

DREF operation



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Guyana: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRGY001
GLIDE [FL-2008-000246-GUY](#)
23 December 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.

CHF 80,000 (USD 72,507.80 or EUR 52,105) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support The Guyana Red Cross Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 5,000 beneficiaries. This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed by 23 March, 2009; a Final Report will be made available by 23 June, 2009 (three months after the end of the operation). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: In December 2008, Guyana has reached the height of the rainy season. Many communities have been flooded with three feet of water and completely covered with mud and debris. This DREF operation will focus in covering expenses for initial damage and need assessments, identifying the most affected people and providing them with essential relief items.

[<Click here for contact details,](#)
[or here to view the map of the affected area>](#)



Flooded area in Dochfour. Source: Stabroek News.

The situation

Non-stop rain began during the week of 8 December, causing approximately 25 communities (Greenfield, Dazzel-Paradise, Haslington, Foulis among others) along the East Coast of the Demerara River to flood, and parts of the capital city of Georgetown. The rains have ceased for the moment, but flood waters have been slow to recede leading to foul smells. In addition, health concerns have been identified including, skin rashes, vomiting and diarrhea, among others. Sanitation is an issue, as latrines and septic tanks are flooded. The government of Guyana has made efforts to clear and dig canals and have pumps working. Additional pumps are needed for some communities to remove stagnant water. Potable water through the main water systems has been affected, but only at the network level. Fortunately, water wells have not been affected, but cash crops farms and some livestock were affected by the floods. Persons have saved household items by raising them above the flood waters.

The Guyana Red Cross Society (GRCS) carried out rapid assessments during 17-18 December, which indicated that the main issue is water, sanitation and hygiene. The water is at knee level in some communities and six inches in others, but rises during rainfall. Government estimates that as many as 20,000 families have been affected. GRCS, based on its capacity has identified four communities with an average of 1,000 families to be assisted at this time.

Forecasts indicate further rainfall is to be expected, which will exacerbate the situation.

From 26 December 2004 to 20 January 2005 over one metre of rain fell – the most for a comparable period in over 100 years in Guyana. An international emergency appeal was launched and 150,000 flood victims were assisted by the Guyana Red Cross. Following this experience, the Guyana Red Cross Society increased focus on disaster preparedness activities. At a national level, partnerships were formed between GRCS and the Civil Defence Commission with a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) being jointly developed. Internal Red Cross response capacity was enhanced with the rolling out of standardized National Intervention Team (NIT) trainings, which increased capacity of key staff and volunteers to conduct damage and needs assessments, develop plans of action and provide direct assistance to affected communities.



In late August 2008, communities were also targeted for preparedness efforts and an USAID funded community preparedness project.

Thanks to the lessons learned from the 2005 floods operation and the subsequent preparedness activities, the government and the GRCS have been able to mobilize a much more rapid and efficient response to the current floods.

Coordination and partnerships

The International Federation is coordinating relief activities with the GRCS through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation for the Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago.

GRCS is presently coordinating relief efforts with OXFAM and UNICEF. Specifically, OXFAM and GRCS are working together to spread key health information through the media. GRCS hopes to work in coordination with UNICEF towards supplying jerry cans for the Guyana Water Inc. (GWI) to provide potable water to the affected families.

French Red Cross (FRC) is currently implementing a water and sanitation project with the GRCS. FRC will be working closely with GRCS to support its relief efforts, by providing technical support and transportation.

Two coordination committees have been established: GWI Water Sector Committee – to deal specifically with providing safe water to affected families, and spreading key health messages to the population with regards to safe water; and the Ministry of Health – to address the health needs of the affected families. GRCS is represented on both committees to avoid duplications of efforts. The GRCS also intends to support the GWI by providing jerry cans for the delivery of potable water, and coordinate with Ministry of Health to provide affected families with first aid, non-prescription pharmaceuticals and relevant health information.

GRCS is also working with the Disaster Preparedness committee in the affected areas, who provides support during assessment, and will assist during the response.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the emergency the GRCS has mobilized 30 volunteers to support its initial relief actions. Rapid needs assessments have been completed. Additional detailed assessments have been carried out in four communities during 20-21 December with an aim to start developing a beneficiary list. A National Intervention Team (NIT) workshop was held in Guyana training 18 volunteers. Several of the trained NIT's are currently assisting in the emergency.

The GRCS has an ongoing project with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) among the community. Moreover, GRCS has developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Guyana's government disaster agency (Civil Defence Commission - CDC) for disaster coordination.

GRCS will begin distribution of ½ gallon bottles of bleach, along with specific information on how to make water safe. An initial 1,000 families will be targeted. This distribution will begin after such quantity of bleach is available to procure.

The needs

The GRCS has identified the following as the most immediate needs:

- Jerry cans
- Cleaning kits (work gloves, plastic bags, disinfectant, large broom, bucket)
- Family hygiene kits
- Bleach
- Drinking water
- Emergency health

Beneficiary information will be available after 24 December; however, the communities targeted by the Guyana Red Cross Society to receive assistance will be Greenfield, Dazzel-Paradise, Haslington and Foulis.

