



PARAGUAY: FIRES

DREF Bulletin
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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

This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 120,000 (USD 99,750 or EUR 72,993) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs of those affected by the fires. This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will be completed by 13 December 2007; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 13 March, 2008). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

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>

Background and current situation

Every year in Paraguay, it is a tradition to burn crop fields with the purpose of renovating and clearing the land for agricultural purposes. The lack of rain and resulting drought combined with string winds caused the fires to intensify and spread to other areas uncontrollably. At present, 5,000 sources of fire have been detected in the northern departments of San Pedro, Concepción, Presidente Hayes and Canindeyu. The flames have destroyed approximately 600,000 hectares of forest, natural reserve parks, indigenous villages, crops and pasture, and dozens of rural homes have been destroyed. On 7 September, the Paraguayan Government declared a state of emergency in the above-mentioned departments. On 12 September the Government declared a state of national emergency for 60 days.

The most affected provinces in the department of San Pedro have been Tacuati - where the entire population was evacuated - and Nueva Germania - which recent reports claim that 70 percent was consumed by the flames. 35 families have lost their homes and their land has been damaged in San Pablo, a province in the department of San Pedro. The principal sources of income - orange and corn plantations - have been severely damaged. Recent data provided by the General Secretary in the department of Concepción, confirms the most affected communities are Huguá Po, I Zanja Cue and Horqueta where approximately 1,530 families (9,180 people) were affected.

[Click here to go to a map of the affected region.](#)

The affected areas come within the Gran Chaco area, which spans across Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, with a population of approximately four million people. In Paraguay 90,000 people live in this region in mostly rural and indigenous communities.

The population of the Gran Chaco is constantly affected by droughts and flooding, resulting in a permanent situation of vulnerability, due to high risk locations, fragility of the subsistence economies, scarce possibilities of diversification, and low incomes amongst others.

Mainly small farmers and native tribes compose the population of the Gran Chaco region. These tribes survive thanks to their ancient contact with nature. Nearly eight per cent of the region's inhabitants belong to these populations: 40 thousand in the Paraguayan Chaco, of 13 different ethnic groups and others in neighbouring Argentina and Bolivia.

In response to the fire, the Secretary of National Emergency (Secretaría de Emergencia Nacional, SEN) of Paraguay will be distributing food parcels to 75,000 of the people affected as well as roofing materials. According to official sources, the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Russia and Venezuela have shown their interest in supporting



Approximately 600,000 hectares have been destroyed by the fires in Paraguay. **Source: Paraguayan Red Cross**

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the Paraguayan government by sending fire hydrant planes and relief items.

Weather conditions are aggravating the situation and it is forecast that moderate winds will continue for the next week. The smoke produced by the fires is directly affecting health conditions as people are suffering from respiratory diseases and allergies. There is an urgent need for drinking water, food and medicines for eye and respiratory illnesses.

Red Cross action

The Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) deployed damage and needs assessment team to the departments of San Pedro and Concepción. PRC local branches are coordinating with Secretary of National Emergency local members, elaborated a preliminary plan of action to request relief items, especially for the most affected departments.

The needs

Immediate needs:

The fires in Paraguay have caused serious damages to the land, forests and people's livelihoods. Based on the above information and initial assessments, immediate needs include drinking water, water buckets, food parcels and eye and respiratory medicines.

Assessments to be carried out in coming days will help identify other immediate needs.

Longer-term needs:

The early recovery and rehabilitation needs of the affected populations will be reviewed by assessment teams and the response of the Paraguayan Red Cross will be adapted accordingly

The proposed operation

The DREF funds will contribute to the overall PRC plan of action to respond to the needs of the communities affected by the fires, which includes community risk reduction, food security, water, institutional capacity building and communication and awareness raising actions in both Guaraní and Spanish languages. The actions below include immediate response activities in the affected departments of San Pedro and Concepción in Paraguay within the PRC plan of action to respond to the needs of 1,922 families (of a total of 5,300 families).

Objectives and activities planned

Emergency relief

Objective 1: 1,922 families (11,532 people)¹ from San Pedro and Concepción departments will benefit from the provision of a monthly supplementary food parcel (47 kg), consisting of rice, flour, noodles, sugar, beans, salt, tea and oil.

