

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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

ROMANIA: FLOODS

9 June 2005

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

Appeal No. 05EA009; Operations Update No. 2; Period covered: 9 May to 9 June, 2005; Appeal coverage: 6.4 %; (Please click here to go directly to the Contributions List).

Appeal history:

- Launched on 29 April, 2005, for CHF 1,055,000 (USD 884,985 or EUR 684,735) for 6 months to assist 4,500 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated CHF 160,428 (USD 134,590 or EUR 104,140).

Outstanding needs: CHF 987,746 (USD 828,569 or EUR 641,085)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:

Romania: Floods Emergency Appeal. For details, please see the website at

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA009.pdf

Romania: Floods Emergency Appeal- Operations Update no.1. For details, please see the website at

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA0901.pdf

Central Europe Annual Appeal 2005. For details, please see the website at

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA066.pdf

Operational Summary: As authorities issued new flood warnings for the week beginning from 6 June, with predictions that a quarter of the country could be affected by heavy rains in the coming days, the scale of the disaster in Romania continues to escalate, more than a month after the first wave of severe flooding hit the country. In mid-April, water inundated the land in the area around the Bega, Timis and Barzava rivers. Water levels reached 11 metres in parts, forcing the evacuation of 6,863 people from four villages – Ionel, Otelec, Foeni and Cruceni – which have been underwater for more than a month. Donor response continues to be very slow, hampering the efforts of the Romanian Red Cross, supported by the Federation, to meet immediate needs. The situation has been exacerbated due to continued heavy rainfall throughout the country, causing flash floods and landslides. A total of 453 localities have already been affected in 28 out of 41 counties. The damage caused is extensive with reports arriving daily of the growing scale of the destruction, and stretching the disaster response capacities of the Romanian Red Cross to the limit. The local resources available for disaster relief are scarce. The authorities are focusing on rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure and houses. The relief effort has focused on covering the needs of the population in general, rather than prioritising those with special needs – babies, women and elderly people – due to the extent of the disaster and the limited contribution of other agencies. The Romanian Red Cross has channelled to the flood victims funds and relief items with a value of over ROL 4,790,874,836 (EUR 133,080), mostly by depleting the pre-positioned stocks of its emergency relief warehouses. At the end of May, Romanian Red Cross volunteers conducted a needs assessment survey amongst the affected populations to look at needs and coverage in terms of quality and quantity. The findings of this survey have also led to the introduction of new elements in this appeal – beds, mattresses, diapers, thermometers, washing basins, school materials, mosquito nets and training for volunteers in psycho-social support – although the overall appeal figure of CHF 1,055,000 remains unchanged.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- Romanian Red Cross: Radu Lihaci, Disaster Preparedness Coordinator; Telephone: +40 21 317 40 32, +40 21 317 05 59, Fax: + 40 21 312 84 52, email: dezastre@crucearosie.ro and Daniela Uta, PR & Fundraising Coordinator, Telephone: + 40 21 317 05 59, Fax: + 40 21 312 84 52, email: pr@crucearosie.ro
- Regional Delegation, Slobodanka Curic, Regional Disaster Management Coordinator; email: ifrchu41@ifrc.org, phone: + 387 59 260 383, mobile: + 387 65 665 747
- In Geneva: Erja Reinikainen, Federation Desk Officer, Europe Department, Geneva: email: erja.reinikainen@ifrc.org, phone: + 41 22 730 49 20; fax: +41 22 733 03 95

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background



The situation is still critical: Although water levels have dropped by one metre, many areas remain flooded

Almost six weeks after the Romanian counties of Timis and Caras-Severin were hit by the worst flooding for 100 years, the situation remains critical. Relief efforts have been hindered by several waves of flash floods provoked by heavy rains which continue to hit the country. By 31 May, a total of 453 localities from 28 counties had been affected, stretching the response capacities of the Romanian Red Cross and the local authorities to the limit. Nine people have been killed by the floods - five during the latest big wave of flash floods (27 to 29 May) - one person is missing, 5,537 houses, 9,153 households, 76,143 hectares of agricultural land and 1,842 hectares of forest have been severely affected – with 1,000 houses completely destroyed – 1,417 wells infected, 581 bridges and 562 km of roads and railroads affected.

According to the latest information from the Ministry of Environment, on 26 May in Timis County, the Barzava river was still above the flood level, while the Timis river had exceeded the warning level. While the second emergency relief transport from the Romanian Red Cross central warehouse was delivered in Foeni - one of the four villages completely underwater for more than one month – the village of Ionel remains isolated and the evacuation of Cruceni is in progress, as the current water level permits the access of trucks to the village. By 25 May, some 6,863 people had been evacuated.

