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Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) Albania: Extreme winter conditions

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRAL004
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10th 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.

CHF 129,185 CHF has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Red Cross of Albania in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,000 families (5,000 beneficiaries). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: Harsh winter with unusually abundant snowfall (1-1.5 m of snow in rural areas with temperatures averaging minus 10° Centigrade) hit the northern and north-eastern parts of Albania. The snow is blocking some national and many rural roads, and the number of snow-trapped people in the communes of Puka, Shkodra, Kukes, Peshkopia, Librazhd and Korça districts is estimated at about 100,000.



Landscape in the town of Bulqiza.
Photo: National TV Channel, Albania

Five people lost their lives due to the extreme cold. Preliminary information shows that there are at least 1,000 most vulnerable families (5,000 people), mainly poor ones with sick and elderly members, who are completely isolated by the heavy snow and nearing the end of their food reserves. Their most urgent needs are food, hygienic kits and blankets. The Albanian Red Cross is going to provide them with food parcels, hygiene items and blankets, and assist them in preserving their health in the harsh weather conditions.

This operation is expected to be implemented in two months, and will therefore be completed by 9th April 2012; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 9th July 2012).

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

The situation

During January and the beginning of February unusually abundant snowfall (1-1.5 m of snow in rural areas with temperatures averaging minus 10° Centigrade) hit the northern and north-eastern parts of Albania. In Bulqiza, the temperature dropped to 25° C below zero. The snow is blocking some national and many rural roads, and the number of people trapped in the snow and cut off from the rest of the country in the communes of Puka, Shkodra, Kukes, Peshkopia, Librazhd and Korça districts is estimated at about 100,000.

So far, the media have reported of five people frozen to death. The communes that are cut off are also reported to be suffering interruptions in electricity supply due to sporadic network malfunctions caused by the heavy snow.

The Ministry of Education and Science has advised the Education Directories to consider suspending or limiting the work of primary, secondary and higher education institutions in these areas to save energy and ensure the safety of students.

The population of these areas is usually prepared to face the winter; however, the current conditions are out of the ordinary with extreme temperatures and snow blockades. The poor families and older people residing in remote villages and communes are now very vulnerable due to isolation, running out of food and being unable to keep warm.

The National Government is closely observing the situation. An emergency situation has not yet been declared, but the government has set up an inter-ministerial commission lead by the Minister of Interior and put them in charge of managing the situation with all the actors asked to respond to the situation within their mandates.

The National Government is taking charge of road cleaning works and other immediate damage repairs. The State Reserves are preparing and distributing the relief distribution initially for 500 families by a division of helicopters from the Ministry of Defence.

The helicopters of the Ministry of Health are evacuating sick people from the blocked areas to Tirana Hospital, 8 cases so far.

Coordination and partnerships

The Albanian Red Cross is coordinating their response activities with the authorities at both national and local level.

The secretaries of Red Cross branches in the isolated areas are members of the communal emergency structures and are participating in all the meetings of the Emergency Management Commissions in order to help coordinate the response efforts

The Secretary General of the Albanian Red Cross and its Disaster Management Programme coordinator are working closely with the National Directorate for Civil Emergency, Operational Centre to the Ministry of Interior and other stakeholders involved.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Albanian Red Cross is basing its intervention on its Plan of Action for Disaster as is foreseen in the National Plan for Civil Emergency Situations. The National Society's mandate is to act with the purpose of alleviating as much as possible the sufferings of the vulnerable, in accordance with its capacities and access to the affected population.

So far, the Albanian Red Cross has taken the following steps:

- The Red Cross Branches of Shkodra, Dibra, Kukes, Puka, Librazh, Korça situated in the isolated areas are carefully following the situation as well as participating in the meetings of Emergency Commissions set up at Prefecture and Commune levels to coordinate the response.
- Cooperation is established at national level with the Directorate of Emergency Situations in the Ministry of Interior.

- The National Society is preparing the initial relief distribution (using its existing disaster preparedness stock) to help 300 families identified as the most vulnerable in the isolated areas. The immediate relief assistance will consist of a family package containing:
 - blankets 4 pieces,
 - wheat flour 25 kg,
 - white beans 5 kg,
 - cooking oil 5 litres,
 - sugar 5 kg,
 - rice 5 kg,
 - Hygiene kit 1 box.

