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Emergency Appeal Operations Update Chile: Forest Fires

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency Appeal Operations Update No. 1: MDRCL013	GLIDE n° WF-2016-00138-CHL
Date of issue: 16 March 2017	Time period covered by this update: 15 January 2017 to 16 February 2017
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Operation start date: 10 February 2017	Expected timeframe: 12 months (the operation end date is 10 February 2018)
Overall operational budget: 528,860 Swiss francs (CHF)	Current appeal coverage: 167,004 Swiss francs (CHF) – 32 % Click here to view the donor response
Number of people affected: 7,157 people	Number of families to be assisted: 2,000 people (400 families)
Presence of the National Red Cross Society (N° of volunteers, staff, branches): The Chilean Red Cross has 11 regional committees, 185 branches at the national level, 3,000 volunteers and 22 staff members.	
Red Cross and Red Crescent partners actively involved in the operation: International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and German Red Cross	
Other organizations actively involved in the operation: Ministry of Interior and Public Security (ONEMI for its acronym in Spanish), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Regional Governments, National Forest Corporation (CONAF), <i>Un Techo para Chile</i> , the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)-Chile, Caritas, Chilean Humanitarian Assistance Network (RAHCh), International Humanitarian Network (RIH), Fire Brigade, United Nations United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team Andean Relief Corps. European Union Civil Protection team. Several teams of firefighters to support the ongoing response; teams from the following countries have been deployed: Argentina, France, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela and Panama	

Summary:

Since 15 January 2017, Chile has been affected by a series of forest fires, ranging from the Santiago Metropolitan region to the Maule region. These fires have been increasing as the days pass and continue despite fire fighters, brigade members and volunteers from different institutions' efforts to extinguish them; all the efforts in the affected zone have been dedicated to containment in the areas that are closest to population centres, as well as mitigation actions and the extinguishment of the fires. To date there have been more than 595,042 hectares of land affected by the fires, including forests, native vegetation and agricultural crops.

It should be noted that the president of the Republic instructed the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security to decree a constitutional state of emergency, a state of catastrophe and to simultaneously declare the provinces

of Colchagua and Cardenal Caro in the O'Higgins region, as well as for the Maule and Biobío regions as natural disaster areas. In addition, the constitutional state of emergency remains in effect for the township of Valparaíso, in the Valparaíso region.

To date, eleven people have died (three CONAF Brigade members, two members of the Chilean national police force, two firefighters and three civilians). Furthermore, the severity of the effects on livelihoods (agricultural and livestock) continues to increase as the forest fires have become fires in urban zones, affecting a large number of civilians as people have been evacuated, displaced and are staying in the collective centres.

Region	Deaths	Injuries	Evacuated	Placed in collective centres	Damage to homes		
					Destroyed	Major damage	Minor damage
Valparaíso	0	3	5	0	2	0	0
Metropolitan	0	2	12	0	5	1	0
O'Higgins	0	2	191	0	95	0	26
Maule	9	0	4,848	432	1,273	0	0
Biobío	2	9	2,412	0	380	243	168
Araucanía	0	0	3	0	5	0	0
Overall total	11	16	7,471*	432	1,760	244	194

*The number of evacuees changed on a daily basis in each region; however, the overall figure was remained the same.

Coordination and associations

The National Society has been coordinating with other organizations such as the Ministry of Interior and Public Security (ONEMI for its acronym in Spanish), Caritas, the United Methodist Relief Committee-Chile (UMCOR), the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), World Vision, Search and Rescue (SAR), Greenpeace and other members of the Chilean Humanitarian Aid Network (RAHCh for its acronym in Spanish). The various sectors working in the intervention areas have been organized, and they have shared information regarding the preliminary assessments conducted in the affected zones.

The German Red Cross, through its delegation in Lima, Peru, travelled to Chile in order to finalize the details for the presentation of the work areas and the joint financing that will be carried out over the next three months; the Chilean Red Cross has begun to implement these actions in the zones affected by forest fires in the Sixth and Seventh Regions¹, maintaining the general intervention areas that the National Society has identified as priorities since the fires first appeared in January 2017.

One of the most essential tasks required is joint and collaborative work in these areas to provide greater coverage of the affected families and people whose employment and/or businesses have been affected by fires in the regions. In addition, greater accompaniment will be provided to these work areas that have been planned for the appeal, with the goal of engaging in complementary actions instead of duplicating them.

The IFRC, through its Regional Office for the Americas, has continuously monitored and supported the actions implemented by the Chilean Red Cross, and it has also provided technical support on the development of the appeal and the action lines that the National Society presented, which were complemented by the following work areas:

- Mobilization of an IFRC disaster management coordinator to provide support on the writing of the appeal's emergency plan of action.
- Mobilization of two General Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members (although it was not contemplated in the appeal, an American Red Cross staff member was also deployed as a RIT).
- Monitoring and accompaniment were also provided during the initial implementation of the appeal's actions.

¹ A possible extension to the BioBío region is being considered; this will depend upon the field assessments that will be delivered in the coming days, as the fires are advancing at a slower pace, but they are still damaging homes.

Summary of the current response.

