

# DREF operation update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Belize: Floods

**DREF operation n° MDRBZ001**  
**GLIDE n°TC-2008-000078-BLZ**  
**Update n° 2**  
**31 July 2008**

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:** 11 June to 8 July, 2008.

**Summary:** CHF 90,000 was originally allocated on 4 June, 2008 with an additional CHF 69,000 requested and allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 10 June, 2008 to support the National Society in delivering assistance to some 2,500 beneficiaries, as well as to replenish pre-positioned stocks.

Torrential rainfall as a result of Tropical Storm Arthur hit Belize during the end of May 2008 affecting some 10,000 people. To date, the Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS) has delivered emergency relief to some 380 families representing more than 1,900 people. In addition, the BRCS continues to carry out assessments in the affected areas.



Transportation of non-food items and food parcels. Source: International Federation.

The BRCS and the International Federation have extended the timeframe of the operation to four months (which adds one month to the three originally planned). The time frame was extended to allow the BRCS to carry out additional activities related to capacity building. The operation will therefore be completed by 4 October, 2008. In line with Federation reporting standards, the final report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 4 January, 2009).

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## The situation

Tropical Storm Arthur formed on Saturday 31 May, 2008 and made landfall in northern Belize on the Yucatan Peninsula before becoming the first named storm of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. The rains from the tropical storm compounded the effects of Tropical Storm Alma which had developed in the Eastern Pacific on 27 May. Together, storms Alma and Arthur brought approximately 10 inches of rain across Belize within 36 hours, causing flash floods in low lying areas.

The National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) and the Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS) conducted assessments in the northern districts of Orange Walk and Corozal. Preliminary findings from Orange Walk estimate that there are 105 affected families in five villages: San Estevan, Carmelita, Black

Water Creek, Trial Farm, and Douglas. In Corozal, 144 families have been identified as being in need of assistance in the villages of Santa Clara, San Roman, San Victor, San Narciso, Louisville, Caledonia and San Pedro.



Beneficiary registration in Hope Creek, carried out by a BRCS volunteer. Source: Belize Red Cross

Water levels have receded; detailed assessments were conducted in order to allow for proper beneficiary targeting. The assessments of the Belize Red Cross Society as well as those of other organizations, show that people in Hope Creek, Sara Wee, Valley Community, Alta Vista, Mullins River, Gales Point Manatee, Sittee River and Hopkins have suffered direct impacts from the floods, such as damages and losses to livelihoods and infrastructure.

Water systems are reported to be intact at the pump stations, but have suffered damages along delivery lines. In addition, communities supplied by rudimentary systems are reporting shortages. Contamination of surface and ground water systems remain of great concern to health officials. The health sector also warns of possible increases of water/vector born

diseases if early mitigation strategies are not employed.

## Coordination and partnerships

The BRCS is working closely with the government (through NEMO), Partner National Societies (PNS) present in Belize and NGO partners to coordinate a timely and efficient response. Emphasis is being placed on avoidance of duplication as well as on ensuring that basic human needs are being met.

The BRCS received a direct contribution of USD 25,000 from the United States Agency for International Development and the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) as well as 2,000 hygiene kits, 1,500 blankets, 500 Jerry Cans and 100 rolls of plastic sheeting.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The BRCS has made substantial progress in implementing its Plan of Action (PoA). The progress towards objectives listed below include the activities earmarked with DREF funding, and it should be noted that the BRCS is carrying out additional activities to those listed here as a result of funding secured from other donors outside the International Federation's DREF.

Safe water has been provided by BRCS. The National Society has also supported health authorities in hygiene promotion and vector control. In addition, psychosocial support has been integrated into the response, whilst training sessions on Community Based First Aid and HIV and AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) awareness activities will be conducted in the affected communities.

The BRCS continues to receive in-country support from the Norwegian Red Cross via two in-country representatives working on DIPECHO programming.

The Mexican Red Cross deployed a team of 12 volunteers trained in assessments and distributions to support the operation, made possible with funding support from the American Red Cross. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) deployed a Disaster Management delegate and a RIT member specialized in logistics to support the operation.

## Progress towards objectives

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

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

Distributions are carried out according to assessment and selection criteria that identify actual needs and vulnerable groups, and are based on careful registration and a process that controls, monitors, and records the movement of the items.

#### Activities planned:

- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.
- Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- 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.
- Develop an exit strategy.

#### Progress:

The BRCS has carried out initial family assessments with more than 380 families. Points of distribution have been established at Corozal, Orange Walk, and Stann Creek branches to carry out assessment and distribution cycles.

