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## DREF operation update

### Kosovo: Extreme winter condition/ Snowstorm

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

#### DREF operation n° MDRKVO05 GLIDE n° CW-2012-000006-SRB Operation Update n° 01 30<sup>th</sup> March 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:** 17 February to 30 March 2012

**Summary:** CHF 204,963 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 17 February 2012 to support the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo in delivering assistance to some 6,000 beneficiaries,

Due to extremely low temperatures and windstorms followed by heavy snowfall starting in January this year, several municipalities in Kosovo have been heavily affected. February 2012 brought even more snowfall with many villages buried under the snow reaching two meters in height and being cut off from road traffic and supply of goods and suffering electricity/communication cuts. The snowstorm causing even an avalanche that resulted in nine fatalities with one person rescued in the village of Restelica, Dragash municipality. The Red Cross organisations in Kosovo activated their disaster response teams in order to assess the situation and respond accordingly. According to the assessments from the RC branches, a total of 3,800 families were affected and Red Cross organizations in Kosovovo targeted 1,200 of the most vulnerable families with support in food and nonfood items. Following that a DREF supported relief operation was launched. During the reporting period distribution of all relief items was completed by the Red Cross organizations as per plan.



In February 2012 Red Cross volunteers carrying relief goods for distribution among vulnerable population affected by extreme winter condition in a remote village in Vushtri. IFRC

This operation is expected to be implemented in three months, and completed by 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due to be completed 90 days after the end of the operation (by 16 August 2012).

The Canadian Red Cross/CIDA contributed CHF 27,617 to the DREF in replenishment of the allocation made for this operation. The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, Italian, Netherlands and Norwegian governments and ECHO. Details of all donors can be found on

## The situation

Due to extremely low temperatures and windstorms followed by heavy snowfall starting in January this year, several municipalities in Kosovo have been heavily affected. February 2012 brought even more snowfall with many villages buried under the snow reaching two meters in height and being cut off from road traffic and supply of goods and electricity/ communication cuts. The authorities closed schools for two weeks, during the coldest period. The snowstorm caused even an avalanche that resulted in nine fatalities with one person rescued in the village of Restelica, Dragash municipality. The most affected municipalities are Dragash, Peja, Deqan, Gjakova, Istog, Skenderaj, Kamenica, Vushtrri, Mltrovica, Novo Brde, Viti, Gracanica, Rahovec, Podujeva, Klina, Prishtina, Kacanik, Prizren, Obiliq, Malisheva, Suhareka, Shtime, Strpce, Leposavic, Zubin Potok and Zvecan. The majority of the affected villages are situated in the rural and poorer areas of Kosovo, and the emergency situation represents an additional factor in deteriorating their already difficult situation.

Following the described events, the Red Cross organisations in Kosovo activated their disaster response teams in order to assess the situation and respond accordingly. The assessment has been hindered by difficulties to access all the affected areas due to the roads being blocked by snow. The assessment team reported that the families living in these blocked areas are facing shortages of food and other essential goods, as the population was not prepared for such a harsh winter with extreme weather lasting more than three weeks. There were numerous requests to assist them with food parcels, hygiene parcels, blankets, stoves, and firewood. According to the assessments from the Red Cross branches, a total of 3,800 families were affected and Red Cross organizations in Kosovo targeted 1,200 of the most vulnerable families with food and nonfood items through DREF operation.

## Coordination and partnerships

The Red Cross of Kosova participates in all emergency meetings organised by the relevant authorities for coordination of the response to the current emergency. The Red Cross of Kosova also participates in the local level meetings organized by the municipal disaster management departments, and all activities are carried out in coordination with them.

