


www.ifrc.org
Saving lives,
changing minds.

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

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRBY002
GLIDE n° CW-2013-000010-BLR
25 January 2012

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of unearmarked 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 25,631 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Belarus Red Cross Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 5,000 beneficiaries. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: Freezing weather has already killed four people in Belarus over the past few days, and temperatures are set to drop even further according to weather forecasts.

Frosts will go down to minus 25 degrees Celsius at night in the period between 25th and 28th January. Northern winds of 6 to 7 m/sec will aggravate the severe frosty conditions.



Belarus Red Cross delivers food to the homeless at Minsk municipal dump site. Photo: Belarus Red Cross

As soon as the harsh winter weather started, Belarus Red Cross immediately mobilised its trained volunteers on the regional branches` level. A total of 172 volunteers have been engaged in the action so far. Belarus Red Cross has already assisted around 850 people during its activities by providing them food rations, hygiene parcels, thermo cover sheets and hot drinks.

The needs in Belarus Red Cross are for the replenishment of the already distributed goods (320 food parcels and 200 hygienic parcels); 2,000 litres of fuel is required for running the Red Cross power generators to heat the Red Cross winter tents and for driving the vehicles in action; Food portions are also needed to assist at least 1,000 homeless, and tea bags and plastic cups will go for the support of another 4,000 people.

This operation is expected to be implemented over two months, and will therefore be completed by 25th March 2013; a Final Report will be made available in three months from the end of the operation, by 25th June 2013.

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

The situation

Freezing weather has already killed 4 people in Belarus over the past few days, and temperatures are set to drop even further according to weather forecasts.

The second half of January 2013 has been marked by severe frosts and snowfalls, for which many of Belarus citizens turned to be unprepared. People are being affected by extreme frosts. The current temperatures are below minus 20 degrees Celsius at night and minus 17 degrees during the day.

In Belarus, during the harsh winter period, 1,325 people have been hospitalized with various traumas caused by frostbites. Overall, it is estimated that more than 10,000 people have been affected of hypothermia, and three of them died.

Frosts will go down to reach minus 25 degrees Celsius at night in the period between 25th and 28th January. Northern winds of 6 to 7 m/sec will add to the severe frosty conditions.

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 Belarus 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 usually gather, which include 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 the distributions are also placed at glass bottle buy-back centres where the homeless often appear.

The Red Cross has also mobilized the national and local media to raise public awareness for prevention. The Coca Cola Company has offered to provide portable water dispensers for preparing tea in winter tents and for distribution by mobile response teams (2,000 litres in the first batch). The Belarus Group A-100 Company has donated 100 pairs of winter boots through the Belarus Red Cross.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Belarus Red Cross Society takes up its role in assisting the people affected by severe frosts with a strong focus on the homeless. On 15th January 2013 Belarus Red Cross headquarters started providing assistance to the most vulnerable people. The support took place in the form of setting up distribution posts with hot drinks, meals, warm clothing and blankets. When the harsh winter condition started, Belarus RC mobilised trained volunteers in all regional branches. Altogether, 172 volunteers have been engaged in the action so far. Belarus Red Cross has assisted 320 of the most vulnerable people (homeless) with food rations (one box of canned meat and one box of canned fish, a bag of instant soup) and 200 people have received hygienic parcels. 62 people who had traffic accidents have been assisted by 100 BRC volunteers. The radio amateurs involved in the action are using their private cars. 62 people have been provided with thermo cover sheets and a cup of tea. Belarus RC also assisted 200 people who have been stuck at the border crossing points between Belarus and Latvia due to the closure of the border. Some trucks had to wait 7 days on the border. Belarus Red Cross was distributing hot drinks for 200 people for one week.

The needs

Based on recent experiences and also the experience gained during the operation last year, it is difficult to reach the central state-operated emergency phone numbers, since the lines are either busy or there is not enough staff to take all incoming calls. There is a need for an additional emergency number that is operated by the Red Cross for the support of the general population so as to minimize the information vacuum.

Opening four telephone hot lines will assist the general population during the harsh winter disaster as well as in any future disaster event. The telephone service will be organised in the following way. The main operator's room will be based at Belarus RD Headquarters. The telephone number will consist of three digits, similar to the fire brigade, police and emergency services telephone numbers. The lines will be available 24 hours. During the day, three volunteers will be deployed and one volunteer during the night shift. This number will be advertised in the whole country (radio, TV, information brochures etc.). This line will be open to the general population for urgent assistance. Recently, three people died due to the fact that they had gotten lost in the cold weather, and the relatives did not have a place where to call and seek for assistance. The Red Cross hot lines will receive information about people sleeping in the street, intoxicated by alcohol, drugs etc.), will find out about the need for psycho-social support over the telephone (each volunteer has been trained in PSS support); and will provide information to callers about practical, sometimes life saving information such as the current temperature, strength of the wind, information on what to do and what not to do in cold weather. The Red Cross will have direct link to the Ministry of Emergency and other governmental services. After receiving the calls, the RC

volunteers will pass on the information either to Red Cross mobile teams out in the field or to governmental structures. This will depend on the request received from the callers.

The Red Cross will need the following items to be purchased to implement the operation.

