

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Brazil: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRBR004
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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: 3
December 2008 to 6 February 2009.

Summary: CHF 170,000 (USD 141,078 or EUR 110,924) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 3 December 2008 to support the Brazilian Red Cross (BRC) in delivering immediate assistance to some 2,000 families (10,000 people).

During the second week of November 2008, intense rainfall affected the state of Santa Catarina in Brazil. Approximately, 78,000 people were displaced and 57 cities declared in a state of emergency.

This update reflects the progress made towards reaching the objective presented in the DREF bulletin issued on 3 December 2008.

The operation has been completed on 28 February 2009, and additional information concerning the remaining distribution activities will be detailed in the Final Report. The Final Report will be available three months after the end of the operation (by 28 May 2009).



Flooded parking lot in Santa Catarina. Source: International Federation

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The situation

Heavy rainfall and floods affected the state of Santa Catarina, located in the southern Atlantic region of Brazil, causing damage to infrastructure and agricultural losses. In addition, strong winds coming from the ocean increased the humidity in the area at the same time as a low-pressure system strengthened the rains. Subsequently, the rivers overflowed causing mudslides, which in turn damaged roads and interrupted the electricity and water supply in the area.

The economy of the state of Santa Catarina is based on the textile industry, port activities, agriculture, cattle farming, fishing and tourism. All of these sectors were affected by the floods, hence increasing prices in basic food items, negatively impacting economic security.

According to figures from the National Secretariat of the Civil Defence (Secretaría Nacional de Defensa Civil – SNDC) 97 cities were flooded, affecting 1.5 million people and displacing 78,000 people. The municipality of Alto Jequitiba, located 300 kilometres from the capital Florianopolis, was declared in a state of emergency by the Civil Defence in December 2008. Between 4 and 5 December, rainfall flooded most of the city affecting 110 houses and leaving 450 people without shelter. The crisis has so far killed 116 people, and at least 31 more people are missing.

The most affected areas were the municipalities of Luiz Alves, Ilotes, Gaspar and Baúl, with at least 5,000 people impacted by the floods. These areas were isolated and the electricity and water services were interrupted. The Civil Defence donated mattresses and blankets to the people in the affected cities of Triangulo de Nineiro, Norte de Minas, Belo Horizonte, Centro-Oeste and South de Minas, amongst others that were also affected by the floods.



A field completely covered by the floods in Santa Catarina.
Source: International Federation

The Ministry of Health informed that water borne diseases emerged in some communities due to the rain and floods. 1,900 cases of leptospirosis were reported, of which 306 were confirmed to be positive. Additionally, the Ministry of Health has provided medicine, conducted hygiene promotion activities and supplied a mobile laboratory to analyze the water quality.

On 6 February, rain continued to affect Santa Catarina, but not significantly. Nevertheless, river water levels have increased, forcing some families to return to the temporary shelters established by the municipality. Authorities have provided the displaced people with food items, security and health services. In the city of Blumenau, approximately 400 families are living in shelters. These families will be relocated to a permanent shelter built by the municipality. This shelter will have individual rooms, bathrooms and shared kitchens.

Coordination and partnerships

Since the beginning of the emergency, the national relief department of the Brazilian Red Cross has been providing direct support to the local BRC branch in Santa Catarina. The German Red Cross continues to assist and support the BRC in relief actions, including damage and need assessments.

The BRC has received support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit. In addition, the Regional Representation Office for the Southern Cone, based in Buenos Aires, has been in constant communication with the BRC.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the onset of the emergency, the Brazilian Red Cross has been assisting the most affected people. The BRC deployed approximately 40 volunteers and 2 water and sanitation specialists. Subsequently, a nationwide fundraising campaign was organized to collect donations of relief items and dispatch them to the Santa Catarina local BRC branch. A specific bank account to collect funds for the affected people of Santa Catarina was opened as well, under the supervision of the Judiciary. The BRC Relief Secretariat is

constantly monitoring the event in case the water levels increase and affect the local public institutions and organizations working in the field.

The International Federation sent a relief RIT member specialized in relief to support the BRC local branch in Santa Catarina. The Federation also deployed a health officer to support the National Society in assessing needs and potential areas of intervention.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: 2,000 families will benefit from the provision of hygiene and cleaning kits to recover from the effects of the floods.

Expected Results	Activities Planned
2,000 families received essential hygiene and cleaning kits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments. • Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance. • Obtain quotes from suppliers for relief items. • Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user. • Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions. • Workshop on Humanitarian Distribution

Progress and impact:

On 19 November 2008, a relief distribution workshop was conducted with the objective of training 25 BRC volunteers on the International Federation distribution standards. The workshop was conducted by the RIT member specialized in relief deployed by PADRU.

The BRC has identified suppliers for hygiene and cleaning kits. However, the delivery of these items was delayed due to the holiday season in December 2008.

Meetings between the BRC, municipal authorities and community leaders were held in order to complete beneficiary lists. The BRC has completed the identification of beneficiary families and has begun to receive items from the suppliers.



BRC staff and volunteer carrying relief items in the distribution centre in Porto Escalvado. Source: Brazilian Red Cross

Distribution of relief items commenced on 31 January 2009 in the affected cities. The BRC has rented two trucks to start distributing the relief items. Distribution cards have been made to facilitate the process, ensuring identification of the targeted beneficiaries. A BRC logistics volunteer works from the local warehouse in Porto Escalvado, managing the dispatch of relief items.

During the first distribution phase, the following kits were distributed:

City	Date	N° of kits distributed	N° of families assisted
Navegantes	31 January	141 Kits – Hygiene and cleaning kits	141

Gaspar	1 February	36 Kits - Hygiene and cleaning kits	36
Ilhota	1 February	60 Kits - Hygiene and cleaning kits	60
Itajaí	1 February	84 Kits - Hygiene kits	84
Total			321

Each hygiene kit contains bars of soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, toilet paper, sanitary towels, disposable razors and combs. The cleaning kits contain a broom, a rake, a plastic bucket, a sponge and 1 kg of detergent. As explained in the DREF Bulletin, each hygiene and cleaning kit contain items to assist one family of five members for 30 days. The BRC chose to concentrate its relief efforts in these cities since they were the most affected by the floods.

Challenges:

Thus far, the challenges encountered within this objective were delays as a result of the holiday season in December, lack of items in the market and complications in completing the beneficiary census lists. Since the Brazilian territory is very extensive and there was a lack of transportation, the volunteers had difficulty in accessing the affected areas. Nevertheless, the beneficiary lists were completed thanks to the assistance of the municipal authorities. Distribution information will be described in detail in the final DREF report.

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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