Summary of the Operating National Society's work

- The deployed IFRC regional disaster management coordinator met with the Chilean Red Cross to evaluate the first phase of the appeal.
- A fundraising campaign has been launched by the Chilean Red Cross (ChRC), and the ChRC received additional information about the Ammodo system.
- Donation points have been opened in several regions, which are being organized by ChRC branches and regional committees.
- First Aid services have been provided in the regions to firefighters and brigade members as well as to affected communities.
- Assessment teams from the O'Higgins, Maule, BioBío and Araucanía regions have been mobilized to identify the affected population's needs.
- One thousand emergency rations (food) were purchased with the funds that have been collected so far; a total of 300 of these rations were distributed to the response teams working in fire zones.
- The DHL Rapid Response Team arrived in Chile, and they integrated themselves into the support provided by the Chilean Red Cross by conducting field visits to perform an initial assessment on warehouse management, followed by a coordination assessment.
- The Chilean Red Cross has mobilized technical human resources for accompaniment actions with the branches and regional committees located in the affected areas.
- The damage assessment carried out by the technical staff deployed in the field helped identify that there had not been a coordinated response from public mental health agencies and members of the Humanitarian Network of Chile; RAHCh, professional and volunteer psychologists who arrived by their own means to the area participated in the assessment.
- The Chilean Red Cross has distributed N95-type masks with filters (24,000), first aid supplies, jerry cans (900), psychosocial support (PSS) kits (2) and shovels (16) in two regions in the country, thereby providing an immediate response to the affected communities' needs.
- Approximately 83 volunteers provided first aid, primary health care, damage assessment, regional logistical coordination in the affected zone, in addition to 132 volunteers at the national level, who participated in donation collection efforts.
- From 10 to 16 February, a ChRC disaster risk volunteer and two IFRC General RITs accompanied local and regional information gathering efforts for the National Society's cash transfer programme (CTP) intervention to gain an insight into the situations and complement the information-gathering actions that are being funded by the German Red Cross.
- The CTP intervention has multi-purpose effects, given the high level of losses in income-generating activities in the fruit, agricultural and livestock sectors; moreover, in cases where owners do not have insurance, CTP could lessen the impact on the affected population.
- The results of the field visits in both regions were analyzed by the technical team to establish dates for the implementation of the areas outlined in the appeal, along with the areas that were complemented with bilateral funds from the German Red Cross.
- The actions carried out in the affected zones include the provision of psychological first aid, first aid and other water and sanitation work at the same time as the distribution of food, water, containers, hygiene kits and other basic items that have been delivered to the affected families. Furthermore, a number of unexpected donations have been received at each ChRC donation point across the country. Approximately 150 families (in Valparaíso, O'Higgins, Maule and BioBío) have received direct assistance through the distribution of basic items.
- The following actions were implemented as part of the cross-cutting intervention actions by National Society volunteers in the O'Higgins and Maule regions:
 - Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion.
 - Psychosocial support.
 - First aid.
 - Needs assessment (divided into the different livelihoods sectors that have been affected).

Operational implementation

Health and care

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS											
Outcome 1: Immediate psychosocial health risks have been reduced and first aid has been provided to 400 families.	N° of assisted families											
Output 1.1: The affected population has received psychological first aid care.	N° of people treated N° of prevention posts deployed N° of trained volunteers participating in PSS activities											
Activities Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Provide first aid and psychosocial support to the community.												
Psychological first aid workshops for CRCh volunteers.												
Replenishment of psychological first aid materials that are used in recreational activities.												
Output 1.2: First aid care is provided to people affected by the disaster.	N° of people who receive first aid care N° of relief posts set up and running to provide first aid care											
Activities Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Deployment of mobile first aid posts												
Deployment of volunteers with first aid training												
Deployment of ambulances												
Replenishment of first aid supplies to branches												

Achievements to date

Due to the complexity of this emergency, which quickly changed from a forest fire to a national catastrophe with loss of life and serious effects on families and their livelihoods, interventions have been undertaken with volunteers to support areas such as:

- Psychosocial support for volunteers and community interventions.
- Psychological first aid clinics were established for the period of 26 January to 16 February 2017 in the locality of Los Aromos; these mobile clinics were closed on 16 February due to the general clean-up that was occurring and it was no longer needed as families had already left the area.

Some of the mechanisms that are currently being used include the donation of items for games and recreational activities to engage the affected population in physical and mental activities that lower their stress levels.

Psychosocial care from 21 January to 16 February 2017.

Region	PSS volunteer induction	Community care actions	Children	Adults	Responders
O'Higgins	32	34*			1
Maule	21	44 (15 medical procedures that were attended to by a psychologist)	10	17	2

*Updating of the registry

- An ambulance has been mobilized from the head office to support the regional health service, which has exceeded its response capacity in some parts of the region that are difficult to access.

Ambulance movements				
Region	Date	Sector	Type of care	Quantity
O'Higgins	21 to 26 January	Four sectors in the Region	First aid and transfers	Approximately 40
	12 February	Nilahue Alto (medical procedure)	Medical	67 people attended
Maule	4 to 6 February	Constitution	Basic	Currently being verified

* This assistance is not disaggregated by gender; this will be verified statistically.