Due to the lack of reliable and detailed information to inform the relief effort, on 26 May, the crisis management team of the Romanian Red Cross decided to conduct a survey among the flood victims from the most affected villages – Otelec, Ionel, Foeni and Cruceni. The survey was conducted by Romanian Red Cross volunteers and questioned 70 families from the affected area. The first objective of this survey was to estimate the number of victims with special needs and to find out to what extent their basic needs are covered. Until now relief efforts have concentrated on the needs of the population in general. The second objective of the survey was to find out if the relief items provided to the flood victims meet, in quantity and quality, the standards set out in the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response.

Heavy rains have continued throughout the country since the beginning of the floods, causing landslides and flash floods. Another phenomenon over the last two weeks has been the appearance of severe storms similar to the

tornado phenomenon. This ongoing stream of smaller disasters enhances the extent of destruction every day, and further stretches the Romanian Red Cross disaster response capacity. Weather forecasts are not optimistic and therefore, further heavy rain is predicted with warnings of flooding for a quarter of the country.

Food and Water

The immediate local response to the disaster has been good, with basic needs covered by local sources: private donations, relatives, companies and direct distribution in the field. This was confirmed by the Red Cross survey, which revealed that the goods received consisted mainly of basic food items, with the lowest level of satisfaction regarding the question of sufficient quantity being 74% and the highest 95%.

However, relief stocks are depleting rapidly whilst the necessity for Red Cross involvement becomes more pressing every day. The Prefect of Timis County - responsible for the local coordination of the disaster response efforts - stated that expectations of the Red Cross are high and that the authorities expect the Romanian Red Cross to support the efforts of the authorities by providing food parcels for 4,500 people (1,000 families) for a period of 3 to 6 months.

While almost 90% of the affected families have to prepare their own meals, the Red Cross survey revealed that the need for cooking and eating utensils is covered only in a proportion of 10 to 48 percent (less than 30% in average).

Drinking water needs are covered completely from local sources, with daily mineral water distributions according to the needs, carried out by three five tons trucks under the management of the local authorities. The Romanian Red Cross keeps two water purification units on standby at its local branch as a cautionary measure, to be able to respond to any sudden water requests in the area.



Aftermath: While some houses are still standing, the damages they suffered are irreparable and it is expected that they will collapse within a short time

Shelter

With the waters starting to withdraw, access to previously isolated villages has gradually become possible, although still at great risk and not without difficulty. In Cruceni, a village isolated from the rest of the world for more than a month, the authorities managed to organize the evacuation of the population by trucks, bringing the total number of evacuated people to 6,863. According to the Red Cross survey, temporary shelter for almost 80% of those evacuated can only be guaranteed until the beginning of winter, mainly because those evacuated are hosted in unheated rooms.

Adequate bedding items are needed. Only 47% of the families questioned in the survey have enough blankets. The situation regarding other items was even worse. Some 26% of families have no mattresses, 47% no bed linen and 63% no beds. The existing sleeping conditions do not offer sufficient

protection against the cold according to 58% of the families surveyed, nor against humidity according to 68% of the families. Furthermore, 68% of the families believe that the items already received will not survive through to the rehabilitation period.

The decreasing water level has finally created the necessary conditions to place tents in some parts of the affected area.

Other basic non-food items

The situation concerning other basic non-food items is similar to the already mentioned bedding, cooking and eating utensils. The survey highlighted the fact that the relief effort has focused until now on satisfying general needs, rather than prioritizing those with special needs. Some 64% of families with children under 2 years of age have not received diapers, while 82% don't have a thermometer. The specific needs of women were also

neglected: 84% of families had not received any sanitary napkins whilst the remaining 16% received these materials on an occasional basis and in insufficient quantities.

Basins for washing clothes, bathing small children and cleaning eating and cooking utensils are also required by the majority of affected families. Through the survey the Romanian Red Cross also identified a need for mosquito nets, as no mosquito nets have been distributed in the area.

Operational developments

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Water and Sanitation

Objective 1: To provide potable water for 10,000 people in the affected area for two months.

Objective 2: To provide latrine floors for 600 families

Progress/Achievements

Drinking water needs are covered completely from local sources, with daily mineral water distributions according to the needs, done by three five tons trucks. Furthermore, the Hungarian Red Cross delivered a shipment of water purification pills directly to the local authorities; at the time of the Romanian Red Cross survey, 10% of this shipment had been distributed to the affected families. At this time, there is no indication that further Romanian Red Cross support will be required to ensure the regular supply of water to the affected people in sufficient quantities.