The International Federation of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Societies and the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo closely cooperate in the response to this emergency. Also close coordination is maintained with the authorities at both local and national level and UN development agencies. Following the disaster the UN team in Kosovo requested IFRC Kosovo Office support and to develop an inter-agency coordination mechanism for emergencies as well as in preparing the interagency contingency plan. It is a positive recognition of the International Federation as leader in Disaster Management activities as well as Red Cross activities in support of the most vulnerable in Kosovo.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Progress towards outcomes

In response to the extreme weather that started in January 2012, the Red Cross organisations in Kosovo have requested a DREF allocation of CHF 148,635 to support 700 families with food and non food items on 13 January 2012. The first DREF operation started in mid-January 2012. Until now all the planned distribution under this operation was completed by the Red Cross of Kosova in the affected areas

The weather situation, the amount of snow and the low temperatures continued throughout February, all over Kosovo, thereby affecting even more municipalities and further worsened the situation with continuous snowfall and storm. The Red Cross organizations with their volunteers

started making an assessment of the affected areas in their respective municipalities. The assessment has been hindered by difficulties to access all the affected areas due to the roads being blocked by snow. Some Red Cross of Kosova branches have tried by all means to access the blocked settlements in order to provide at least some assistance.

As an immediate response Red Cross of Kosova distributed 135 food parcels and 270 hygiene parcels donated by the Albanian Red Cross (the latter given out two parcels per family as the parcels are small). Additionally, they also distributed 280 food parcels donated by the US Church Organization for current emergency. The International Federation Office in Kosovo has been in constant contact and coordinates with the local Red Cross organizations in order to support them with an appropriate response for the affected population.

Following this the Red Cross organisations in Kosovo have requested a second DREF allocation to support 1200 families with food and non food items. Subsequently a DREF in amount of CHF 204,963 was approved on 17 February 2012 and the operation started in the third week of February 2012. The details of the relief goods supported through DREF are as follows:

Item	No. of units
Food (family food parcel containing wheat flour, cooking oil, sugar, pasta, rice, beans, potatoes, onion and salt)	1,050
Family hygiene parcels	1,050
Blankets (two pieces per family)	2,400
Firewood for 325 families	750 cubic metres
Boots	700 pair
Shovels	700 pcs

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
<b>Objective: Providing emergency assistance (basic food and non-food items) for 1,200 families (approximately 6,000 people) during a four month period (distribution will be done once for basic food and once for non-food items)</b>
<b>Output: The nutritional and winterisation/health needs of 1,200 families/6,000 people are met over this period during difficult winter situation and snow-blocked homes</b>
<b>Activities planned:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of final beneficiary lists.</li> <li>• Preparation of distribution plan.</li> <li>• Procurement of emergency items in Kosovo.</li> <li>• Distribution of emergency items by RC branches and their volunteers according to the prepared beneficiary lists.</li> <li>• Coordination with local emergency departments and social welfare authorities.</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting.</li> </ul>

**Progress:**

As community-based responders, the volunteers and staff of the Red Cross Organizations were the first one on the scene following the extreme winter conditions. During the assessment Red Cross organizations identified 3,800 families (19,000 people) affected by the cold weather and among them there were 1,200 families (6,000 people) whose level of vulnerability dictated immediate response. These families are living either below or close to the poverty line, are socially marginalised and their capacity for coping with the consequences of this situation (shortage of food and other essentials goods, damage of property, and severe deterioration of their living environment) is almost non-existent. The Red Cross organizations provided them with basic items needed to get through the coming weeks. The Red Cross organizations in Kosovo have been the only humanitarian organization responding to the disaster caused by extreme winter condition in Kosovo.

As planned, upon approval of the DREF funding during the reporting period the Federation Office together with Red Cross organizations in Kosovo did the following:

- Meeting with Red Cross of Kosova (RCK) and Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija (RCKM) headquarters to discuss DREF operation and plan of action, including final beneficiary lists and storage and distribution plan.
- Procurement of goods following the Federation standard procurement procedures
- Delivery of food and non food items by the selected suppliers started on 25 February followed by distribution

During the reporting period as planned in the second DREF operation a total of 6,000 people have been assisted in the following communities: Dragash (100 families); Peja (200 families); Decan (115 families); Skenderaj (67 families); Vushtrri (100 families); Mitrovica (100 families); Novo Brde (60 families); Podujeve (20 families) and Prishtina (60 families); Novo Brdo (30 families); Kamenica (20 families); Viti (20 families); Gračanica (30 families); Rahovec (10 families); Peja (18 families); Istog (31 families); Vucitran (30 families) and Strpce (39 families). Also in the north: Leposavic (50 families); Zubin Potok (40 families); Zvečan (40 families); Mitrovica (20 families).

