

# DREF operation



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Paraguay: Drought 2008

DREF operation n° MDRPY005  
Glide No. DR-2008-000157-PRY  
16 September 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 93,000 (USD 84,545 or EUR 57,585) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the National Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 4,500 beneficiaries. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** The Chaco region in Paraguay is suffering from cyclical drought which has been affecting the zone for the past six months. This DREF operation will be focused on providing basic emergency relief to the most affected.

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed by 16 December, 2008; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 16 March, 2009).

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

## The situation

The Central Region of Chaco (60 percent of the country) which includes the departments of Alto Paraguay, Boqueron and Presidente Hayes has been suffering from cyclical drought, gravely affecting the area for the past six months. Although it is a yearly phenomenon, this time the impact is bigger due to increasing population, poverty of indigenous people and existence of agro-industries. Noticeably, more than 60 percent of the people in this region lives below the poverty line. The extended drought has affected many basic livelihoods as human, environmental and economical capital is deteriorating, unchaining even greater problems to the population including food security and safe water.

According to the National Emergency Secretary (Secretaria Nacional de Emergencia – SNE), the reports on sanitary conditions indicate many cases of people suffering from respiratory problems, flu symptoms as well as diarrhoea due to the sudden changes in the weather and strong winds. Four children are reported dead and many are showing low performance in school due to malnutrition.

The government declared an emergency situation for a period of 90 days on 10 September 2008 in the departments of Alto Paraguay, Boqueron and Presidente Hayes. The departmental government of Boqueron reports that 6,500 families have been affected in 124 communities in the entire department. There is lack of water since the wind mill water systems are in poor conditions and hand made water wells with motors are not functioning because the motors are not working.

The Secretary also mentions that the indigenous community of Mistolar is currently without water. The people in this community have been forced to seek water in neighbouring communities in order to survive.

Other communities in Boqueron are reported to have the same problem and they do not have any type of water reserves.

The municipality of Filadelfia, located in the department of Boqueron, reports that lack of water is not as urgent as the lack of food and medicines. People are suffering from diarrhoea, fever, and flu related symptoms. A total of eight communities with approximately 1,500 families living in the most vulnerable rural area located 40 to 90 km north from Filadelfia.

The indigenous communities located in urban areas are in stable condition since most of them are skilled workers that have their own workshops, co-ops, commerce or work in construction. These communities have rainwater tanks and community wells, but will eventually need water provision due to the lack of rain.

In the department of **Alto Paraguay** local authorities have reported similar situations as in Boqueron, but forest fires have started in the northern region of the Fuerte Olimpo city. A local commissary reported six cattle ranches had been affected in the zone of Toro Pampa and San Carlos.

## Coordination and partnerships

The Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) is coordinating with SNE any assistance they might need such as equipment and the coordination of emergency response actions. The PRC's Risk Reduction programme adopted the Contingency Plan elaborated by the previous local government in Boqueron. The local government of Boqueron asked the PRC for their support in coordinating relief and response activities including support from the National Intervention Team (NIT) and reactivated the Centre Emergency Committee (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia – COE).

The SNE has elaborated a plan of action to respond to this emergency, titling it "El Chaco needs us" (El Chaco necesita de nosotros) and is coordinating the delivery of food items for 18,247 families with different actors involved.

The government of Boqueron has been providing water in some communities and is repairing some of the damaged water systems. It has proposed a preliminary work plan for the emergency which is divided in two phases: 1) Provide emergency response to the most vulnerable, 2) Reactivation of all departmental emergency committees including all sectors, amongst which the Armed Forces, XVII Sanitary Region, the National Police, Paraguayan Red Cross, and Fire departments.

The municipality of Filadelfia is repairing the water systems in the communities. The chiefs of police will have a meeting in order to address the upcoming situation with the forest fires.

The Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid of the European Commission (DG ECHO), USAID and the Finnish Red Cross are interested in providing assistance to this emergency operation.

The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the South America Regional Representation are communicating with and providing support to the National Society. An alert for a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specializing in water and sanitation has been emitted for immediate deployment to Paraguay to provide support to the National Society.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

As of the onset of the emergency, the Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) activated the local and central response teams. A National Intervention Team (NIT) was deployed along with a volunteer trained as a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specialized in information and reporting to support the local branch in Boqueron. The team deployed obtained information from the local authorities and from damage and need assessments performed in the field.

The local branches have been working actively in management risk processes at a departmental level through the Preparation and Risk Reduction Multi-threat Project financed by ECHO (DIPECHO-V) which is being implemented since the beginning of the year. The branches are currently activating all processes with actors involved as established within the framework of the project.

## The needs

The Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) has identified that the most immediate needs are food items and safe water.

## The proposed operation

### Relief distributions (food items)

**Objective: To assist 900 of the most vulnerable families in the departments of Boqueron with humanitarian aid consisting of supplementary food items.**

Every month each family will receive a 47 kg food parcel to the affected communities in Boquerón for a period of three months. The food parcels are supplementary food rations as denominated by the Sphere Project. The following chart shows the food items each food parcel will contain:

Items
Rice
Flour
Noodles
Sugar
Beans
Salt
Tea
Cooking Oil

#### Activities planned:

- Revision of affected communities;
- Selection of supplier;
- Visits to each beneficiary community;
- Procurement of food items;
- Packaging of supplementary food parcels;
- Elaborate a census and compare data provided by the government;
- Organize teams of volunteers;
- Organize communication with community leaders to notify distributions;
- Distribution of food parcels to each family (each head of family has to sign).