However, a need has been identified for latrine floors and the purchase of 600 plastic basements for latrines is planned, as soon as the situation will allow for the construction of new latrines.

Impact:

The Romanian Red Cross continues to keep two water purification units on standby at its local branch as a cautionary measure, to be able to respond to any sudden water requests in the area. Each of these two units can provide 500 litres of drinking water per hour. Together, these two units are able to cover the daily water needs (drinking, cooking and washing) for up to 1,600 people. Five more water purification units have been distributed to the regional emergency warehouses throughout the county and can be transferred immediately if needed to the affected area. Thanks to existing international partnerships and the support of the Federation, the Romanian Red Cross can also draw on water and sanitation capacities in national societies in the region in case of further emergency needs.

The outstanding needs remain:

- Disinfectants and cleaning materials (brushes) for public buildings, private houses and wells
- Water purification pills
- Dehumidification dryers
- Jerry cans (20 liters) – 500 pieces
- Plastic basement for latrines – 600
- Water pumps for cleaning the wells – 6 motor pumps

Relief: Distribution of food and basic non-food items

Objective 1: To provide humanitarian assistance to 4,500 evacuated people and severely affected persons, consisting of food parcels, blankets, sleeping bags, rubber boots, underwear, T-shirts, bed linen, plastic sheeting, hygienic parcels, jerry cans and tents.



Foeni: The first Red Cross relief shipment arrived on May 20 to this village, isolated for more than a month

Progress/Achievements

While the latest reports indicate an increasing number of evacuated people (6,863 by 26 May), the Romanian Red Cross crisis management team has decided to maintain for the moment the initial objective of 4,500 assisted people. This is because numbers are fluctuating, as many people leave their homes but return within a short time period. Updated lists of beneficiaries, reflecting the real situation, are expected to be received from the local authorities in early June. The Romanian Red Cross will then decide on whether the level of beneficiary number remains the same or will rise.

Two further relief shipments were sent in this period from the Romanian Red Cross central emergency warehouse to Timis County, containing the most needed relief items from the pre-positioned emergency stocks: the first on 19 May – carrying 500 pairs of

rubber boots, 1,000 bed linen pieces, 1,000 blankets, 235 kitchen sets, 10 food containers, 360 fish cans and 9 small water pumps for well cleaning; the second on 26 May, carrying 10 large tents (5.2 x 5.2 meters), 40 food containers and 158 kitchen sets. With the last shipment, the total value of the Red Cross relief to the area has exceeded ROL 4,790,874,836 (EUR 133,080), mainly consisting of relief items from the pre-positioned stocks of the central and regional Romanian Red Cross emergency warehouses. The items were distributed directly to the affected people by Red Cross volunteers alongside other relief items previously delivered in the area and temporarily kept in the warehouses of local authorities, based on the lists received from the local authorities. The validity of the lists is verified by the National Headquarters by random checks of the beneficiaries.

Besides the relief items already distributed by the Romanian Red Cross in the affected area, at the end of May, the procurement procedures were finalized for 4,100 hygienic parcels, 1,900 pairs of rubber boots, 1,400 sets of underwear, 1,500 jerry cans, 1,150 blankets, 1,030 bed linen pieces and 600 square meters of plastic sheeting acquired from the Federation's DREF allocation. The ordered items will be delivered by mid-June and will be distributed according to the lists of beneficiaries obtained from the authorities by the local branch and the National Headquarters. Meanwhile, with the assistance of the National Headquarters, the local branch has organized the distribution network in the field. The local authorities allowed the free usage of a warehouse in Uivar, located in the affected area, where the goods will be temporary stocked pending local distribution.

The local distribution will be based on a small (3.5 tons) truck which will be acquired during June, from the Swedish Red Cross contribution to the emergency appeal, as the existing two trucks of the Romanian Red Cross are too large for the small and narrow country roads in the affected area.

Based on the assessment made by the Federation's Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT), the Romanian Red Cross has already distributed from the stocks of its emergency relief warehouses, or purchased from the DREF allocation, the following items: 4,400 hygiene parcels, 1,500 jerry cans, 2,720 bed linen pieces, 3,240 blankets, 50 sleeping bags, 1,400 sets of underwear, 75 T-shirts, 2,500 rubber boots, 9 small capacity water pumps for well cleaning, 600 square meters of plastic sheeting, 40 food containers and 393 kitchen sets.