Families who will receive food parcels are those worst affected by the fires and drought in the departments of San Pedro (seven communities) and Concepción (four communities), particularly those whose food supply has been affected or depleted by the fires.

Table showing the location of families who will receive supplementary food parcels:

Location of families	Number of families
Department San Pedro	1,156
Ex Montaner	112
6 de Enero	271

¹ Based on 6 people per family

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Tacuatí Poty	238
San Pedro Poty	122
Py'a Guapy	15
Agüerito	237
Santa Librada	161
Department Concepción	766
Cuartelero Cue	187
Tотора	312
Paso Itá	161
Curupay	106
TOTAL	1,922 families

Objective 2: 3,858 families (23,148 people²) in eight communities in the department of Concepción will receive drinking water.

Drinking water will be distributed in bladders to 3,858 families in eight communities of Horqueta and the district of Concepción (department of Concepción). These communities were selected as there is a lack of coverage by other institutions. In addition, work will be guaranteed by the PRC branch and the departmental and municipal authorities, who will cover logistical needs for the distribution of water. Weekly distributions will take place in each of the communities for a one-month period.

PRC is working closely with other organizations such as Oxfam and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Department	Community	Number of families
Concepción	Arroyito	2,105
	Cuartelero	187
	Tотора	312
	Alemán Cué	987
	Paso Itá	161
	Curupay	106
Total		3,858

Coordination

The PRC is in direct contact with the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the South America Regional Representation in Lima. PADRU will coordinate the deployment of a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member to support all relief activities in Paraguay.

Meetings and coordination activities are taking place with donors and embassies such as the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), USAID, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and Partner National Societies (PNS), which have showed their interest in supporting the PRC. The Federation is in contact with American Red Cross, German Red Cross and Italian Red Cross.

The European Commission is shortly expected to take an emergency decision to provide funds to support the PRC plan of action in coordination with the Spanish Red Cross. USAID have also announced a contribution of USD 50,000 to support the PRC's plan of action, and the Inter-American Development Bank has offered USD 160,000 in support of PRC actions planned for water.

² Based on 6 people per family.

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The PRC, supported by the Federation, is currently implementing a DIPECHO project in El Chaco region (which includes Argentina, Bolivia and northern Paraguay) to reduce people's levels of vulnerability in this area. The project target eight indigenous and non-indigenous communities, representing some 3,000 people, from the Pilcomayo River basin, from Fortin Tte. Anselmo Escobar and Pozo Hondo to Gral. Diaz located some eight kilometers from the eastern bank of the river. These populations are extremely vulnerable not only because of their exposure to flooding and droughts, their poverty and their position in marginalized ethnic groups, but also because of their physical remoteness, which means that in situations of emergency or disaster, assistance is slow to arrive, if it arrives at all.

Communications

As in previous emergencies, the PRC has prioritized communications and awareness-raising in the larger plan of action. The aim is to support community risk reduction actions through an awareness raising campaign through national and local media.

