

# DREF operation



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Bosnia and Herzegovina: Cold wave

DREF operation n° MDRBA002  
GLIDE n° CW-2009-000024-BIH  
23 January 2009

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.

**CHF 166,370 (USD 144,027 or EUR 110,798) has been allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,000 families. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** Extremely low temperatures and a shortage of gas are having a severe impact on the coping mechanisms of already vulnerable groups of the population. They are in need of heating and food since their financial resources have been spent on alternative heating.

This operation is expected to be implemented over one month, and will therefore be completed by 22 February, 2009; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 22 May, 2009).



Wintry conditions in Sokolac, Bosnia and Herzegovina on 17 January 2009.

[<click here for the DREF budget, here for contact details, or here to view the map of the affected area>](#)

## The situation

Extremely low temperatures have hit Bosnia and Herzegovina since the beginning of January 2009, followed by a lack of gas supplies have worsened the already difficult situation in the country, particularly for the socially vulnerable groups of population. The number of people most severely affected amount to over 5,200 families or 10,000 people, according to the information collected from Red Cross branches.

The most affected regions are the cities of Sarajevo, Zenica, Zvornik and parts of eastern Herzegovina where some villages were completely cut off from the rest of the country due to snow drifts. In some places, such as Gacko, (Fazlagica Kula) and Sokolac the temperature fell to 25 degrees below zero, and in the most affected areas, the authorities proclaimed a state of emergency in order to get the situation under control. In the city of

Sarajevo more than 50 per cent of inhabitants are using natural gas for heating. They have been in an extremely bad situation due to the ongoing shortage of gas supplies from Russia. An intermediate contract with an alternative gas supplier from Germany is in place, but is valid only until 23 January. The normal gas supply is expected to be restored, but the shortage has forced people to spend whatever resources they have on alternative heating. The price of electricity in Bosnia Herzegovina is among the highest in Europe and the prices of heaters are very high at the moment, tripled during the cold wave, and it is very difficult to find them at all these days. In Zenica, the situation is very similar to Sarajevo.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a very poor country with an unemployment rate of 45 per cent, and large parts of the population have little or no capacity to cover additional expenses. Many poor people have depleted their financial resources. One case of death has been reported from Dobož, where a person living in a house froze to death because he had no means to provide heating. People might go to their neighbours' houses to warm up, but in poor neighborhoods this may not be an option.

To assess the information coming in from the Red Cross Society's coordinators, the International Federation's logistics officer, who is a regional disaster response team (RDRT) member, joined the National Society representatives in conducting a rapid assessment in Sokolac, Lukavica and urban areas of Sarajevo.

In the collective centre and private homes of Sokolac some 100 families (with 8 newborn babies, 30 people older than 65 and 3 blind people), are affected by very low temperatures. They are facing severe food shortage and are almost out of firewood. Water in the households is frozen, as well in the collective centre. Preparing food was a challenge even before and without water it is impossible. The same situation prevails in Foca and Zvornik. In the town of Lucavica and in Sarajevo (Dobrinje township) many are facing similar hardships. They will be better off once the gas returns, but the food shortage will continue to cause a problem, as they have spent all their money on alternative heating.

The situation after the period of extreme cold is for many compounded by ice storm, leading to high risks of injuries, affecting elderly people in particular, preventing them from leaving their homes regardless of their situation.

### **Collapse due to low temperatures**

According to the information from the field all stoves and electric heaters are sold out in all shopping markets. There is, however, new import taking place, although at increased prices. According to evaluations made by the international community representatives, it is unlikely that a long-term solution will be found to this problem any time soon. Although at the moment the temperatures in the areas affected by the lack of gas are around zero degrees, according to weather forecasts the temperatures will go extremely low again.

Beside severe heating problems, low temperatures caused freezing of water pipes and other installations affecting municipal institutions. Meteorologists foresee cold weather followed by strong winds that could jeopardize the power-transmitting network and other power facilities.

The lack of natural gas, firewood and alternative fuel for heating are at this moment the greatest problem for the citizens in the above mentioned areas. Authorities have appealed for people to reduce their fuel consumption and to keep the prices of energy sources at previous level and they also got involved in assessing the situation of the most vulnerable citizens through the civil defense. People are however complaining that the government has not succeeded to meet their needs.

## **Coordination and partnerships**

UNHCR has been distributing heaters in Gorazde, and Caritas provided food parcels in different areas. The RCSBiH will act in coordination with the Civil Defence and the authorities, and seek information from other organizations responding to the emergency. The Red Cross, in co-operation with the Civil Defence and the authorities, is involved in all field activities and is responsible for the organization and realization of care for the affected people. The RCSBiH Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) members carried out field assessment together with Civil Defence. Local, regional/cantonal, and entity authorities assisted the RCSBiH and Civil Defence in the assessment of emergency needs.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Immediately after receiving first information from the field, the National Society's disaster management coordinators submitted reports to the headquarters on the humanitarian situation. Information is also collected from the civil defense and the media. The estimate of 5,200 most affected families is based on this information. The humanitarian needs were confirmed through the rapid assessment carried out jointly by the International Federation and the National Society.