The already distributed kitchen sets, together with the 1,000 promised by the German Red Cross, will cover the needs for cooking and eating utensils of all the affected families. The Romanian Red Cross also relies on the 3,000 food parcels promised by the German Red Cross, which would cover the bulk of the needs in this field, ensuring the food supply for 1,000 families for 3 months. Further food parcels will be needed for the medium term assistance, in the 3 to 6 months timeframe, where the Romanian Red Cross can rely until now only on the contributions of the Slovenian Red Cross, containing 260 individual food parcels.

Impact:

The immediate response from the Romanian Red Cross, with subsequent distributions supported by the DREF allocation, has met the basic needs of the affected population, complementing the initiatives of the local authorities. The initial plans of the Emergency Appeal launched on 29 April and the urgency of the situation were confirmed by the findings of the RDRT mission to the affected region (5-9 May) and of the subsequent Romanian Red Cross survey.

The outstanding needs remain:

- Food parcels for 1,000 families for a period of 3 to 6 months
- 1,000 parcels x 3 months, followed by re-registration of beneficiaries and possibly under 1,000 parcels x 3 months.
- Possibly up to 1,600 hygienic parcels, if number of beneficiary families re-registered for the 3 to 6 months timeframe will exceed 450.
- Underwear – 2,600 sets
- Clothes (raincoats, T-shirts, vests)
- Rubber boots – up to 2,000 pieces (for Red Cross volunteers and affected people)
- Washable diapers – 3,600 pieces
- Thermometers – 300 pieces
- Basins for bathing the children up to 2 years old – 300 pieces
- Basins for washing – 1,000 pieces
- Electric generators / diesel / high power engine – 2 pieces
- Training for Red Cross volunteers in psycho-social support
- School materials for children
- Agricultural tools and seeds (to be confirmed by authorities in 10 days)

The diapers, thermometers, basins, school materials and training for volunteers in psycho-social support were not included in the original appeal.

The local Romanian Red Cross volunteers, active in the disaster intervention team and distributions, continue to play a key role in the operation, with their standing in and knowledge of the communities in which they work, the coping mechanisms and their relationships with other key actors.

Shelter:

Objective 1: To provide housing in tents for 500 evacuated people for two months



Otelec: Romanian Red Cross volunteers are assembling a tent in the courtyard of an affected family

Progress/Achievements

On April 29, the regional disaster relief warehouse from Oradea transferred 10 Red Cross tents to the Timis branch, in order to be used as shelter for affected people as soon as the local conditions will permit placing tents in the affected area. All these tents were mounted in Uivar and Gataia to house those evacuated, with the first six placed on 10 May.

Following the decrease in the water levels by around one meter in the affected area, 10 large-size tents (5.2 x 5.2 meters) were sent to Otelec with the latest relief shipment from the Romanian Red Cross central warehouse. These tents were mounted in the courtyards of owners of houses, which had collapsed or were barely standing.

The local authorities are also providing tents for the affected people in the area, from the reserves of the military and private donations. In Foeni, 100 tents were mounted by the authorities after the waters withdrew, covering completely the immediate local needs.

Impact:

Together, the 20 tents provide shelter for more than one hundred people. As the water withdraws further and people start to move back to their villages, more tents will be sent to the area from the stocks of the Romanian Red Cross disaster relief warehouses and from new procurements, in order to meet the emerging needs of beneficiaries. The purchase of new tents will be covered from the contribution made by the Spanish Red Cross.

The outstanding needs remain:

- Bed linen – 1,280 pieces
- Blankets – 760 pieces
- Beds – 2,000 pieces
- Mattresses – 2,000 pieces

The beds and mattresses are additional elements not included in the original appeal.

Health

Objective 1: Provision of mosquito nets to beneficiaries

Progress/Achievements

Although the health situation is under control, the authorities expect more problems once the water withdraws, especially with the water supply system, as wells are polluted, and disinfection of public institutions and private houses will have to be carried out. The health authorities are involved in a campaign to raise awareness among the population about how to treat the wells once the water recedes. Public health authorities are in charge of testing the quality of water. An assessment of the health situation in the affected area is in progress and more precise data is expected within a few days. Medical doctors, mostly Red Cross volunteers, are on permanent duty in the affected area.

Based on the results of its survey, which indicated that mosquito nets are required by all the people in the area, the Romanian Red Cross is planning to provide mosquito nets to prevent the spread of disease until the authorities manage to cover the entire flooded area with anti mosquito agents.