### Water and sanitation

**Objective: The risk of waterborne and water related diseases has been reduced through the provision of safe water.**

A RIT specialized in water and sanitation will be providing his expertise to determine the best course of action towards the re-establishment of an adequate supply of safe drinking water and irrigation systems for farmers.

#### Activities planned:

- Visits to the affected municipalities;
- Coordination between the PADRU Water and Sanitation expert and PRC technicians;
- Complete a thorough damage assessment in 94 communities;
- Elaborate a report on assessments gathered in the field;
- Deliver a status report to the communities about the repaired water systems;
- Seek funding to implement proposed course of action.

## 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

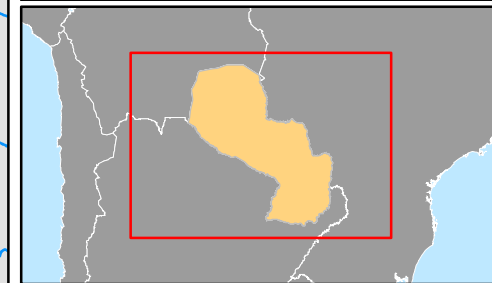
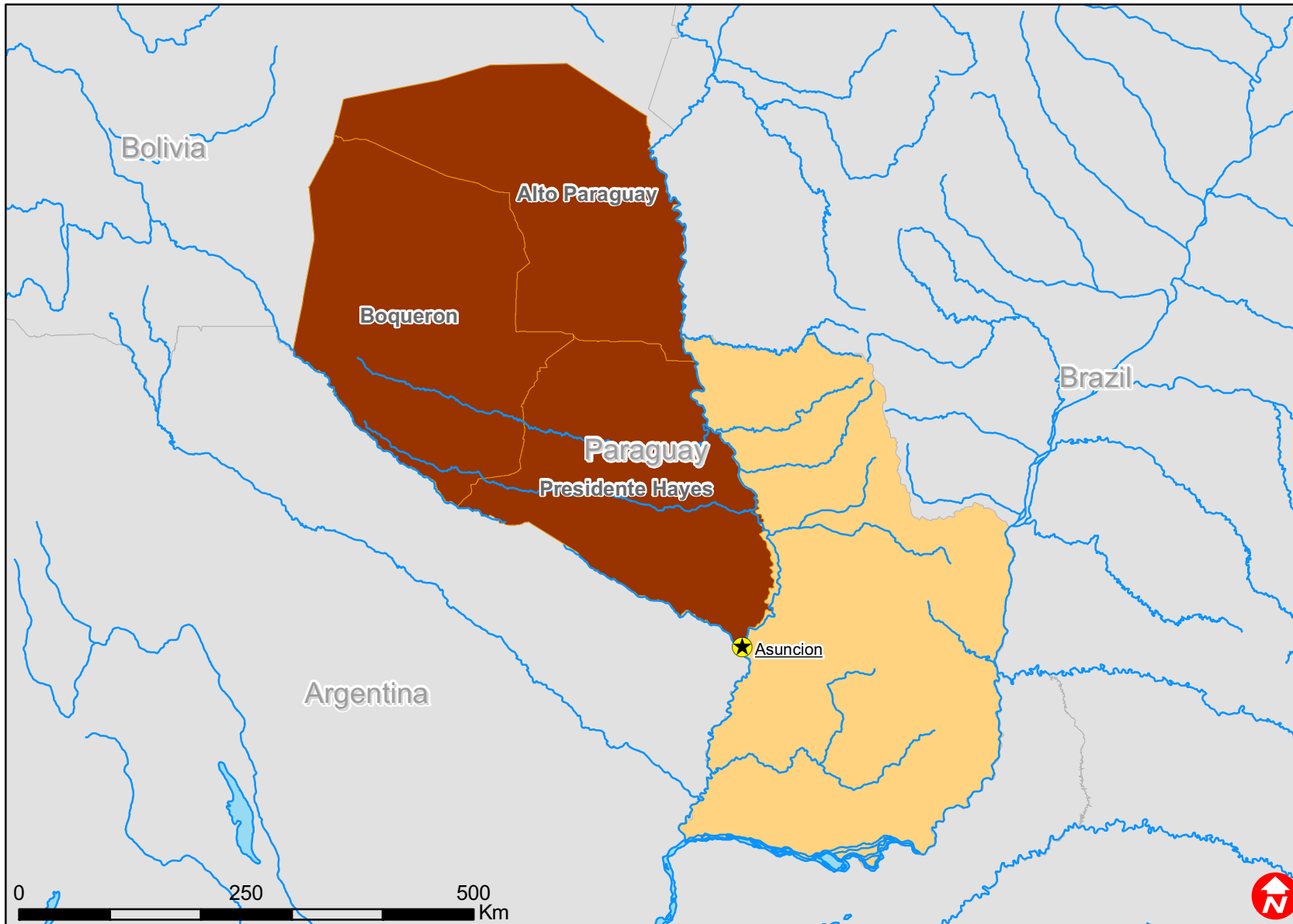
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**[<Map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)**



# Paraguay: Drought



The Center of Chaco region (60 percent of the country) which includes the departments of Alto Paraguay, Boqueron and Presidente Hayes has been suffering from cyclical drought devastating the area for the past six months. Although it is a yearly phenomenon, this time the impact is bigger due to increasing population, poverty of indigenous people and existence of agro-industries. Noticeably, more than 60 percent of the people in this region lives below the poverty line. The extended drought has deteriorated all basic livelihoods unchaining even greater problems to the population including food security and safe water.

 Affected departments