

Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF)

Panama: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRPA009
GLIDE n° [FL-2012-000198-PAN](#)
30 November 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.

52,450 Swiss francs have been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Red Cross Society of Panama (RCSP) to carry out further assessments and deliver immediate assistance to 750 beneficiaries. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: Severe rains have affected the Colón and Panamá Provinces in Panamá, causing floods, landslides, disruption of economic activities and access to communities. Initial reports by the government indicate that at least 5,118 persons have been directly affected, although more isolated communities have not yet been reached and current figures are likely to increase. Given the situation, on 25 November the Panamanian government declared state of emergency for the regions of La Chorrera, Capiira (Panamá West) and Colón.



Heavy rains caused severe flooding in the western side of the Panama Province, with hundreds of families losing all their possessions. Source: EPASA.

The RCSP aims to provide immediate assistance to 150 families (750 beneficiaries) and carry out assessments to determine the needs of people living in target areas. The proposed operation includes psychosocial interventions to help families and Red Cross volunteers to cope with the stress caused by the disaster and as well as fatalities affecting RCSP personnel.

This operation is expected to be implemented over two months, and will therefore be completed by 28 January 2013; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 28 April, 2012).

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

The situation

A low-pressure system has affected Panamá, causing floods, landslides and damage to livelihoods and communications in the provinces of Colón and Panamá. Between 24 and 25 November, heavy rains in the hills and central plains resulted in the overflowing of the rivers Caimito, Trapichito and Velazques in the province of Panamá. Sudden water surges affected several communities where some families have lost their belongings. Access to some communities is interrupted with many roads having collapsed, including a section of the Transistmica Highway that connects Panama City with the Atlantic coastal area. The National Administration declared a state of emergency for La Chorrera, Capira (Panamá West) and Colón. The President reported three people dead and many disappeared, including two members of the Red Cross Society of Panama. Preliminary reports from the National Civil Defence I System (Sistema Nacional de Protección Civil- SINAPROC) on 25 November indicated that 1,037 houses were damaged, the majority in the province of Panamá, affecting a total of 5,118 persons.

Province	Area	Affected houses	Affected persons
Panama	Chorrera	675	3,150
	Arraiján	110	475
	Ciri de los Soto	20	200
	Nueva Arenosa	1	4
Colon	Cristobal	36	438
	Cativa	146	706
	B. Norte	40	110
	Rio Gatun	9	35
TOTAL		1,037	5,118

The National Administration has started an assessment of the damage incurred to the water and sanitation system and to the population's access to health services. A campaign was launched to collect essential items to help those hit by the disaster and cleaning tools are being distributed to affected families. On 27 November the SINAPROC shared a document stating that the rains have severely affected 23 communities, 11 commercial facilities and 5 bridges.

As rains continue, there is still a threat of landslides, flooding and further damage to communities. Furthermore, rains and overflowing rivers continue to restrict access to flooded communities, particularly in the mountainous areas.

Coordination and partnerships

The RCSP maintains close coordination with the SINAPROC, the Fire Department and the Police Force, and has agreed to provide support in those areas not covered by governmental action. The National Administration is publicly supporting the RCSP's collection campaign for food and non-food relief items.

The Disaster & Crisis Response and Early Recovery Unit has been monitoring the situation with the National Society, and is currently involved in facilitating support to its activities. A delegate has been deployed to the RCSP to assist in the organization of assessments and relief activities. In addition, the Americas zone's communications officer has been deployed to support National Society media relationships, and a psychosocial support delegate has been sent to the area of Colón to assist affected personnel.

The Costa Rican and Mexican Red Cross Societies have deployed a total of 17 volunteers and staff to support the RCSP in search and rescue actions. The American Red Cross is providing transportation support, non-food items and personnel to participate in the assessments.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action



The current emergency affected areas in Arraiján that were not considered as flood prone or at risk. Source: EPASA

The National Society has carried out search and rescue activities, pre-hospital care and has started an early assessment in the affected areas in the provinces of Panamá and Colón. In addition, a volunteer has been deployed to the National Emergency Operations Centre to facilitate the flow of information with governmental authorities.