The distribution of food and non food items by the Red Cross Organizations in Kosovo supported through this operation has been completed. The remaining activities including beneficiary satisfaction survey and lessons learnt workshops are planned for April/May 2012.

The Red Cross assistance provided satisfied the immediate needs of the most vulnerable among the affected population and helped alleviate their hardship during the emergency period. 200 volunteers and 35 staff members have been active in the disaster response operation of the Red Cross organisations in Kosovo.

The procurement of the food and non food items was done following the International Federation standard procurement procedures. Due to favorable exchange rate (CHF vs. Euro) and lower price of relief goods (shovels) there were savings in the operation budget and approval was given for these savings to be used for purchase of relief stocks. 500 blankets and 500 Hygiene parcels have been purchased as preparedness for the possible spring floods and prepositioned in the Red Cross warehouses. Some of the savings will be used to cover the cost of the beneficiary satisfaction survey – not originally planned but upon the recommendation of the Zone Acting Disaster Management coordinator during the monitoring visit – it will be organized.

The Red Cross of Kosova also received an allocation of Euro 50,000 from the Ministry of Trade and Industry used to support 920 vulnerable families affected by the disaster with food parcels. UNDP on behalf of UN Kosovo Team also donated US Dollar 10,000 to the Red Cross of Kosova to procure 160 food and 160 hygiene parcels for distribution among the affected population. Turkish Red Crescent also sent one truck of relief goods consisting of 1,000 food parcels amounting to US dollar 24,294 to the Red Cross of Kosova to support the population affected by the severe winter.

In the northern part of Kosovo, in the municipalities of Leposavic, Zubin Potok, Zvečan and Mitrovica, the needs are mainly for firewood and blankets since the Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija distributed food and non food items recently from Russian and Serbian Government aid shipments.

Regular monitoring of the activities is carried out both by the Red Cross organizations' disaster management coordinators and the International Federation's office in Kosovo. The RC Organizations headquarters staff and the International Federation staff were present during the distribution in the Municipalities in monitoring.

The IFRC Europe Zone Disaster Management and Shelter delegate visited Kosovo from 4-8 March to monitor the DREF supported operation.

During the mission the delegate had the chance to discuss with the Red Cross Organizations and the Federation office in Kosovo about the progress achieved related to the DREF operation. The technical staff from both Red Cross Organizations were involved in overall discussion and in the field visit. This also contributed towards building the relationship with the Red Cross Organizations.

During the visit the following has been agreed with Red Cross Organizations and the Federation Kosovo team.

- The Red Cross organizations will conduct the beneficiary survey for both DREF allocations with the support of the Federation Kosovo office (approximately 20% of the targeted beneficiaries).
- During last week of April two lessons learnt workshop with the support and the participation of acting Disaster Management coordinator from Europe Zone office will be conducted.
- Acting Disaster Management coordinator from Europe Zone office will support the Federation Kosovo office in the preparation of the Inter Agency Contingency Plan.

### **Challenges:**

Early in the operation the communication was hampered due to inaccessibility and electricity/communication cuts, so was the early assessment hindered by difficulties to access all the affected areas due to the roads being blocked by snow. However, despite the Red Cross being the only actor to respond to the disaster, the Red Cross organizations in Kosovo conducted a very good action starting from the assessment and including planning, implementation of activities, as well as reporting.

## **Contact information**

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

- **IFRC Office in Kosovo:** Shafiquzzaman Rabbani, Head of Office, phone: +381 38 241 518; email: [shafiquzzaman.rabbani@ifrc.org](mailto:shafiquzzaman.rabbani@ifrc.org)
- **IFRC Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Acting Disaster Management Coordinator; 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)

## **DREF history:**

- This DREF was initially allocated on 13 January 2012, for CHF 148,635 and then another was issued for the continued emergency on 17 February 2012 for CHF 204,963 cumulating with the activities planned for three months to assist 6,000 beneficiaries.
- One DREF operation updates issued.



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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.