The outstanding needs remain:

- Mosquito nets – 5,000 pieces

The mosquito nets are a new element to the appeal.

Constraints:

At present, the amount of funding made available for the operation through the appeal is limited and can only meet immediate basic needs. The livelihoods of whole communities have been affected by the flooding. Coming in the middle of the planting season, it is unlikely that the area will see much agricultural production this year. The consequences of the flooding on communities may only really become evident as winter approaches and private food stocks and stores are insufficient.

Federation Coordination

The Federation's Disaster Management Coordinator visited the affected regions, local Romanian Red Cross branches and the National Headquarters from 11 May, supporting the Romanian Red Cross disaster management staff and volunteers with further operational planning and development.

Two National Societies responded to the Emergency Appeal with donations in cash: the Swedish Red Cross with a donation of CHF 34,200 and the Japanese Red Cross with a donation of CHF 33,054.

The Spanish Red Cross transferred directly to the Romanian Red Cross a donation of EUR 12,000 (CHF 18,480), which will be used to purchase new tents in order to achieve the objective of sheltering 500 flood victims.

A humanitarian aid shipment is on the way from the Slovenian Red Cross, with 200 blankets, 100 female shoes, 810 packs of washing powder, 109 jeans, 1 palette of soap, 2 palettes of sanitary napkins and 280 individual food parcels. The total value of the shipment is EUR 20,000 (CHF 30,800).

Department for International Development (DfID) has confirmed that it can support the Romanian floods emergency appeal with GBP 40,000 (CHF 90,000) following a request from the British Red Cross. The funds are to be spent on emergency relief.

The Bulgarian Red Cross announced an in-kind contribution to the Emergency Appeal, with a value of EUR 7,500 (CHF 8,925).

The German Red Cross announced a possible in-kind donation of food parcels, hygienic parcels and kitchen sets.

To meet the possible needs for water, which may exceed the Romanian Red Cross' own capacity to provide, the Romanian Red Cross relies on the support of the German Red Cross - based on long term cooperation in disaster relief and the standing bilateral agreement – and possibly other sister national societies in the region.

The Swiss Red Cross is providing support to the Romanian Red Cross crisis management team by sending one of its delegates - a consultant in coordination and logistics, and also a member of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit – to reinforce management of this emergency.

Cooperation / coordination with other partners / actors

The Romanian Red Cross is coordinating efforts with local authorities and at a national level. Updated beneficiary lists are expected from the local authorities at the beginning of June. In addition to government and Romanian Red Cross relief efforts, Caritas is also still involved in the field in distributing 1,500 food parcels over a 2 month period. The Romanian Red Cross is in contact with Caritas to establish a coordination mechanism for distributions to beneficiaries. A further Romanian Red Cross field assessment to the affected area in the coming weeks will also identify any other actors still engaged in relief operations in order to develop cooperation and coordination as necessary. However, there are few agencies involved.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

The Romanian Red Cross has been undergoing a planned change process over the past three years, with an organizational development programme and plan financially supported by the Secretariat Capacity Building Fund. With this program coming to an end in the summer 2005, the Federation has been discussing with the Romanian Red Cross the possibility of initiating a Cooperation Agreement Strategy (CAS) process in the country, to support the national society to manage its relations with current and potential donors according to its priorities and strategies and within agreed standards. This operation will be implemented against this background, and with the intention of improving key partner relationships and cooperation, including those of Red Cross branches with authorities on the local and municipal level.

National Society Capacity Building

The planned change process and 3-year organizational development program has focused on building national society capacity in four key areas: financial development and management, resource development, image and communication and human resources. A new and committed leadership have made significant progress in building the capacity of the national society and its profile and image both nationally and internationally amongst donors. In its third and final year according to the current plan, this process is focusing on consolidating the branch / headquarters relationship in 2005. This operation will be an opportunity to further improve branch / headquarters relationships as well as to increase operational disaster management experience at different levels of the national society.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The Romanian Red Cross public relations coordinator has been in regular contact with media partners. Since the start of the disaster, three press releases have been issued, outlining the Romanian Red Cross's response in the affected area, presenting the emergency appeal and the international support for the relief operations. Information is available to the general public through the national society's website in Romanian and English.

The Romanian Red Cross ran a very successful fundraising campaign following the tsunami in South East Asia at the beginning of the year, collecting over CHF 1 million for the Federation appeal. This operation will be an opportunity and a challenge for the national society to consolidate its fundraising initiatives and to work with the new donors it developed during the tsunami campaign but for the benefit of the affected population in Romania – very much closer to home.