

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Ukraine: Mine blast

DREF operation n° MDRUA003
GLIDE n° [AC-2007-000214-UKR](#)
Update n° 01
28 December, 2007

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.

Period covered by this update: 27 November to 25 December 2007.

Summary: CHF 37,132 (USD 32,038 or EUR 22,195) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 27 November, 2007 to support the national society in delivering assistance to some 457 families and their relatives (about 1,500 people).

After a needs assessment nurses from the Donetsk branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross have already been providing psychological aid to the miners and families affected by the mine explosion. The formation of a psychosocial support team will ensure that qualified support is given to the victims of the current accident; moreover this team will be ready to be involved if other accidents occur in the mining regions of Ukraine.

This operation is expected to be implemented over six months, and completed by 22 May, 2008. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 22 August, 2008).



Food parcels are ready for distribution in the regional hospital in Donetsk

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The situation

On 18 November 2007 a methane explosion killed 101 people and left 40 injured at the Zasyadko coal mine in the regional capital Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine. Ten bodies still remain in the mineshaft because of heavy fires. Two weeks later, on 1 and 2 December two further explosions occurred in the same mine causing the death of five members of the rescue team and injuring 116 miners. Thus, during two weeks time 106 people lost their lives and 156 injured in a series of deadly mine accidents in Donetsk, of which 58 remain in hospital at the present time. In a separate incident on 25 November, two miners died and one was injured in two further mine accidents in the neighboring Lugansk region.

The government of Ukraine had allocated USD 7.5 million to provide compensation to the workers and the families of those affected. The recently appointed prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko took the distribution of money under her personal control. Despite the accidents at the Zasyadko mine, and the fact that the high concentration of methane in the mineshaft of Donetsk could be a danger for the city, the Ukrainian government and the mine administration took the decision not to close the coal mine.

Coordination and partnerships

The local authorities expressed their full support for the Red Cross activities. The regional Red Cross branch of Donetsk is in close contact with the staff of the hospital, the miners' trade union and the regional coordinator for emergency situations. A working agreement was reached with the regional medico-psychological centre to provide joint psychosocial support to the people affected by the accidents. Regional TV companies provided coverage of the Ukrainian Red Cross activities. Three broadcasts and an interview with the disaster management coordinator from the Federation's regional representation were carried out during the reporting period.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards objectives

Immediate psychological support

Objective 1: to minimize the psychological effects in the aftermath of the coal mine explosion.

Activities planned:

- Provide psychosocial support at home for the affected individuals and families in the first two months following the mine explosion.
- Provide psychosocial support at home during the recovery period to the affected individuals and families for five months following the blast.
- Organize teams of psychologists and nurses in Donetsk and Lugansk regions to accompany the affected families as they deal with the needs or obligations related to the tragedy (visits to cemeteries, hospitals, or government institutions distributing compensation).
- Create PSS and self support groups for those affected by the explosion.
- Release and distribute information materials to the local population on overcoming stressful situations.
- Provide advocacy for the affected individuals and families and help them resolve any legal problems.

Progress and impact:

Some hours after the mine explosion, the Donetsk branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross was already obtaining the lists of the injured and dead miners and their relatives, and started to assess the scale of the necessary assistance to be provided. Nurses from the Donetsk branch of the Ukrainian Red Cross have been providing psychological aid to the relatives of the victims in the office of the mine administration, in the morgue during the identification of the bodies, and in the hospital. They also attended the funerals in ten different cemeteries in the Donetsk region.

During the three visits to the hospitals psychological support was provided to all 156 injured miners. Local funds and financial support from the neighboring Red Cross branches were used to purchase 468 food parcels (including fruits, juices, mineral water) and some necessary medical supplies worth CHF 5,000. Each miner was provided three food parcels.

At the present moment further assessment is carried out to define the individual needs of all target group members.

On 28 December 2007, in the event of the commemoration day, according to the national tradition of the 40 days of mourning, the psychosocial support (PSS) team will carry out its first major activity that will involve not only the injured miners but also the affected families.

Psychosocial support service

Objective 2: to initiate and consolidate a Ukrainian Red Cross PSS support service in accident-prone mining towns.

Progress and impact:

A PSS team consisting of 19 members was formed among the employees of the Ukrainian Red Cross branches in Donetsk and the neighboring cities. With the support of the Russian Red Cross and the Federation's regional representation in Moscow, a programme and the materials for the first four-day seminar were prepared. The headquarters of the Ukrainian Red Cross had invited specialists in psychological aid to the victims of mine accidents to work as facilitators during this seminar that is scheduled for January 2008.

The Russian Red Cross provides consultancy support for the newly established PSS team, and will also help conduct a seminar.

The Ukrainian Red Cross employees had selected three main groups of the most vulnerable people as future recipients of the psychosocial support:

- Young women without children who lost their husbands (eight people)
- Women with children who lost their husbands (81 families, including four multi-child)
- Older people who lost their children (18 families)

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:

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