Due to the road conditions, the transport of goods to the destinations will be with Albanian Red Cross trucks and/or in cooperation with Directory of Civil Emergency and the Helicopters Division starting from next week, 13th February; however the date depends on the schedule of the Helicopters Division.

Seventy homeless Roma people (some of them living in tents provided last June by the Albanian Red Cross) in Tirana are at the moment temporarily accommodated in the Ombudsman Building in Tirana. The National Society is still involved with helping them, providing food and non-food items (in addition to 32 tents provided to them earlier), having recently distributed:

- 15 family standard basic food packs,
- 15 family hygienic kits,
- 90 blankets,
- 20 fresh food family rations and
- 70 liters of bottled drinking water

The Albanian Red Cross branch staff has, in co-operation with local authorities in the above mentioned blocked communes, done the assessment of needs and capacities in order to get proper information on the needs of the population of these areas. The assessment confirms that in these communes there are a considerable number of extremely poor families with no or nearly depleted food reserves whose urgent needs are helped with food and other non food items.

The needs

The assessment identifies the following number of the poorest families in need in the isolated communes according to the prefecture administrative division as following:

- Shkodra Prefecture (6 Communes): 250
- Kukes Prefecture (5 Communes): 250
- Dibra (4 Communes): 250
- Elbasan (3 Communes) 100
- Korca (4 Communes): 150.

A total of 1,000 vulnerable families in need is planned to be assisted through this operation. The DREF allocation will contribute to the replenishment of Albanian Red Cross emergency stocks for the already distributed items to 300 families. 700 families will receive support through the DREF allocation.

Due to the road conditions, the data available at the moment has been provided via telephone through the Red Cross branches and it is most probably not final. An updated plan for this operation will be made if necessary.

The identified families are mostly poor with very low income, elderly households or older individuals living alone in remote areas, as well as families with sick members. Their needs are mostly for warm clothes, hygiene items and food due to the fact that the extreme cold means most of their efforts and funds have gone into securing firewood and heating fuel.

A more detailed assessment of needs will be done as soon as the roads are unblocked and the cut off areas become accessible. The Red Cross will be part of the broader assessment effort mounted by the Municipal Crisis Headquarters.

The proposed operation

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Outcome: 1,000 most vulnerable families (approximately 5,000 people) blocked by snow will preserve their health through provision of food, hygiene items and blankets.

Outputs (expected results) and activities planned: The food and hygiene needs of the most vulnerable 5,000 people will be met through distribution of food and non-food items.

- Conduct the needs assessments and prepare the list of beneficiaries with local authorities
- Procure food and non-food items for distribution and replenishment.
- Prepare a system of data reporting and monitor distribution
- Organise distribution to the beneficiaries
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reports on relief distributions.

The contents of one standard packed ration for one month are as follows:

Item	Unit	Quantity
Food parcel		
Cooking oil	litre	5
Sugar	kg	5
Beans	kg	5
Rice	kg	5
Flour	kg	25
Non food items		
Hygienic kit	kit	1
Blankets	pcs	4

Item	Unit	Quantity
Washing powder	kg	2.5
Hair shampoo 0.5 l	piece	1
Soap 200 g	piece	4
Toilet paper, four ply	piece	1
Tooth paste	piece	1
Tooth brush	piece	4
Shaving foam	piece	1
Razor	piece	4
Hygiene pads	package	1

There will be only one distribution, so each family will receive one standard full package that consists of the following pieces of relief items: Food parcel 20 kg, wheat flour 25 kg, hygienic kit 1 piece, and blankets 4 pieces.

At the end of the operation an evaluation meeting will be conducted, with the participation of the Red Cross volunteers and members, government structures representatives and beneficiaries, to discuss the lessons learned from the operation.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Red Cross of Albania:** Zamir Muça, Secretary General, Phone: 0355 42227508; email: zmuca@kksh.org.al
- **IFRC Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Disaster Management & Shelter; office phone: +36 1 8884 500; email: alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org
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Click here

1. DREF budget is available [here](#)
2. Click [here](#) to see the map of the affected area
3. Click [here](#) to return to the title page