Some of the activities of the National Society were interrupted on 25 November after members of the RCSP were involved in a tragic accident during the response to the emergency. The Transistmica highway collapsed under the car carrying volunteers working near Colón, and although some members of the team escaped, two of them lost their lives. Therefore, in the subsequent days

efforts focused more in search and rescue activities.

In spite of the difficult circumstances, the National Society continued their relief efforts, including the launching of a national appeal to gather food, water and clothing that has received the support of civil society and private companies. Thus far, they have started the distribution of the items received to some 500 families that have already been registered.

The needs

The RCSP has started rapid assessments in the affected area and identified the following needs:

- Pre-hospital care, search and rescue activities for the population isolated by floods
- Community based hygiene promotion activities
- A campaign for prevention of water borne diseases, including water purification and information on safe storage.
- Food and non-food relief (hygiene kits, food parcels, blankets and jerry cans).
- First aid training for members of the communities.
- Psychosocial support to both affected families and Red Cross personnel in order for them to cope with the events.

However, there is a need to continue the assessments, as at least 32 communities have not yet been reached due to difficulties in accessing the more mountainous areas, and more reports are arriving of new possible affected areas on the Atlantic coast of the province of Veraguas.

It should also be mentioned that the current DREF operation will support the provision of psychosocial support to volunteers, as well as friends and families of the Red Cross personnel who lost their lives. In addition, the National Society is evaluating their needs in telecommunication, particularly their radio communications, as some problems have arisen.

It is also critical to determine if a livelihoods programming response is required. The main activity of population living in the target areas is small trade. Floods and landslides have destroyed or damaged their productive assets as well as cut off key commercial routes. Further assessments will determine the viability of cash transfer to meet basic needs and replace essential assets.

Selection of people to be reached: the selection criteria used by the RCSP include the extent of damage incurred to the family, poverty, single-parent families, people with special needs, number of children or senior citizens living in a house, families that have lost their livelihoods, families in rural areas and volunteers of RCSP directly or indirectly involved in the 25 November accident.

The proposed operation

The proposed use of DREF funds aim to provide immediate relief support to 150 families (including hygiene kits and jerry cans for safe storage of water), cover the ongoing search and rescue mission and pre-hospital care in target areas, as well as to continue assessments to determine the need for further support.

Search and rescue, and pre-hospital care

Outcome: The Red Cross Society of Panama carries out search and rescue, evacuations and first aid care in flooded areas of the provinces of Colón and Panamá.

Outputs and activities planned:

- Mobilize volunteers to affected areas.
- Conduct search and rescue activities in coordination with the Civil Protection System authorities.
- Monitor the population at risk at the national level focusing on possible landslides and rising river levels.
- Provide first aid and ambulance services to the affected population
- Provide logistic support to field activities (vehicles, motor boats, radio equipment and rescue material).
- Monitor and report on activities.

Relief distributions (basic food and non-food items)

Outcome: The Red Cross Society of Panamá is ready to assist with the immediate needs of some 150 families in the provinces of Colón and Panamá.

Outputs and activities planned:

- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.
- Develop a beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user.
- Distribute 750 blankets to 150 families.
- Distribute one-month food parcels to 150 families.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.

Through a national appeal, the RCSP has been able to collect food, water and clothing for the affected families and the American Red Cross will be providing up to 500 hygiene kits for distribution by the RCSP. Therefore in addition to supporting some 150 families through the DREF, the operation will also assist with the operational costs of distributing the items already collected. Thus far, the National Society had finished registering and has reached 502 families:

Area	No. of families
Faldares	355
Sta Rita	
3 Hermanas	
Ciri de los Sotos	
Mastranto Final	30
Limón	22
Barriada El Panty	25
Flamingo	70
Total	502

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Outcome: The risk of emergent diseases has been reduced through the provision of safe water storage equipment and basic personal hygiene products to 150 families in the provinces of Colón and Panamá.

