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## Focus report

# Disaster and Crisis Management – Heads of Emergency Operations (HEOps)

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**MAA00040**

**20 December 2012**

**This report covers the  
period July to December  
2012**

*Photo: Psychosocial activities organized for displaced children in Jaramana near Damascus, Syria. Two HEOps contributed to the regional support operations linked to the humanitarian crisis in Syria. Homam Azzam/SARC*



### In brief

Following the establishment of the HEOps tool in early 2012, the period covered by this report saw the three incumbents undertake both a range of critically important deployments and various 'peace-time' activities. The deployments undertaken were a variety of complex emergencies, involving Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Nigeria. These deployments helped shape the operational response in the countries mentioned (i.e. the creation of an emergency appeal for Syria, one for its surrounding countries and one for Nigeria) and the start-up of a cash transfer programme in Jordan. In addition to the deployments, support was given to a variety of initiatives and actions with global significance: the development of the Global Disaster Response SOPs, the Federation's ERU & FACT team leader training's curriculum revision and first course roll-out and the Principles and Rules revision process. At the time this report is being finalised (December 2012) the HEOps are focusing on the further development of the tool by designing a mentoring and coaching concept for future HEOps in 2013 and beyond. On the financial side, all deployments have been cost-recovered as per the original idea at the onset of the project.

### Background

The IFRC Secretariat has long recognized the need for high level strategic leadership particularly for large response operations. The rationale for the creation of the HEOps pool and roster has been supported by the findings and recommendations of a number of recent operational reviews and evaluations, namely the increasing frequency and complexity of major disasters requiring more sophisticated strategic leadership and coordination roles and the need for greater predictability and continuity in providing quality operational leadership support to National Societies affected. The HEOps project was developed by the Geneva IFRC Surge Senior Officers and British, Canadian and American Red Cross representatives. The project was presented to and supported by the Disaster Management Working Group, the Federation's Zone and Geneva Secretariat offices as well as National Societies, many of whom have contributed to the costs and roll out the pilot initiative for the first three years.

A rigorous recruitment process was undertaken leading to three HEOps commencing their assignments in April 2012. All three were brought to Geneva for a detailed two-week long induction programme which involved meeting and being briefed by all internal departments relevant to their responsibilities. The induction programme also included meetings with the ICRC and key inter-agency partners such as UNOCHA and ACAPS. As a way of introducing and promoting this new global IFRC response tool, a HEOps video was produced and is available on the IFRC's website or via the following link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piNPs0EnSkw>

## Operational and peace-time tasks and deployments

**During the period under review the three HEOps have undertaken the following operational deployments:**

- Birte Hald was deployed on three occasions between May and October to reinforce the MENA Zone in its support to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and NS in the surrounding countries. Her presence critically strengthened IFRC operations, helped develop an appeal for Syria and a separate preliminary appeal for the surrounding countries (Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq)
- Jean-Pierre Taschereau was deployed in November to further support the MENA Zone, with the task of helping to consolidate the regional Appeal for Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. He was also tasked with defining and initiating a cash transfer programme for Syrian refugees in host communities in Jordan. He was involved in the initial discussions around the Jordanian Red Crescent's intentions to take on the management of a possible new camp for Syrian refugees and he took part in a joint assessment mission with the Egyptian RC and the ICRC after the attack on Gaza in November
- HEOp's Steve McAndrew was deployed to Nigeria in November to manage the country's Floods operations, which had been supported by a FACT deployment in October. Given that the IFRC does not have a permanent representation with NRC and considering the complex environment a HEOps deployment was justified. Steve will remain in Nigeria until mid-January 2013, to oversee adequate longer-term staff is recruited and the necessary systems are in place to ensure the appropriate implementation of programmes. It is significant to point out that the Nigeria Appeal has one of the highest coverage rates in the Zone, at 98% coverage

To date, all HEOps' deployments (MENA and Nigeria) have been cost recovered; a good indication of the sustainability of the system.

**In addition to the individual operational tasks described above, the three HEOps have been involved in and continue to collaborate on a number of peace-time tasks including:**

- Steve McAndrew facilitated a meeting on the Principles and Rules revision process with Spanish speaking NS in the Americas Zone

### **Innovation and initiatives: collaborating with the wider humanitarian community**

The IFRC recognizes the need to ensure that our response systems and mechanisms are compatible with those of other agencies. To this end, the IFRC continues to develop systems and tools that strengthen our capacity to respond. These systems and tools complement the IASC Transformative Agenda's focus on three key areas of leadership, coordination and accountability

- The HEOps provides strengthened leadership capacities, and improved strategic planning;
- Global IFRC Disaster Response SOP's will ensure a rapid and unified response and enable strengthened accountability through a defined IFRC operational framework;
- The continued improvement of our Global Surge Capacity - Field Assessment and Coordination Teams (FACT), Emergency Response Units (ERU) and Federation Early Recovery Surge Teams (FERST) - strengthens coordination, improved needs assessments with development of new tools and guidance for emergency assessment in collaboration with ACAPS, information management, planning, early recovery, monitoring and evaluation for a more effective and strategic response.

- Birte Hald also co-facilitated meetings on the Principles and Rules revision process: with English speaking NS in the Americas Zone and with the NS in the West Coast, Sahel and Central African regions. A similar exercise for South Asia was cancelled due to visa issues
- All three have provided considerable input into the revision of the FACT/ERU Team Leader Training, which was held in Finland (a separate report on this pilot Team Leader training will be published by the end of 2012/early 2013). This training is viewed as a primary source of candidates for the mentoring and coaching aspects of the HEOps role. At least one HEOp's will attend and co-facilitate this training in the future unless there is a need for all to be deployed to emergency operations
- Steve McAndrew facilitated a Benelux Relief ERU training in Belgium and a NDRT & delegate relief training in Haiti
- Birte Hald provided feed back on the content review process for the IFRC – TATA/TISS DM on-line certificate course
- Steve McAndrew represented the IFRC in the Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism Tool in Phase 1 development process

**Lastly, key peace-time work is undertaken to further the development of the HEOps tool:**

- The HEOps continue to contribute to the development of IFRC's Global Disaster response SOPs
- The development of the HEOps SOPs are now at final draft stage and will be reviewed in early 2013
- A detailed Concept Paper on the mentoring and coaching aspect of their role has been developed.

The HEOps are now developing the concept around:

- Defining candidate criteria and a selection process (panel interviews, tests, exercises)
- Defining the 'development path vision' for 12 months including tailor-made training/induction and field-based activities
- Defining how a HEOps mentor will be selected to match the candidates profile and mentoring needs
- Defining appropriate on-the-job learning tasks, i.e. DM support activities (Global and Regional)
- Establishing monitoring of mentoring modalities – remote or otherwise
- Establishing a system for measuring progress and certifying when a candidate is deployable

It is foreseen that four future HEOps candidates will be identified and commence their development track by the end of the first quarter of 2013. Further information on this will be shared widely at the beginning of 2013, requesting the submission of candidates against the criteria developed.

## How we work

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 Humanitarian 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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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

Find out more on [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

### **Contact information**

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