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# Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) Belarus: Extreme winter condition

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**DREF operation n° MDRBY001**  
**GLIDE n° CW-2012-000006-BLR**  
**1<sup>st</sup> February 2012**

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) 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 emergency response. 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.



Belarus Red Cross assists homeless hit hard by the sudden onset of extremely cold weather  
Photo: Belarus Red Cross, Minsk

**CHF 46,072 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support Belarus Red Cross in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,500 homeless people throughout Belarus. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** Due to the sudden onset of extremely cold weather, many Belarusians' livelihoods already hit hard by the crisis have come under extreme pressure. The severe winter has in particular increased vulnerability of the homeless. The Belarus Red Cross has undertaken to respond immediately by meeting their basic needs such as hot meals, warm clothing and blankets.

This operation is expected to be implemented over two months, and will therefore be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012).

[<click here for the DREF budget; here for contact details; here to view the map of the affected area>](#)

## The situation

Freezing weather has killed dozens of people in Central and Eastern Europe over the past few days and temperatures are set to drop even further according to weather forecasts.

The second half of January 2012 has been marked by severe frosts and snowfalls, for which many of Belarus citizens turned to be unprepared. Only in Minsk, during the past week-end, over 30 people have been delivered to hospitals with various traumas like frostbite and hypothermia. Overall, it is estimated that more than 100 people have been affected, and a number of them are kept in hospitals in a serious condition.

On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> February temperatures are expected to drop down to 25-29 degrees Celsius below zero, and in some places to 30-32 degrees. The sudden onset of extremely cold weather is expected to continue throughout February. People are being affected both by extreme frosts and black ice.

The most affected regions and cities are the following:

- Vitebsk region (Vitebsk, Miory, Glubokoe, Polotsk, Novopolotsk and Postavy)
- Minsk region (Minsk city and Stolbtsy, Molodechno, Borisov, Zhodino, Slutsk)
- Gomel region (Gomel city and Rechista, Zhlobin, Mozyr)
- Grodno region (Lida, Slonim, Volkovysk)
- Brest and Mogilev regions

## Coordination and partnerships

From the very beginning of this emergency Belarus Red Cross branches have been in close contact with local authorities and emergency response units of the Ministry of Emergencies, who provide the National Society with hands-on information on the evolving situation and the needs of the people. The Red Cross also works closely with the media to raise public awareness on prevention of traumas and chilblains.

The IFRC representation in Belarus and the National Society cooperate closely in assessing the needs and the response to this emergency. The operation will be coordinated by Belarus Red Cross branch chairpersons in their areas of responsibility. Red Cross volunteers will be responsible for delivering the emergency assistance.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Over the last years certain progress has been made towards improving the National Society's capacity for effective disaster management. Partly this has been achieved through cooperation between the Vitebsk branch of the Belarus Red Cross and the Visaginas branch of the Lithuanian Red Cross. The Red Cross branch in Vitebsk has two volunteer teams of 20 persons trained by Lithuanian and Norwegian Red Cross in first aid and psychological support skills, as well as the methodology for tracing people lost in the forest.

With the support of Austrian Red Cross and IFRC provided in 2011, Belarus Red Cross has progressed quite well in developing its psychosocial support capacities. A dedicated team of trained volunteers and staff in Minsk city work every day to ensure that the most vulnerable blast victims and their families have access to the full range of psychosocial and other vital services. This team will take part in the proposed action to help the most vulnerable cope with extremely cold weather.

Belarus Red Cross regional branches also have a number of staff trained in first aid, as well as an experience of responding to winter frosts and spring floods in 2010-2011. Each regional branch has a basic stock of relief items, including tents, clothing, and tea, ready for distributions in case of disaster. The National Society has established an emergency response fund however due to recent devaluation and hyperinflation processes in Belarus, the fund has dropped down by almost 75 percent.

Belarus Red Cross sees its role in assisting the people affected by severe frosts, with a strong focus on the homeless. On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 Belarus Red Cross headquarters sent out a letter to its regional branches urging to assist people affected by frosts by setting up distribution posts with hot drinks, meals, warm clothing and blankets. The action will be partly supported by the Belarus Red Cross emergency fund (approx. CHF 5,000) however DREF assistance for CHF 46,072 is also required to cover the related needs.

Belarus Red Cross now works closely with homes for temporary shelter for homeless people and sanitary centres reaching out to the target group, assessing their needs and establishing for the basis for the future

operation. So far 15 Red Cross staff members and 100 Red Cross volunteers have been engaged in the assessment and immediate response.