Outputs and activities planned:

- Assess the existing coverage with a view to ensuring availability of sufficient water supply.
- Provide information on basic hygiene, water handling and water purification for 150 families.
- Distribute 300 jerry cans to 150 families to support appropriate handling and storage of water.
- Supply 150 families with hygiene kits for one month.

At the moment, government authorities are supporting affected families with the distribution of potable water through water trucks; however, there is still a need for recipients for safe storage. During further assessments, the National Society will evaluate the need to provide chlorine tablets or other forms of household water treatment for a longer period of time.

Psychosocial Support

Outcome: The effect of stress in members of communities affected by floods and members of the Red Cross Society of Panama involved in emergency response is reduced.

Outputs and Activities Planed:

- Hold psychosocial support sessions in at least three of the most affected communities.
- Provide psychosocial support sessions for volunteers at the Colón branch.
- Carry out a psychosocial support workshop at the National Society headquarters.

Logistics

The local logistics capacity of the Red Cross Society of Panama to respond with relief items will be strengthened with the support of standardized items prepositioned in the IFRC's zone Logistics Unit in Panama. The unit will also provide technical support and dispatch of goods stored in the IFRC warehouse belonging to the National Society, as well as ensure procurement of transport services when needed.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **In the National Society:** Jaime Fernández, President of the Red Cross Society of Panama. Phone: +507-315-1388, email: presidencia@panama.cruzroja.org
- **Americas zone office in Panama, phone: +507 317.3050**
 - Benoit Porte, acting disaster & crisis response and early recovery coordinator; email: benoit.porte@ifrc.org
 - Douglas Baquero, regional logistics coordinator; email: douglas.baquero@ifrc.org
- **In Geneva:** Christine South, operations support, Phone: +41.22.730.4529, email: christine.south@ifrc.org

For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:

In IFRC Zone: Inga Purmalis, resource mobilization officer; email: inga.purmalis@ifrc.org

**For Performance and Accountability
(planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)**

In IFRC Zone: Jane Grimshaw; PMER manager; email: jane.grimshaw@ifrc.org



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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