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

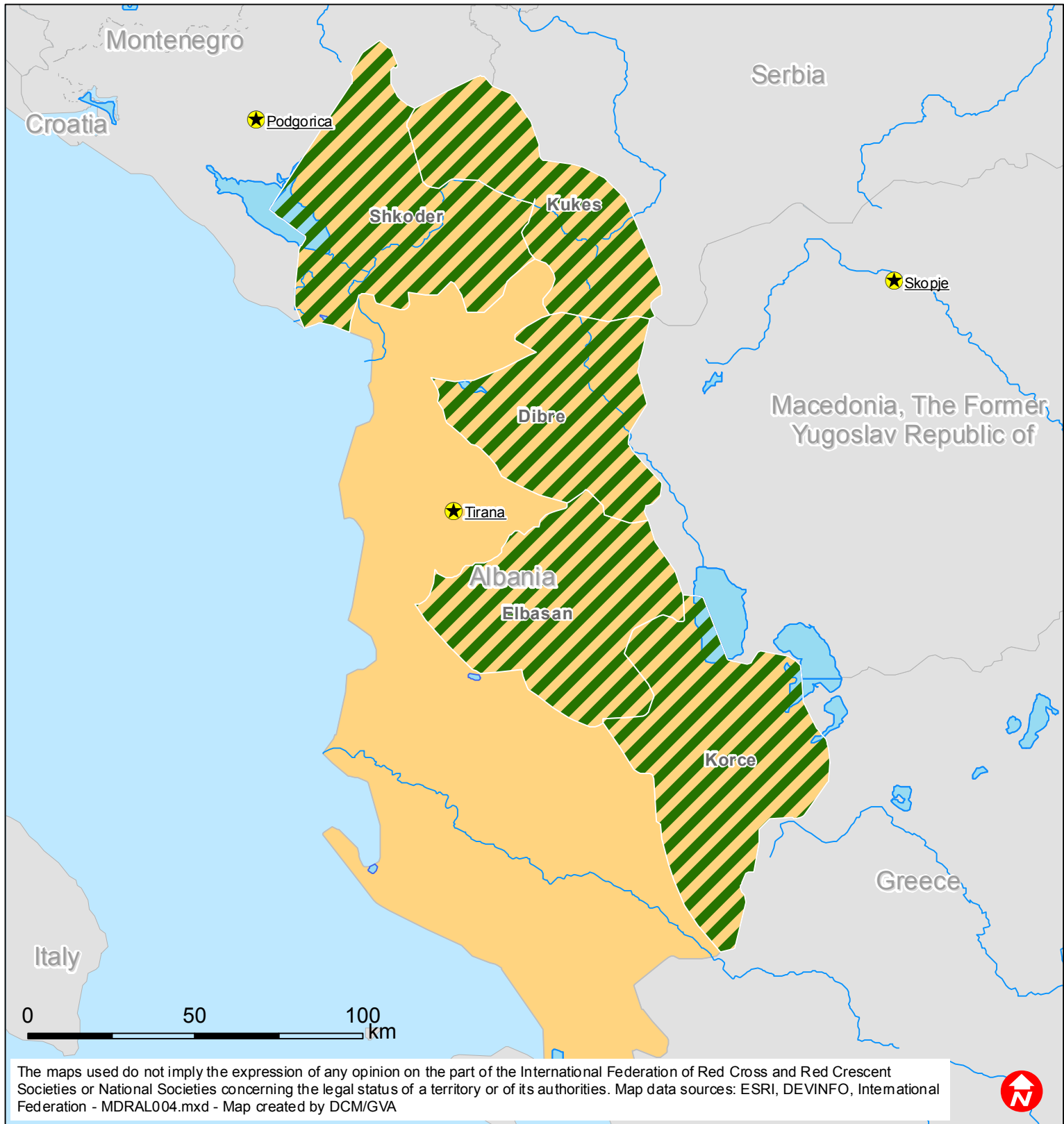
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MDRAL004 Albania: Extreme winter conditions

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	32,000
Food	65,000
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	15,000
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Ustensils & Tools	
Other Supplies & Services	
Emergency Response Units	
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	112,000
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles Purchase	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	1,700
Transport & Vehicle Costs	4,200
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	5,900
International Staff	
National Staff	
National Society Staff	500
Volunteers	200
Total PERSONNEL	700
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	2,000
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	2,000
Travel	
Information & Public Relations	
Office Costs	
Communications	500
Financial Charges	200
Other General Expenses	
Shared Support Services	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	700
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	7,885
Total INDIRECT COSTS	7,885
TOTAL BUDGET	129,185



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 Targetted prefectures