In March a workshop will be held for Red Cross staff and volunteers to share best practices and lessons learned, to update the National Society contingency plan and further improve its disaster management capacity.

## The needs

Based on the preliminary assessment made so far, Belarus Red Cross has prepared a plan of action to assist 1,500 homeless people around the country with hot meals, warm clothing and blankets.

The table below lists the needs of 1,500 homeless people:

Item	No. of units
Hot meals (porridge, sandwiches, canned meat or fish, tea)	1,500
Blankets	1,500
Winter clothes (hats, scarves, mittens, socks)	1,500

Table 1: Most urgent needs among the affected population as identified by the Belarus Red Cross

In addition, some 50,000 dwellers of large cities need to be supported by distributions of hot tea and shelter offered in Red Cross tents.

## The proposed operation

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
<b>Objective: Providing emergency assistance (basic food and clothing items) to approximately 1,500 homeless and other vulnerable people during a two month period</b>
<b>Output: The nutritional and winterisation/health needs of 1,500 homeless people are met during the period of harsh winter frosts</b>
<b>Activities planned:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local procurement of emergency items</li><li>• Local procurement of three power generators and barrels for water heating.</li><li>• Preparation of distribution plan</li><li>• Setting up Red Cross distribution points and tents for 1,500 homeless and 50,000 city dwellers</li><li>• Reaching potential beneficiaries to inform them about assistance available at the Red Cross</li><li>• Distribution of emergency items by RC branches and their volunteers through the established distribution points.</li><li>• Coordination with local emergency departments and local authorities.</li><li>• Monitoring and reporting</li></ul>

The Red Cross operation will focus on providing support to homeless people who are most in need of this assistance, but also city inhabitants will be supported according to their rising needs.

The Belarus Red Cross Headquarters, in close cooperation with IFRC Country Representation, will monitor the progress and provide the necessary technical expertise. Visibility of the work of the Red Cross volunteers will be ensured during the operation through the local media. Weekly operation updates will be sent to the IFRC Europe Zone Office.

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## Contact information

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

- **IFRC Office in Belarus:** Zlatko Kovac, IFRC Representative for Belarus and Ukraine, Minsk, Belarus; phone +375 17 223 34 46; fax: +375 17 223 90 60; e-mail: [zlatko.kovac@ifrc.org](mailto:zlatko.kovac@ifrc.org)
- **IFRC Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Disaster Management & Shelter; office phone:+36 1 8884 500; email: [alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org](mailto:alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org)
- **In Geneva:** Christine South, Operations Support, Phone: +41.22.730.4529, email: [christine.south@ifrc.org](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org)



[Click here](#)

1. To see the DREF operation Budget [below](#)
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## 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 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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**Saving lives, changing minds.**



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 non-violence and peace.
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# DREF OPERATION