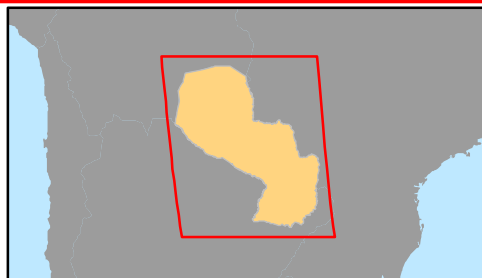
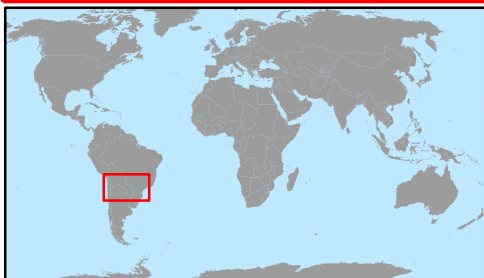
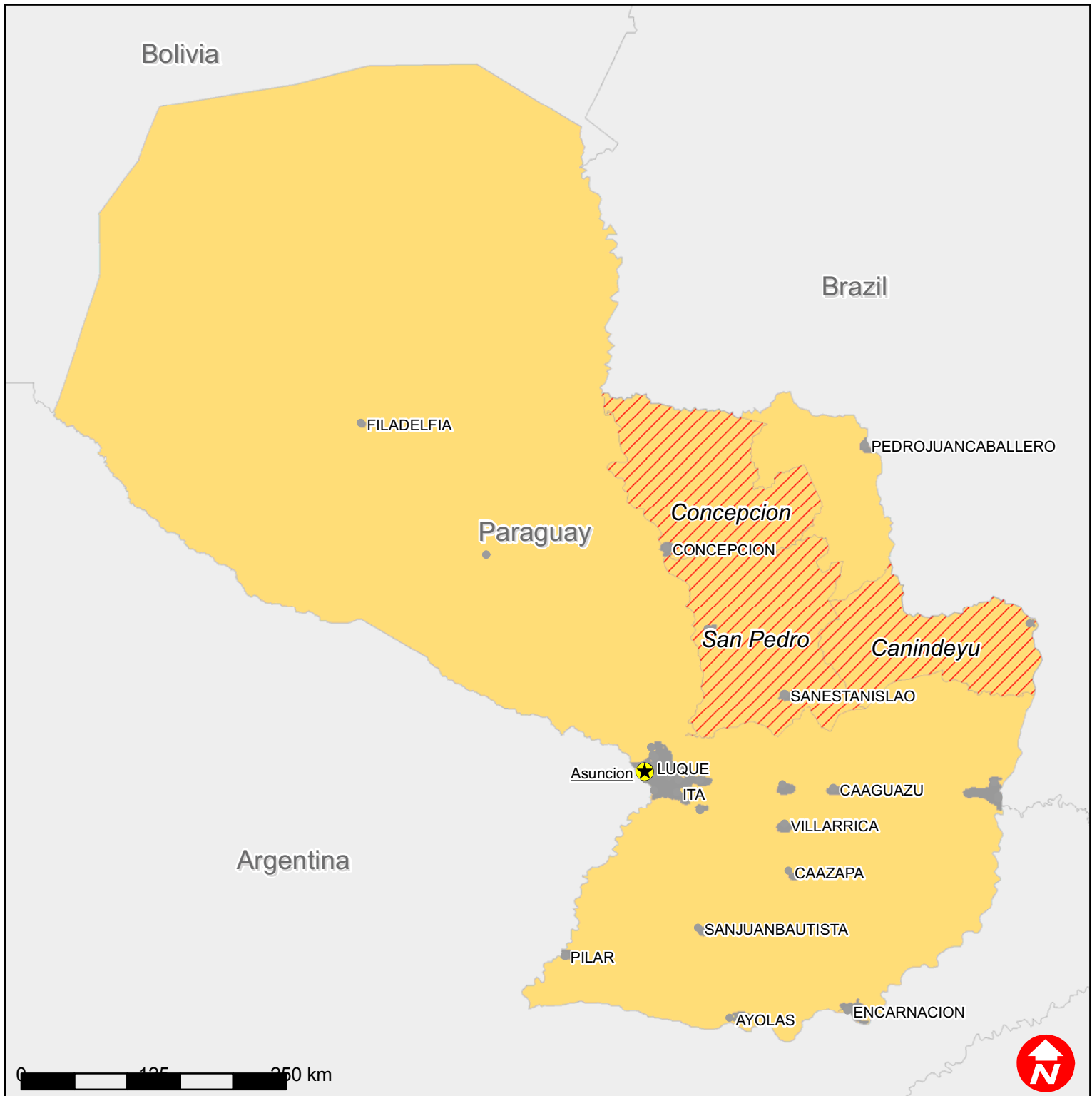
Situation reports have been issued through the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) on the global Federation website. The communications plan has been developed to support activities in response to droughts and fire, having five main target audiences: affected communities, vulnerable population, local authorities, donors and the Red Cross Movement.

Different channels of communication include national media in Paraguay and the PRC and Federation regional and global websites. Special sections will be created on the Federation's regional website – www.cruzroja.org – and on the PRC website www.cruzroja.org.py

[Click here to return to the title page or contact information](#)



Paraguay: Fires



Approximately 5,000 sources of fire have been detected.

7,000 people have been directly affected.



Capitals



Cities



Most affected departments