From 9 June to 10 July 2008, the BRCS has distributed the following relief items in the districts of Orange Walk, Cangriga and Corozal benefiting 1,878 people:

No.	Item	Quantities distributed
1	Food parcel	520
2	Blankets	298
3	Hygiene kits	396
4	Cleaning kits	100
5	Mattresses	110
6	Kitchen sets	70
7	Buckets	91
8	Tarpaulins	37
9	Jerry cans	29

Distributions to families were based on individual family assessments, to avoid that families would receive items that were not needed; therefore, not every family received the same baskets of goods.

These relief items were procured locally while others were pre-positioned stock.

#### Challenges:

One challenge the BRCS encountered whilst implementing the relief operation was the not cost-effective rental of vehicles; another challenge consisted of a lack of volunteers, as most volunteers had returned to work or school.

### Emergency Health

**Objective: The health risks of the emergency on the affected population is reduced through the provision of preventive and community-level education to 100 families (500 beneficiaries) in 3 months.**

#### Activities planned:

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, conduct clean-up campaigns in six villages;
- Distribute 1,000 treated mosquito nets to 500 families with instructions;
- Produce and broadcast public service announcements to inform about vector control;
- Distribute flyers with health information;
- Train six villages on Basic Community First Aid;

- Carry out HIV and AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) awareness activities, and stigma and discrimination and HIV and AIDS in emergencies sessions in six villages;
- Print and post 500 posters on HIV and AIDS and STI awareness;
- Distribute condoms in shelters and at HIV and AIDS, and STI information sessions;
- Integrate psycho-social support awareness sessions in cooperation with Ministry of Education.

#### **Progress:**

Condom distribution in shelters took place in various communities. In addition, distribution of mosquito nets and information on vector control was distributed. Specific numbers on distributions are still being collected and will be made available in a future report. Several Community HIV and AIDS training sessions are planned to be carried out in August 2008 in the communities of Hope Creek, Sara Wee and Mullins River. Specific dates have yet to be finalized with these communities. Printing of the Hygiene and Sanitation posters are in progress for distribution in August 2008.

In addition, together with the Ministry of Health's Psychiatric Unit, BRCS and its volunteers trained in PSP will be holding a one day camp in Hope Creek and Sara Wee in August before the start of the new school year for children from ages 5 – 12, who have been traumatized by the floods and their family. The sessions will be interactive and will be held in the form of educational games. The Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Risk Land game will be introduced. Other games and activities are being formulated in coordination with the Ministry of Health. The target is to work with a total of 250 children.

#### **Challenges:**

One lesson learned after the passing of Hurricane Dean was that Public Health programming was delayed; therefore, attention should be paid to avoid this from happening: it will be ensured that planned activities will start as soon as possible.

### **Emergency Health**

**Objective: The risk of waterborne and water related diseases will be reduced through the provision of safe water, adequate sanitation as well as hygiene promotion to 500 families (or 2,500 beneficiaries) in targeted areas as appropriate to the operation for three months.**

#### **Activities planned:**

- Assess the existing coverage with a view of ensuring availability of an adequate water supply;
- Produce safe drinking water for 500 families for one month;
- Distribute water purification tablets to 500 families for two months;
- Distribute 1,000 jerry cans for 500 families for safe storage of water;
- Print and post 1,000 posters on hygiene promotion.

#### **Progress:**

After assessment of water needs, a water and sanitation operation has been on the ground since 3 June 2008, with BRCS volunteers overseeing the operation. Up to 30 June more than 137,500 liters of water were distributed to affected communities.

**Water distributions carried out in Dandriga, pairing the BRCS with the Mexican Red Cross that came to support the BRCS's operation. Source: International Federation**

The main problem was the lack of transport to move the drinking water to the communities and the high cost of hiring trucks; however, delivery continued to the end of the month using a tank on the trailer, pulled by the BRCS Land Cruiser, and chlorine tablets were distributed in addition to education on their use carried out so that people can revert to their local water supply. The relevant Government and local authorities were informed of these activities



through a letter so that all were aware of BRCS's strategy and to better coordinate future activities.

From 11 June to 10 July, the BRCS distributed 3,020 chlorine tablets to last up to two weeks and 616 mosquito nets with written instructions as well as verbal instructions in both English and Spanish in the districts of Orange Walk, Stann Creek and Corozal. Hygiene and vector borne disease posters were distributed in Spanish and English in Stann Creek.

A full sanitation mapping of the villages of Hope Creek, Sarawee and Mullins River has been carried out. This involved the drawing of a village map and creating a database which contains a full assessment of the latrines. The survey involved identifying different levels of work needed; a stage one latrine being one which needs total construction and a stage four being one which requires only cosmetic work. In summary, 74 latrines need complete reconstruction. Prices of local materials have been gathered and costs are being calculated.

#### Challenges:

The Ministry of Health was distributing a different brand of chlorine tablets with different dosage to the ones distributed by the BRCS.

### 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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