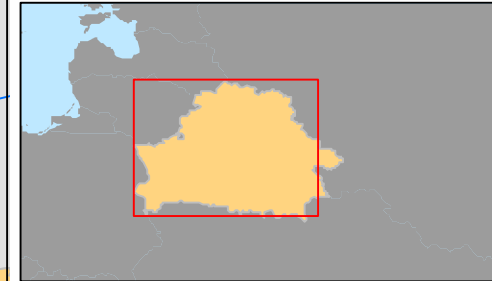
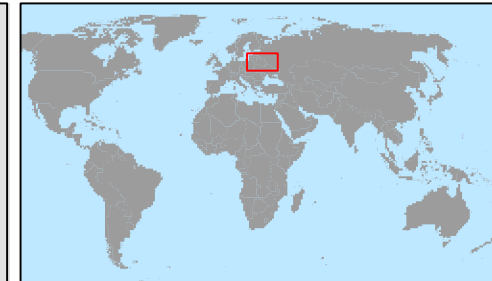
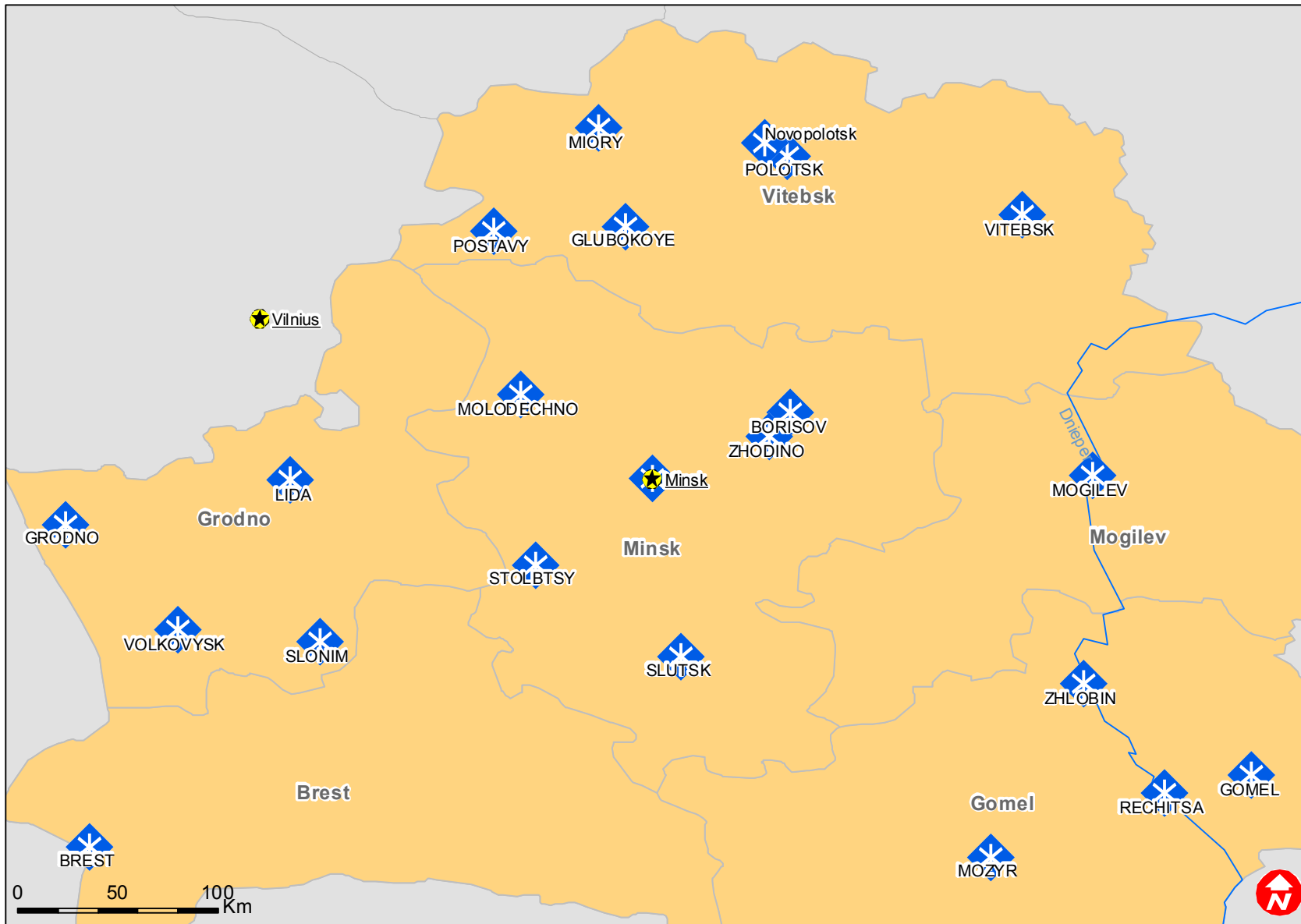
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MDRBY001 Belarus: Extreme Winter Condition

<b>Budget Group</b>	<b>DREF Grant Budget CHF</b>
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	16,600
Food	5,860
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Ustensils & Tools	6,650
Other Supplies & Services	0
Emergency Response Units	
Cash Disbursements	
<b>Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES</b>	<b>29,110</b>
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles Purchase	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	0
<b>Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>0</b>
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	1,000
Transport & Vehicle Costs	
Logistics Services	
<b>Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE</b>	<b>1,000</b>
International Staff	
National Staff	2,500
National Society Staff	1,950
Volunteers	
<b>Total PERSONNEL</b>	<b>4,450</b>
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
<b>Total CONSULTANTS &amp; PROFESSIONAL FEES</b>	<b>0</b>
Workshops & Training	4,500
<b>Total WORKSHOP &amp; TRAINING</b>	<b>4,500</b>
Travel	2,200
Information & Public Relations	600
Office Costs	
Communications	1,000
Financial Charges	400
Other General Expenses	
Shared Support Services	
<b>Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>4,200</b>
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	2,812
<b>Total INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>2,812</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>46,072</b>



# Belarus: Extreme winter conditions



 Most affected places