

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

COSTA RICA: 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: 25 September to 30 October, 2008.

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

- CHF 50,000 (USD 42,699 or EUR 30,120) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 25 September 2007 to respond to the needs of this operation.
- This operation is expected to be implemented in three months and will be completed by 25 December 2007; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 25 March 2008).

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's 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>



Floods have deeply affected many communities in Costa Rica. Source: Costa Rican Red Cross

Background and current situation

Costa Rica has been affected by an unusually heavy rainy season. On September 24, the National Emergency Commission (Comisión Nacional de Prevención de Riesgos y Atención de Emergencias – CNE) issued a green alert for Northern San José in the central valley, and the province of Guanacaste in the Northern Pacific coast. Non-stop rainfall for 48 hours caused several rivers to overflow and severely damaged the towns of Santa Cecilia, Guayabal, El Guabo, Barrio Limón, Bernabela, Las Camisitas - amongst others in the Northern Pacific region. According to the latest confirmed information, more than 2,500 families are affected. Four shelters were opened providing housing for over 600 people.

Some of the communities in the Northern San José region, affected by the heavy floods are Barrio Maiquetía, Barrio La Granja, Santa Eduvigés,

Calle el Robel. 268 houses are damaged, 45 houses destroyed and five houses in the Northern San José region are at high risk.

Bridges, roads and plantations were ruthlessly destroyed, making relief activities harder and causing severe damage to local livelihoods. The CNE monitored the situation closely and activated the corresponding committees in order to prepare for the initial needs and damage assessments. The CNE distributed drinking water to the affected areas and deployed machinery to clear out the roads so relief aid can reach all affected areas.

The affected areas mentioned above were again stricken by continuous rain during the month of October causing even more damage. Another DREF allocation was requested and approved to cover these needs. This event has extremely affected the on-going distributions undertaken by the government and the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRC).



Distribution activities held in Costa Rica. Source: Costa Rican Red Cross

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the emergency on 21 September, the **Costa Rican Red Cross (CRC)** monitored the constant rains throughout the Northern Pacific coast and carried out rescue and evacuation activities. All CRC local branches in the affected regions were activated as well as the Emergency Operation Centres (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia – COE). Rescue teams and officials were deployed to the affected areas to supervise the rescue activities and to perform needs and damage assessments. The CRC search and rescue teams evacuated and rescued 1,000 people from the floods and placed them in the shelters that were opened for the emergency. Relief items such as food parcels, blankets and mattresses were distributed. The CRC coordinated the planning of relief activities with the municipalities in the affected areas along with the Ministry of Health.



Distribution activities held in Costa Rica. Source: Costa Rican Red Cross

The proposed operation

Objectives and activities planned

Emergency relief

Objective 1: 500 families (2,500 beneficiaries) will benefit from the provision of relief items to recover from the effects of the floods.

The CRC plan of action will distribute the following items:

- 500 Cleaning kits
- 500 Hygiene kits
- 500 Kitchen kits

The contents of the hygiene and kitchen kits are based on the SPHERE project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for disaster relief:

No.	Hygiene kit (for 5 persons for 1 month)	Quantities
1	Washing powder, 1 kg, for washing machine, for cloth	3
2	Toilet, paper, hygienic, roll	12
3	Soap, body soap, 100g, piece	5
4	Toothpaste, tube 75 ml	5
5	Tooth brush, medium	5
6	Shampoo, 250 ml	2
7	Razor, disposable	5
8	Hygienic pads, normal	8

No.	Kitchen kit (for 1 family of 5 persons)	Quantities
1	Bowl for food	5

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2	Fork, table, stainless steel	5
3	Frying pan, 2.5L	1
4	Knife, kitchen, stainless steel blade	1
5	Knife, table knife, stainless steel	5
6	Spoon, wooden, stirring, 30cm	1
7	Spoon, soup, stainless steel, 15 ml	5
8	Cooking pot, 5L, alum. diam 20 cm	1
9	Cooking pot, 7L, alum. diam 24 cm, with handles	1
10	Cup, stainless steel, with handle, 300ml	5
11	Plate, deep, aluminium, diam. 22 cm	5

PADRU sent a container with 500 Kitchen and Hygiene kits to the CRC. The remaining 500 cleaning kits were purchased locally. The distributions were undertaken in coordination with the area's local branches and with the CRC. 2,000 labels were procured locally to identify the cleaning kit boxes.

The 500 cleaning kits contain the following items:

No.	Cleaning kit (1 per family)	Quantities
1	Broom	1
2	Gallon of clorox	2
3	Gallon of disinfectant	2
4	Soap bars	6
5	Detergent bags	5

Progress

During the month of October, the CRC was able to distribute the aforementioned relief items to 500 families in the affected communities. As the country was and is still experiencing constant rainfall, and as many people in the affected areas were being evacuated, distribution activities were not accomplished in due time, but were eventually completed on 26 October 2007. Additionally, due to donations from Costa Rican residents, the CRC was able to provide the affected people in the Central Pacific and Northern regions with food parcels.

The volunteers and personnel from the CRC carried out the distributions in a very orderly manner, since the CRC had made lists with detailed information of the beneficiaries in the different affected regions. Each beneficiary was asked to show its identification in order to receive the relief items.

During the import of the relief items sent from Panama by PADRU to Costa Rica, custom difficulties arose. The Costa Rican authorities were hesitant in allowing the import of the hygiene kits, as they contained some products that they were not sure about. This experience will be used as a learned lesson for future operations, since it causes mayor delays in the distribution of relief items.

Communications and coordination

Maintaining a steady flow of timely and accurate information between the field and other major stakeholders is vital for fundraising, advocacy and maintaining the profile of emergency operations. During an operation, communications between affected populations and the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as with the media and donors, is an essential mechanism for effective disaster response and the cornerstone to promote greater quality, accountability, and transparency. There has been close coordination and support to the Costa Rican Red Cross to increase the visibility of their actions in regards to the communication through the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), the Central America and Mexico Regional Representation Office in Panama, and the Communications department of the International Federation's Secretariat in Geneva. Furthermore, the communication activities targets five main target audiences: the media, the Red Cross Movement, beneficiaries, local authorities and donors.

Several reports were issued through the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) on the global Federation website: https://www-secure.ifrc.org/dmis/prepare/view_report.asp?ReportID=3237 and https://www-secure.ifrc.org/dmis/prepare/view_report.asp?ReportID=3244. The communication activities between PADRU and the Costa Rican Red Cross have enabled the possibility of coordinating the dispatch of 500 Kitchen kits and 500 Hygiene kits to the CRC in coordination with the Regional Logistic Unit (RLU) in Panamá.

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