forested areas in the dry season for growing crops.



More than 100,000 hectares of pastureland and forest have been affected by the fire  
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These fires have often gotten out of control in past years. About 500 heat points have been identified in the region, among them: Agua Dulce, Hamburgo, Uruco, La Esperanza, San Antonio, Tumichoua and Candelaria. Calm weather in the last two days has helped to

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significantly slow the spread of the blaze and on 20 September it was reported by the media that 70 percent of the fire was under control. Around 600 families have been affected in 25 communities, of which 60 have been evacuated. No deaths have been reported so far. More than 300 soldiers, Red Cross volunteers, rescue workers and local residents are battling the fire.

It is feared that the fire will destroy the livelihoods of many of the residents of the impoverished communities, as the trees that are harvested for nut or timber, the pastureland and the nearby rivers are of vital economic importance to the communities. The Beni Farmer's Federation estimates that farmers have lost USD 17 million in crops, livestock and infrastructure. Although, no official reports have been made, health authorities are warning of the risk of acute respiratory infection in the population, caused by the smoke. In addition to respiratory infections, residents of Riberalta have reported several cases of conjunctivitis. The local airport has been closed due to decreased visibility because of heavy smoke.

### Red Cross and Red Crescent action taken so far

The Bolivian Red Cross (BRC)<sup>1</sup>, with about 22 volunteers from the Riberalta branch, has been assisting the community in close coordination with fire fighters, soldiers and first aid rescue workers who are working in conditions of approximately 50°C of heat. Volunteers have also been supporting the team of about 300 people battling the fire by providing first aid to those affected by burns and bruises, as well as food and water.

Further actions will be carried out with the communities and affected families. The Bolivian Red Cross is currently holding meetings with the National Emergency Committee (COEN) in order to assess the damages and determine which areas are in need of assistance.



The number of people battling the fire has doubled in recent days, including members of the armed forces, Red Cross volunteers, local residents and other organizations.  
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### The needs

An allocation of CHF 30,000 has been released to the Bolivian Red Cross from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the immediate relief needs of the most vulnerable members of the population. A total of 600 families have been identified as being in need, of which the target beneficiary population for the BRC relief operation is 300 families. These families will each receive one 45-kg food package through two programmed distributions. Each food package contains the following items:

Item	Quantity
Rice	5 kg
Sugar	5 kg
Beans.	5 kg
Pasta	5 kg
Salt	5 kg
Oil	1 litre
Flour	5 kg
Coffee	1 kg

<sup>1</sup> [www.cruzrojaboliviana.org](http://www.cruzrojaboliviana.org)

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Although the Ministry of Health has not given an official report, medicine to prevent epidemics of conjunctivitis and other eye and respiratory infections have been reported as an urgent need.

**Coordination**

Close coordination has been maintained and joint work has been carried out together with local authorities, the army, air force, and private enterprises, which have provided heavy machinery to open gaps and stop the fire from spreading further. In addition, inter-institutional meetings have been held with Civil Defence, National Council for Risk Reduction and Disaster Response (CONARADE) and the World Food Programme (WFP) to evaluate the situation and coordinate further actions.

**Budget outline****Riberalta Fire**

FOOD (300 families in 2 distributions)

	<b>TOTAL</b>
Item	
Rice 5 kg.	36,900.00
Sugar 5 kg.	22,800.00
Beans 5 kg.	19,800.00
Pasta 5 kg.	13,800.00
Salt 5 kg.	1,080.00
Oil 1lt.	10,200.00
Flour 5 kg.	9,600.00
Coffee 1 kg.	14,400.00
<b>TOTAL Bs</b>	<b>128,580.00</b>
<b>TOTAL USD</b>	<b>15,913.37</b>
Packing	4,890.00
Visibility	1,000.00
Transport and distribution	30,000.00
Operation expenses	10,000.00
<b>TOTAL Bs</b>	<b>45,890.00</b>
<b>TOTAL USD</b>	<b>5,679.46</b>
<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Food</b>	<b>15,913.37</b>
<b>Operational expenses</b>	<b>5,679.46</b>
<b>TOTAL USD</b>	<b>21,592.83</b>

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