The proposed operation

GRCS plans to provide 4,000 jerry cans, 1,000 hygiene kits and 1,000 cleaning kits. There are three possibilities of accomplishing this objective which are: locally procuring the items, dispatching the items from PADRU or implementing a cash voucher system. The DREF allocation will specifically contribute for the procurement of the aforementioned relief items once the flood waters have receded.

Once damage and need assessments are completed, a detailed Plan of Action (PoA) will be elaborated which might include additional beneficiary families and objectives, depending on the needs.

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: 1,000 families in the most affected areas of Guyana will benefit from the provision of essential relief items to recover from the effects of the emergency.

The GRCS will procure the jerry cans, cleaning kits, family hygiene kits and bleach locally. Distribution of relief items will begin today December 23rd.

Activities planned:

- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.
- Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Procure local items.
- Distribute relief supplies procured and received.
- 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.

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

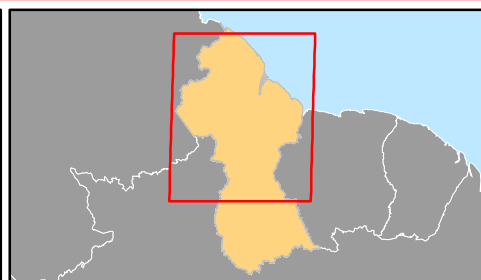
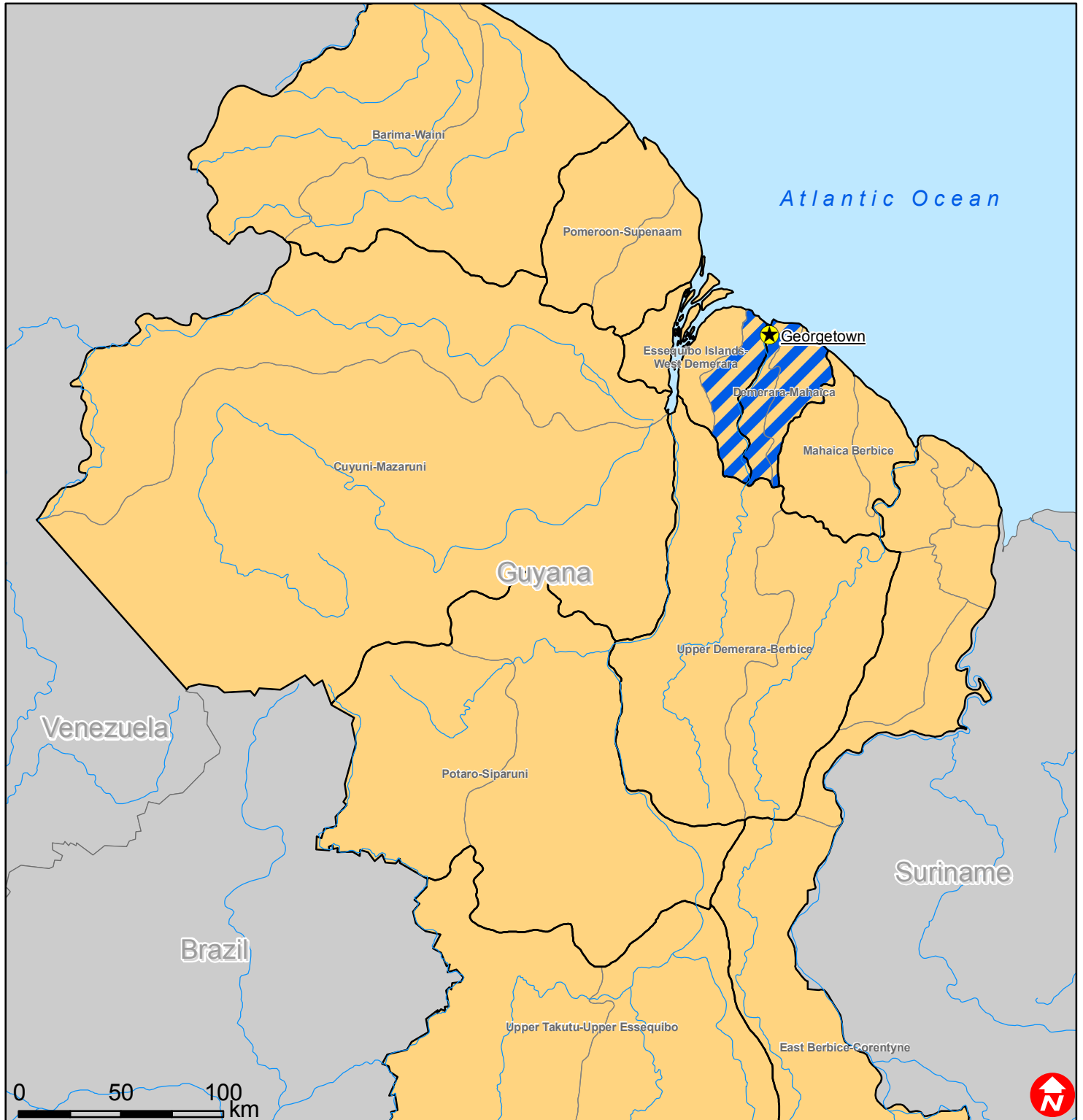
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[<Map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



Guyana Floods



- ★ Capital
- River
- Lake
- Provinces
- Districts
- ▨ Affected area