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## DREF operation update Belarus: Extreme winter condition

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**DREF operation n° MDRBY001**  
**GLIDE n° CW-2012-000006-BLR**  
**Update n°1**  
**7<sup>th</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.

Period covered by this update: 1-6 February 2012.

**Summary:** CHF 46,072 has been initially allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support Belarus Red Cross in delivering immediate assistance to beneficiaries. Due to the increased needs, the National Society has revised its operation and [budget](#). The revised budget for this operation is CHF 95,871. Based on the recent reports from the Red Cross staff and volunteers working in the field, a total of 2,000 homeless people and other vulnerable people will be targeted throughout Belarus. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

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. The situation is aggravated by the start of heavy snow falls and continuation of extremely low temperatures. In this context, the operation will respond to the increased needs of beneficiaries with setting up winterized tents with equipment to function as stations in the cities where people can warm up and receive services and relief from the Red Cross. Additional food packages, clothes, winter boots, blankets will be provided for the beneficiaries, especially homeless.

Belarus Red Cross staff and volunteers act promptly and report on the new needs identified while assisting the affected people. In order to ensure that proper support is provided to the affected people, the rescue teams will receive tools to remove the snow and help trapped vehicles. Also in order to efficiently assist other vulnerable city inhabitants, Red Cross volunteers working on the streets will receive big thermos to hand out hot drinks.

This operation is expected to be implemented over two months, and will therefore be completed by 31st



Winter felt boots from the Red Cross reach homeless at the municipal dumping in the vicinity of Gomel. **Photo: Belarus Red Cross, Gomel**

March 2012; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 30th June 2012).

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February Austrian Red Cross contributed CHF 18,000 to the DREF in replenishment of the allocation made for this operation.

The major donors and partners of DREF include the Australian, American and Belgian governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and government, Danish Red Cross and government, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Irish and the Italian governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg government, the Monaco Red Cross and government, the Netherlands Red Cross and government, the Norwegian Red Cross and government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the national society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

## 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. People are being affected both by extreme frosts and black ice. Only in Minsk, during the harsh winter period, 129 people have been delivered to hospitals with various traumas caused by frostbite and 248 have received traumas caused by black ice. Overall, it is estimated that more than 700 people have been affected and five people died of hypothermia.

On 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> February temperatures dropped down to 25-29 degrees Celsius below zero, and in some places to 30-32 degrees. From 8 February average night temperatures will be around 15-22 degrees Celsius below zero, falling down to 25-28 and even to 31-34 by next Sunday(12<sup>th</sup> February).In addition, strong wind and snow are forecast for the rest of the week to hamper road traffic, including transportation of people and delivery of basic supplies to remote areas. The extremely cold weather is predicted to continue throughout February.

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, Volkovyssk)
- 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. Belarus Red Cross cooperates with local authorities to identify the sites where homeless gather, which includes also dump sites. Red Cross staff and volunteers visit these sites regularly bringing aid or personally informing people where they can receive assistance. Posters with information about distributions are also placed at glass bottle buy-back centres where the homeless often appear.

The Red Cross has also mobilized national and local media to raise public awareness on prevention of traumas and chilblains. A maintenance station in Minsk has agreed to service a Red Cross heavy duty vehicle free of charge.

On 7<sup>th</sup> February from 10 to 12 A.M. Minsk City authorities provide a hot line service to answer people's question related to extreme cold weather.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

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) and initial DREF allocation of CHF 46,072 was requested, however additional DREF assistance of CHF 49,799 is required to cover the evolving needs that increase the budget to CHF 95,871.

The IFRC representation in Belarus and the National Society cooperate closely in assessing the needs and the response to this emergency. Belarus Red Cross has established the coordination committee meeting each day at 14.00. IFRC is among members of the committee. The operation is coordinated by Belarus Red Cross branch chairpersons in their areas of responsibility. Red Cross volunteers are responsible for delivering the emergency assistance.

So far 125 Red Cross staff and 523 Red Cross volunteers have been engaged in assisting 1,195 homeless people and 3,069 city dwellers.

Based on the field reports, additional needs were identified as the conditions became harsher and as the temperatures continued dropping further below zero. Therefore it is expected that during the two-month operation the Red Cross will support at least 2,000 homeless due to the increased needs. The number of towns involved in the operation is also increasing considerably compared to the number mentioned in the initial DREF Operation.

**The summary of the outstanding needs is as follows:**

- At least eight winterized tents (one per region) are required together with some basic foldable furniture (chairs, tables, beds) for the people to sit on, take some rest, or change clothing. The winterized tents can accommodate up to 12 persons include power generator and heating system. Special materials and flooring help keep the warmth inside.
- Big thermos for hot water and soup preferably type that can be carried as a backpack. A total of 30 big thermoses (12-litre) are required for volunteers in order to efficiently provide assistance without losing time for refilling small thermos.
- At least 500 mattresses or rugs are required for homeless to sleep on.
- Winter boots are required for the homeless in addition to initially budgeted clothing.
- Additional food portions are also needed to assist at least 2,000 homeless compared to the initially planned 1,500.
- The Red Cross rescue teams need tools to help remove the snow (shovels, axes, flickers, torches, etc.) so that stranded cars could start moving away from the snow.
- Two tons of heating fuel is required for running Red Cross power generators and heating the Red Cross vehicle operating at Minsk ring road.
- Five sets of radio stations and antennas are required to connect more Red Cross vehicles to the rescue operation.