### The needs

RCSBiH aims at addressing the needs of the families that have not been reached by other actors. Therefore, some 1,000 most vulnerable families will be targeted and their needs related to heating will be addressed. Most families have heating possibilities, but some 50 stoves will be provided for the ones who do not. In addition, food supplies for one month and blankets will be distributed.

RCSBiH has no emergency stock available, therefore all items will need to be procured.

#### Beneficiary selection:

The beneficiaries will be selected among the families who meet the following criteria:

- Elderly and bed-ridden people over 60 living alone
- People with disabilities
- Socially endangered persons with very young children
- Self-supporting mothers
- Returnees, refugees and displaced persons

Based on the first assessment and estimates the most urgent **needs** are:

Firewood	1,000 m3
Stoves	50 pcs
Blankets	1,000 pcs
Food parcels	1,000 pcs

The relief items will be distributed in the following municipalities:

	Federal Red Cross Entity			Entity Red Cross of Republic Srpska			
	Sarajevo	Zenica	Dobrinja	Zvornik	Sokolac	Gacko (Fazlagica Kula)	Foca
Firewood	220 m3	170 m3	110 m3	110 m3	120 m3	110 m3	160 m3
Stoves	10	10	5	5	10	5	5
Blankets	300	150	100	100	100	100	150
Food parcels	300	150	100	100	100	100	150

## The proposed operation

### Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

**Objective: 1,000 most vulnerable families living in the areas affected by low temperatures and lacking heating possibilities are provided with firewood, stoves, blankets and food parcels for a period of one month.**

#### Activities planned:

- Identify beneficiaries according to criteria and needs
- Procure firewood, stoves, blankets and food parcels
- Distribute relief items to the beneficiaries
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

Food parcels, firewood and stoves will be purchased locally. The procurement of blankets will be carried out in the region. It is crucial for the National Society to reach the beneficiaries in time and provide assistance to them.

The procurement, distribution and monitoring will be conducted by the Red Cross Society using its own capacities, both human and logistical. The International Federation will do the procurement, and will conduct joint monitoring together with the National Society.

#### Dissemination and coordination:

The National Society will promote Red Cross activities and improve Red Cross image in the public through the engagement of its volunteers in providing support to the affected population. The media will be also addressed. Responding to the consequences of the cold wave as soon as possible will present the National Society as a responsible humanitarian actor.

#### Budget

See below.

### 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:**

- **In the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Ivona Matic-Bulic, Head of Office, phone: +387 33 200 151, fax: +387 33 200 148, email: [ivona@dckbh.org](mailto:ivona@dckbh.org)
- **In the Federation Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Samra Campara-Clary, Head of Office, Sarajevo, phone: +387 33 666 009; fax: +387 33 666 010; email: [samra.campara@ifrc.org](mailto:samra.campara@ifrc.org)
- **In Country Representation:** Olav Ofstad, Federation Representative for Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgrade, phone: +381 633 25 895, email: [olav.ofstad@ifrc.org](mailto:olav.ofstad@ifrc.org)
- **In the Europe Zone Office:** Slobodanka Curic, Disaster Management Coordinator, Budapest, phone: +36 1 8884 510, fax: +36 1 336 1516, email: [slobodanka.curic@ifrc.org](mailto:slobodanka.curic@ifrc.org)
- **In Geneva:** Pablo Medina, Operations Coordinator, phone: +41 22 730 4381, fax: +41 22 733 0395, email: [pablo.medina@ifrc.org](mailto:pablo.medina@ifrc.org)

[<DREF budget and map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)

<b>APPEAL BUDGET SUMMARY</b>		
<b>APPEAL NAME</b> Cold Wave BiH		<b>APPEAL NUMBE</b>
		<b>ORIGINAL</b>
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>		
Clothing & Textiles(1000blanketsxCHF25,12)		25,120
Food(1000pcsx25,12)		25,120
Other Supplies & Services(firewood 1000m3xchf78.5,stoves 100)		91,060
<b>Total Relief Needs</b>		<b>141,300</b>
<b>TRANSPORT, STORAGE &amp; VEHICLES</b>		
Distribution & Monitoring		9,546
<b>GENERAL EXPENSES</b>		
Travel		4,710
<b>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</b>		
Programme Support - PSR		10,814
<b>Total Operational Needs</b>		<b>25,070</b>
<b>Total Appeal Budget (Cash &amp; Kind)</b>		<b>166,370</b>
<b>Available Ressources</b>		
<b>Net Request</b>		<b>166,370</b>



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