

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Mexico: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRMX001
Glide no. FL-2007-000154-MEX
Update n° 1
10 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: 12
September to 6 December, 2007.

Summary: CHF 100,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 12 September, 2007 to support the national society in delivering assistance to some 30,000 beneficiaries.

This DREF Operation Update is focused on the advances made up to date on the main objective of providing emergency relief assistance to the affected people in the states of Veracruz and Tamaulipas in Mexico due to the severe floods received in the month of September, 2007. This operation was implemented in three months, therefore completed on 12 December, 2007. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (12 February, 2008).

[<click here to view contact details>](#)



Mexican Red Cross volunteers shipping relief items. Source: Mexican Red Cross

The situation

On 22 October, relief operations were still in effect due to the severe flooding experienced in the northern part of Mexico during the month of September in the states of Veracruz and Tamaulipas, the most severe seen in 20 years. Three weeks of constant rain affected approximately 650 communities in the municipality of Panuco (Veracruz' second largest municipality). The rains caused the rivers to overflow, thereby threatening a dam which protects the city of Panuco. Due to the distance between the affected communities and the lack of roads, the assistance and communication activities were hampered, and only 40 percent of the people could be evacuated. Latest reports indicate four casualties due to the floods. The Mexican government, following their Disaster Emergency Plan, operated 56 shelters and opened a centre for donation collection in the state of Tamaulipas, where six tonnes of relief aid were received.

39 communities were affected in the southern region of Veracruz (2,000 families) and 30 communities affected in the northern region of Veracruz (9,000 families).



Flooded house in the affected states in Mexico.
Source: Mexican Red Cross

The states of Veracruz and Tamaulipas subsist mostly on agriculture (corn and sugar cane), fishery and livestock. Most of the affected zones are no longer flooded, but the damages caused on the population's livelihoods were so severe that the population has not been able to resume their daily activities yet. Therefore, humanitarian support was required, consisting of items such as hygiene and children kits.

At the time of this emergency, the Mexican Red Cross (MRC) was managing two other disasters: hurricane Dean in the Yucatan Peninsula and hurricane Henriette, in Baja

California. Therefore, the relief activities for this flood emergency in Veracruz and Tamaulipas placed an additional burden on the human and financial resources of the national society.

Coordination and partnerships

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Central America and Mexico Regional Representation in Panama were in direct contact with the Mexican Red Cross in order to provide immediate assistance.

An initial bulletin alerting of this situation was posted on the Federation's Disaster Monitoring and Information System (DMIS) on 6 September 2007, followed by an update on 8 September 2007. More information concerning this emergency can be found at the Mexican Red Cross website at <http://www.cruzrojamexicana.org.mx/>, or at the Federation's website at www.ifrc.org.

Relief distributions by MRC volunteers.
Source: Mexican Red Cross



Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Three MRC teams (16 people each) specialized in need and damage assessments were deployed to the affected areas. Due to the size of the emergency, the teams have requested additional support from the MRC. Forty persons from the National Intervention Unit (Unidad Nacional de Intervencion Rapida – UNIR) were also deployed to support the MRC teams along with boats, ambulances, vehicles and 2,000 food parcels to commence relief aid activities.

The MRC distributed 4,160 food parcels and 16,000 litres of drinking water to 31 of the most affected communities in Panuco, northern Veracruz; three communities in Altamira in Tamaulipas and two communities in the municipality of Tampico, supporting a total of 4,060 families. Some 80 MRC volunteers were assisting with the distributions. The shelters opened by the Mexican government during the emergency were managed by the MRC.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective 1: 6,000 families (30,000 beneficiaries) will benefit from the provision of relief items to recover from the effects of the floods.

In the second phase of distribution activities, the MRC provided 2,000 families with DREF-funded hygiene kits and children kits in the communities of Altamira and Tampico in the state of Tamaulipas. In Veracruz, 30 communities received hygiene kits and children kits benefiting 3,500 families. These distributions were accomplished thanks to the 60 volunteers from different local branches in the area.

Activities undertaken to reach this objective included:

- Identification and registration of the most vulnerable families with special emphasis on gender inequities and disability conditions.
- Coordination with national, regional, provincial and local authorities.
- Warehousing, dispatch and transportation of relief items from local headquarters to the final destinations.
- Regular detailed reporting on the distribution.
- Monitoring and evaluation

Progress and impact:

The original objective of providing 6,000 families with relief items was accomplished. The MRC even surpassed the assistance to the families benefiting a total of 9,560 families. Thanks to the fact that the beneficiaries saw their basic needs met in a timely manner, they could focus on the longer term needs and determine activities necessary to start recovering their livelihoods that were destroyed after these floods.

Challenges:

No challenges were identified within this objective since the Mexican Red Cross had the equipment (boats, ambulances, cars) necessary to implement and complete the emergency relief operation.

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 Panama, Dario Alvarez, Acting Head of PADRU, e-mail Dario.Alvarez@ifrc.org; phone(507) 316 1001; Fax (507) 316 1082*
- *In Mexico, Isaac Oxenhaut Guzco, Relief Director, Mexican Red Cross, e-mail desastres@cruzrojamexicana.org.mx phone (52)55 36 27 08 94*
- *In Panama: Maria Alcazar, relationship Management Coordinator, Americas, Panama, email: maria.alcazar@ifrc.org; phone (507) 317 1300; fax (507)317 1304*
- *In Panama: Fabricio Lopez, Acting Head of Central America and Mexico Regional Representation, Americas, Panama, email: fabricio.lopez@ifrc.org; phone (507) 317 1300; fax (507)317 1304*
- *In Geneva, Christine South, Operations Coordinator, e-mail Christine.South@ifrc.org; phone (41 22) 730 42 74; Fax (41 22) 733 03 95*

[<click here to return to the title page>](#)