## Progress towards outcomes

***Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)***

<p><b>Objective: Providing emergency assistance (basic food and clothing items) to approximately 2,000 homeless and other vulnerable people during a two month period</b></p>
<p><b>Output: The nutritional and winterisation/health needs of 2,000 homeless people are met during the period of harsh winter frosts</b></p>
<p><b>Activities planned:</b></p> <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 2,000 homeless and other vulnerable 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> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Vitebsk Red Cross regional branch operates in Vitebsk, Glubokoe, Polotsk, Novopolotsk, Postavy, Orsha and Novolukoml; Minsk regional branch – in Stolbtsy, Molodechno, Borisov, Nesvizh, Soligorsk, Vileika, Volozhin, Dzerzhinsk, Marjina Gorka, Starye Dorogi and Logoisk; Gomel regional branch – in Gomel, Rechista, Zhlobin, Mozyr, Svetlogorsk, Kalinkovichi, Rogachev and Dobrush; Grodno regional branch – in Grodno, Lida, Slonim, Volkovyssk, Smorgon, Novogrudok, Shchuchin and Oshmyany; Brest regional branch – in Brest, Baranovichi, Pinsk, Kobrin, Bereza, Ivatsevichi, Luninets and Mikashevichi; Mogilev regional branch – in Mogilev, Bobrujsk, Osipovichi, Krichev, Shklov and Byhov.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coordination with local emergency departments and local authorities.</li><li>• Monitoring and reporting</li></ul> |
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**Progress:**

Belarus Red Cross works closely with homes for temporary shelter for homeless people, sanitary centres and municipal landfills reaching out to the target group, assessing their needs and providing vital assistance on the spot. Tents are being set up in the targeted regions and, where possible, Red Cross vehicles operate as mobile distribution posts.

The essential relief component of the extreme weather assistance consists of sandwiches, canned meat and tea. The homeless also receive instant soups, porridges or potato purees. In two cities, Gomel and Molodechno, Belarus Red Cross has organized joint actions with military units which agreed to provide equipment and human resources to set up tents and soup kitchens. The Red Cross and covers the cost of food items supplied for cooking porridge and its volunteers are on duty in and outside tents.

A team of 50 volunteers in Minsk are staying on radio contact to support stranded vehicles with assistance. The team is cooperating with the Railways Red Cross branch, which has a heavy duty vehicle at service on the Minsk ring road and the team is also equipped with four light vehicles to assist stranded drivers (starting assistance, referral to mechanical assistance, warm conditions). On 5<sup>th</sup> February Belarus Red Cross team was the first one to reach the place of a car accident at the ring road to provide first aid, psychological assistance and warming for the injured people prior to the arrival of ambulance and road police. Later in the evening Belarus Red Cross car spotted a person lying unconscious by the road and freezing in the snow, who was immediately provided with first aid and taken to hospital, one death thus being avoided.

The Railway Red Cross branch informs passengers and train attendants about the Red Cross operation and about where to receive hot drinks and is also advocating towards local authorities to allow homeless to gather at railway stations at night that are usually closed.

On 6<sup>th</sup> February an agreement was reached between the Red Cross and Minsk city authorities for opening a temporary shelter for 50 homeless based at the facilities of hospital no. 2. The shelter will address accommodation, health and nutritional needs of the most vulnerable.

**Challenges:**

In the cause of the operation Belarus Red Cross has faced some challenges and identified new needs so far uncovered by DREF. Belarus Red Cross is currently using tents which are not designed for winter, using modified electric heating from three generators. Due the temperatures getting even lower there is an increased need for winterised tents in order to provide sufficient assistance to the beneficiaries.

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## Contact information

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

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## DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012 for CHF 46,072 for two months to assist 1,500 homeless people. The budget of the DREF operation was extended and DREF allocation for CHF 49,799 has been formally signed off on 07.02.12. This brings the total allocation to CHF 95,871.
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[Click here](#)

1. Revised DREF budget [below](#)
  2. Click [here](#) to return to the title page
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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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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

07/02/2012

Belarus Extreme Winter Condition (MDRBY001)

<b>Budget Group</b>	<b>DREF Grant Budget CHF</b>
Shelter - Relief	24,000
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	23,120
Food	8,250
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Ustensils & Tools	12,950
Other Supplies & Services	6,400
Emergency Response Units	
Cash Disbursements	
<b>Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES</b>	<b>74,720</b>
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles Purchase	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	0
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	0
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	550
Communications	1,000
Financial Charges	1,000
Other General Expenses	
Shared Support Services	
<b>Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>5,350</b>
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	5,851
<b>Total INDIRECT COSTS</b>	<b>5,851</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>95,871</b>