

DREF Bulletin 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

TUNISIA: FLASH FLOODS

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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 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this update: 17 October to 23 October 2007

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 105,000 allocated from the Federations DREF on 17 October 2007 to respond to the needs of this operation, or to replenish disaster preparedness stocks distributed to the affected population.
- This operation is expected to be implemented and will be completed by 17 December 2007; a DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 17 March 2008).

The International Federation undertakes activities that 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.

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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 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.

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>

Background and current situation

From 13 to 16 October, several regions of northern and eastern Tunisia were affected by torrential rains. Rainfall of 184 mm was recorded in some regions in a period of ten hours and on average 108 mm fell in the province of



Boats were used to move people around in the flooded areas.

Tunis. The flash floods occurred during the long weekend of the Aid, meaning most people were either on holiday, traveling, or with their families.

Houses were destroyed, personal belongings flooded, cars swept away, roads blocked and train services interrupted. In addition, several power cuts occurred in Tunis and other provinces. In poor neighborhoods, hundreds of families had to be evacuated.

The government made a public announcement that the national disaster plan (Plan Orsec) had been put into action. A national task force has been created, and several relief services are being mobilized:

- Civilian protection, first aid and rescue: Military, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence;
- Medical assistance: SAMU;
- Network and transmissions: Ministry of Interior;
- Transportation and public works: Ministry of Land Management.

Several experts outlined the deficiencies found in the infrastructure of certain cities in the country and the lack of preparedness to face such emergencies. This highlights the necessity to reinforce the weakest locations and regions.

Two days after the flash floods, a high level meeting was organised for ministerial representatives at the request of the president of the Republic. One of the first outcomes was a review of the existing building and construction policies.

On Tuesday 22 October the Tunisian metrological centre and the government announced a new risk of flooding during the coming days and have re-activated the emergency plan. Emergency phone numbers have been communicated to the public, who have been requested to stay on alert and to drive carefully. Building on previous experience, a mapping exercise was conducted and information provided in locations at risk.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the first public announcement was made by the government on 13 October, the Tunisian Red Crescent has been requested by the high representatives of the affected governorates to coordinate the first aid actions as part of the emergency operation.

During the emergency phase, teams from the Tunisian Red Crescent in different governorates assessed the immediate needs of the affected populations. Blankets, mattresses, food items and camp beds for families were identified as priorities and this was reported to the central committees. Special attention was given to vulnerable

groups such as disabled people. Following the national disaster plan, the Tunisian Red Crescent teams did not intervene directly in the search and rescue as it was not adequately equipped to support the Civil Defence.

Based on the assessment made by the Tunisian Red Crescent, a plan of action was quickly set up. Capitalizing on contacts established during previous emergency operations, the National Society and the Federation regional office quickly alerted the network of suppliers and began the procurement process for the relief items needed. These suppliers have now been requested to remain on alert in case of new floods, and to check the availability of stocks. Due to inflation of 3.5 per cent in the past four months, there has been a change in prices. According to market analysis made by the regional office, prices of basic food items have increased on average by 25 per cent. The increase in the price of petrol has also affected all prices on the Tunisian market. However, thanks to hard negotiations, the suppliers will keep their earlier prices or limit the increase. Blankets and other relief materials could be purchased in accordance with the International Federation emergency requirements for relief items.

Following these negotiations, the budget had to be amended reflecting the changes made. Quantities of quality items were increased covering the needs identified and replenishing some of the Tunisian Red Crescent's buffer stocks. These quantities cover the immediate needs of 500 families.

- 1,500 mattresses;
- 1,500 blankets;
- 600 food parcels (100 food parcels to replenish the Tunisian Red Crescent stock);
- 100 camp beds;

The prices negotiated have allowed the additional procurement of equipment for 200 Tunisian Red Crescent first aid volunteers:

- 200 boots;
- 200 special raincoats;
- contributed to the preparation of 200 first aid/volunteer uniforms.

All purchase orders were sent to the suppliers. Items will be delivered within three to seven days.

The regional branches of the Tunisian Red Crescent, together with the local authorities have completed lists of the families and shared them with their headquarters and the regional office for North Africa of the International Federation. On the basis of these lists, the plan of distribution is organized.

The situation needs close monitoring; all Tunisian Red Crescent committees are on stand by, as well as the suppliers. It is hoped that new donations of in-kind clothing will be received quickly, as the emergency distribution of these items within the first days was very affective and appreciated by the people affected.

Wider context

These flash floods have occurred few weeks before a major international conference on climate change and its consequences on the environment, organized in Tunis on 18-20 November. The Tunisian Red Crescent is expected to participate in its capacity as an auxiliary to the public authorities in the humanitarian field. From this conference, a declaration called the *Tunis declaration for an international solidarity for the protection of Africa and the Mediterranean region*, is to be adopted. The conference is being organized at the initiative of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development and is supported by several European countries and international institutions including the World Bank, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the African Development Bank, The World Forum for Sustainable Development, the Sahel and Sahara Observatory, the Action Plan for the Mediterranean, the German Cooperation Agency (GTZ), as well as the French Development Agency. The areas covered during the conference will range from agricultural development, water resources, food security, environmental protection, renewable energies, to the exploration of new strategies of development adapted to climate change.

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