Challenges

The main challenge that was faced in providing pre-hospital care, and especially psychosocial support, was not being able to gain access to each affected area due to the risk that volunteers could have faced because the fires had not been extinguished at that time. This meant that CRCh volunteers had to develop other intervention mechanisms with the sole focus on equipping the collective centres and training volunteers so that they were prepared for the intervention when it was safe to enter the zone. The lack of coordination in the provision of health care and psychosocial services in the zones was caused by the loss of the Family Centres that have been fully destroyed by the fires as well as the fact it was the holiday time and the staff members who update official databases and have extensive knowledge of the affected communities were on vacation, making it difficult to access information.

One of the difficulties that was faced, was accessing communities and families, given that they had to be moved to collective centres, the homes of relatives or short-term accommodation that was rented with government resources or other types of funds, which made coordination, compartmentalization and the targeting of beneficiaries more complicated.

Another challenge that was faced in the field, was the lack of technical volunteers in the areas that needed intervention, as well as it being during the holidays in Chile, as many of the volunteers involved in community work were not in these areas at that time.

Proposed new activities

There are no changes to the [emergency plan of action \(EPoA\)](#).

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS											
Outcome 2: 400 families reduce their immediate risk to water-related diseases in the regions of O'Higgins and Maule.	N° of assisted families											
Output 2.1: The affected population has implements for storing and using drinking water.	N° of jerry cans distributed											
Activities	Month											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Identification and registration of families												
Distribution of 800 jerry cans to 400 families (2 per family)												
Distribution of 400 hygiene kits												
Output 2.2: At least 400 families in the regions of O'Higgins and Maule receive key hygiene and sanitation messages and practices	N° of families participating in hygiene promotion activities											

Identification of possible actions that need to be implemented, such as community brigades, how to build fire breaks and how to increase prevention during the cleaning of their homes through the "Prepared Family methodology". The ChRC also identified possible actions to implement such as community brigades focused on reducing the risks of the families affected by the emergency.
Challenges
This does not apply to the first phase, as it is necessary to strengthen voluntary work in order to commence these community actions.
Changes to the action plan
Changes were made to the implementation dates due to the rapid nature of the emergency and the lack of trained regional staff that are required for these interventions (the DRR training sessions were reallocated to the four and seven month of the operation).

Strengthening of National Society capacity

OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS											
Outcome 5: National Society capacity is strengthened in the provincial branches involved in the fire emergency.	N° of branches involved in development processes N° of volunteers trained and participating in response teams											
Output: 5.1 Evaluations conducted in branches	N° of branches evaluated N° of branch strengthening plans developed											
Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Month												
One Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification (BOCAC) workshop												
One Well-Prepared National Society (WPNS) evaluation												
One strengthening of the branches' organizational development plan workshop												
Output 5.2 100 volunteers trained to provide effective response according to National Society contingency plans.	No. of workshops for Chilean Red Cross No. of trainings for Chilean Red Cross											
Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Month												
Workshop on strengthening of local contingency and response plans												
One General National Intervention Team (NIT) training workshop												
Damage Analysis and Needs Assessment (DANA) training for volunteers												
Achievements to date	ChRC staff members have carried out a basic induction of volunteers, who have accompanied the needs assessments in different zones. The induction was coordinated following the planning of the National Society's actions. One of the participating branches already had a needs assessment capacity, allowing it to carry out its own induction of local volunteers and begin to conduct family surveys in the affected zone.											
Challenges	Need for permanent regional support for needs assessment given that the Maule region lacks volunteers trained in how to conduct needs and/or damage assessments.											
Proposed new activities	There are no changes to the emergency plan of action (EPoA) .											

Design and implementation of CTP according to area characteristics													
Conduct satisfaction survey													
Establish mechanism for lodging complaints for the beneficiaries and monitoring of the CTP													
Achievements to date.													
<p>The selection process for the operations coordinator has been completed: this person will start the position in March 2017.</p> <p>Identification and selection of beneficiaries: one of the areas where the most progress has been made is the identification of beneficiaries. Teams were sent directly to the communities in order to identify individuals for interviews and see if they meet the selection criteria. The teams will interview 45 per cent of the beneficiary families from 22 February to 12 March.</p> <p>CTP design and implementation for each area of intervention: The multipurpose design that was planned at the outset will remain in place because it has facilitated the verification of community needs in different areas in the field.</p>													
Challenges													
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to communities. - Distance between each community. - Difficulties that the communities will face in restoring the health of their soil following the fires. - The intervention in the communities has been decreasing in intensity in the first few months of the operation, which has created a sense of abandonment in the communities and resulted in psychosocial effects that are observed in the population. - Psychosocial work is fundamental for the progress of communities in terms of integrating and having a sense of belonging in the places where they have been resettled since most affected people face this issue; this needs to occur in coordination with the implementation of the cash transfer programme and requires cross-cutting work between organizations; both of which could prove to be challenging. 													
Proposed new activities													
Since the hiring of the operations coordinator was delayed, this activity was extended by one month.													

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All IFRC 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 the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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