29/11/2012

MDRPA009 PANAMA FLOODS

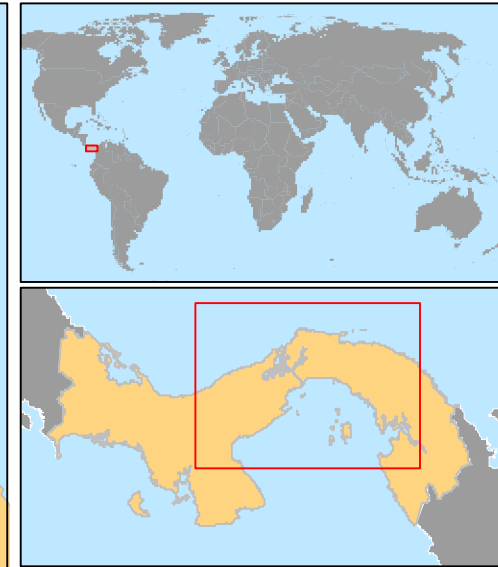
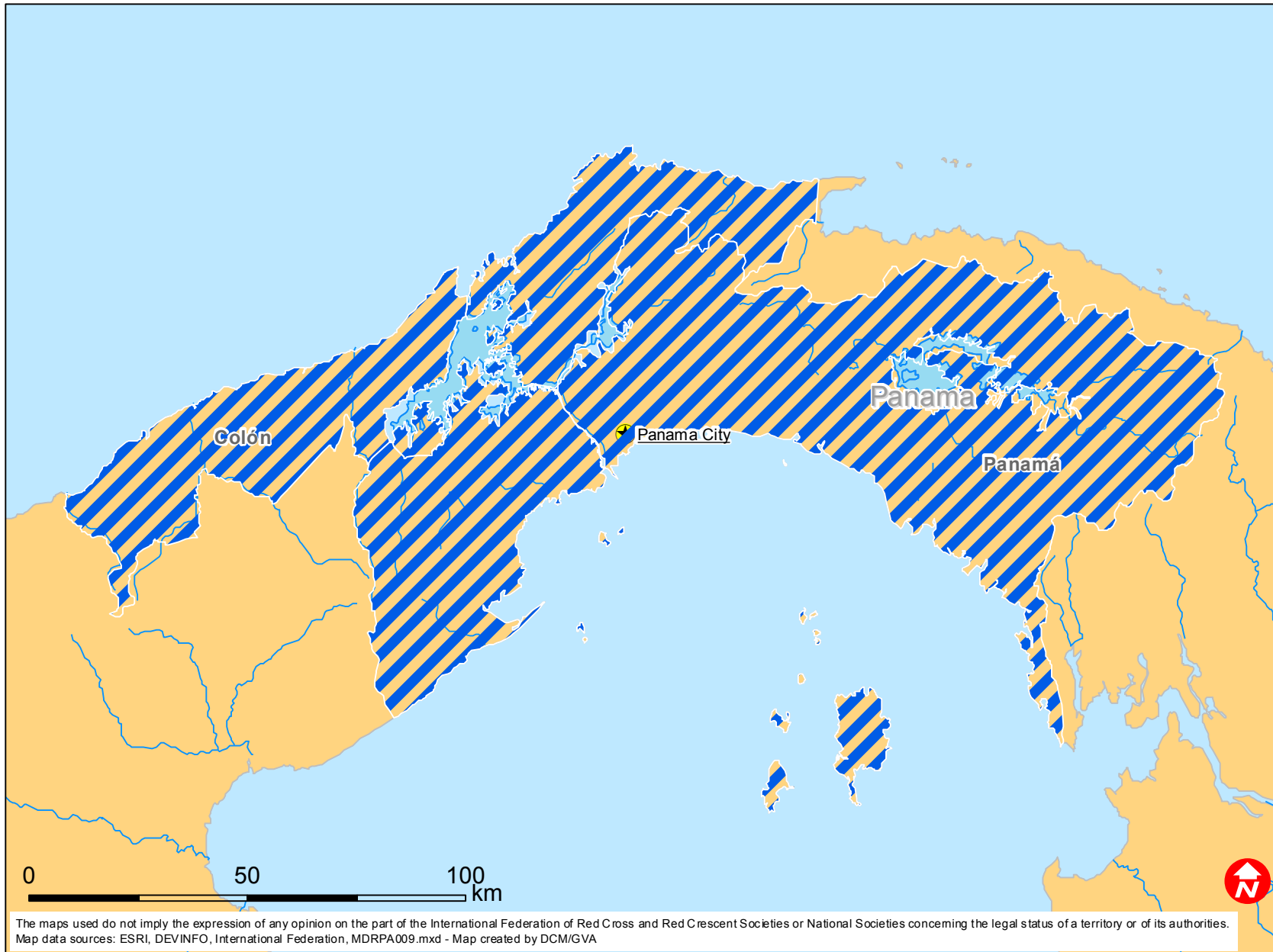
Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	4,179
Food	11,006
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	2,926
Medical & First Aid	2,322
Teaching Materials	9,287
Utensils & Tools	1,114
Other Supplies & Services	0
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	30,834
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	763
Transport & Vehicle Costs	4,644
Logistics Services	433
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	5,840
International Staff	0
National Staff	
National Society Staff	4,179
Volunteers	3,009
Total PERSONNEL	7,188
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	0
Travel	929
Information & Public Relations	1,393
Office Costs	697
Communications	975
Financial Charges	1,393
Other General Expenses	
Shared Office and Services Costs	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	5,387
Partner National Societies	
Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
Programme and Services Support Recovery	3,201
Total INDIRECT COSTS	3,201
TOTAL BUDGET	52,450



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

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 Affected provinces

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.
Map data sources: ESRI, DEVINFO, International Federation, MDRPA009.mxd - Map created by DCM/GVA