- Equipment and hardware for the telephone hotline which will enable to link information received from general public with governmental structures and will provide support people in need.
- Replacement of the stock of 200 winter boots is required for the homeless people.
- Food portions are also needed to assist at least 1,000 homeless. The content of food ration will consist of 1 pc of canned meat and 1 pc of canned fish. The distribution will take place during the next 15 to 20 days and will be directly linked to climate conditions (freezing temperatures)
- The Red Cross rescue teams need tools to help remove the snow and ice (shovels, axes, flickers, torches, etc.) so that stranded cars could get moving away from the snow trap. This will be case when the cars are blocked on the motorway and the drivers need external assistance to move forward.
- The needs in Belarus Red Cross are for the replenishment of the already distributed goods (320 food parcels and 200 hygienic parcels);
- Two tons of fuel is required for running Red Cross power generators heating the 8 Red Cross winter tents and driving the vehicles used by Belarus RC volunteers (100 vehicles used by volunteers /radio amateurs operating in action.
- Tea bags, plastic cups for the support of 4,000 people.

The proposed operation

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
Outcome 1: Providing emergency assistance to approximately 1,000 homeless (basic foodstuff and clothing items) and 4,000 other vulnerable people (hot drinks, tea) during a two month period
<p>Output: The nutritional and winterisation/health needs of 1,000 homeless people and 4,000 other vulnerable people will be supplied with hot drinks at Belarus RC distribution points (winter tents and mobile teams) during the period of harsh winter frosts</p> <p>Activities planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local procurement of emergency items • Preparation of distribution plan • Setting up Red Cross distribution points and tents for 5,000 homeless and other vulnerable city dwellers • Reaching potential beneficiaries to inform them about assistance available at the Red Cross • Distribution of emergency items by RC branches and their volunteers through the established distribution points • Coordination with local emergency departments and local administrative authorities • Monitoring and reporting

Outcome 2: Establishing a telephone hot line related to emergency assistance to approximately 500 vulnerable people calling during a two month period
<p>Output: The information about the vulnerable people out in the streets as well as information for general public will be dealt with so as to help 500 people during the period of harsh winter frosts</p> <p>Activities planned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardware for telephone hot line has been established • Link between telephone hot line centre and mobile respond teams has been established by assistance provided by radio amateurs • Reaching potential beneficiaries to inform them about assistance available at the Red Cross as well as governmental organisations • Receiving information about the vulnerable people out in the streets and transferring information to the mobile response teams. • In case that someone is reported missing to the RC, our volunteers will start coordinating the action with governmental authorities

- Coordination with local emergency departments and local authorities
- Monitoring and reporting

So far around 40 Red Cross staff and more than 170 Red Cross volunteers have been engaged in assisting the targeted 5,000 vulnerable people. The distribution plan of the DREF operation is detailed in the following table. As the operation unfolds, more staff and more volunteers will be deployed.

Region	Number of staff currently involved in the operation	Number of volunteers currently involved in the operation	Number of people who received aid	Number of population who need aid	Towns currently hosting the operation	Towns planned to be involved in the operation
Brest oblast	5	20	20	300	Brest, Pinsk, Baranovichi, Ivatsevichi	Whole oblast
Vitebsk oblast	4	25	112	450	Vitebsk, Polotsk, Novopolotsk	Whole oblast
Grodno oblast	4	10	200	200	Grodno, Lida, Slonim	Whole oblast
Gomel oblast	5	10	65	900	Gomel, Rogachev, Zhlobin	Whole oblast
Mogilev oblast			13	600	Mogilev	Whole oblast
Minsk	8	15	256	400	Minsk	Whole oblast
Minsk oblast	10	42	120	800	Molodechno	Whole oblast
Railroad organization	2	50	62	400	Minsk+belt highway	All organizations
Total	38	172	848	4,050		

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Belarus Red Cross Society:** Viktor Kolbanov, Secretary General; Minsk; phone/ fax: +375 17 327 14 17; email: info@redcross.by
- **IFRC Office in Belarus:** Zlatko Kovac, IFRC Representative for Belarus and Ukraine, Minsk; phone +375 17 223 34 46; fax: +375 17 223 90 60; e-mail: zlatko.kovac@ifrc.org
- **IFRC Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Disaster Management Coordinator; office phone:+36 1 8884 500; email: alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org
- **In Geneva:** Christine South, Operations Support, Phone: +41.22.730.4529, email: christine.south@ifrc.org



[Click here](#)

1. DREF budget and map [below](#)
2. 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.

www.ifrc.org

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.

DREF OPERATION

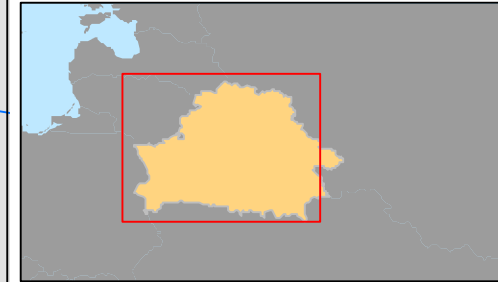
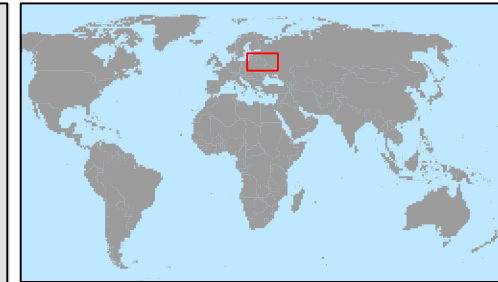
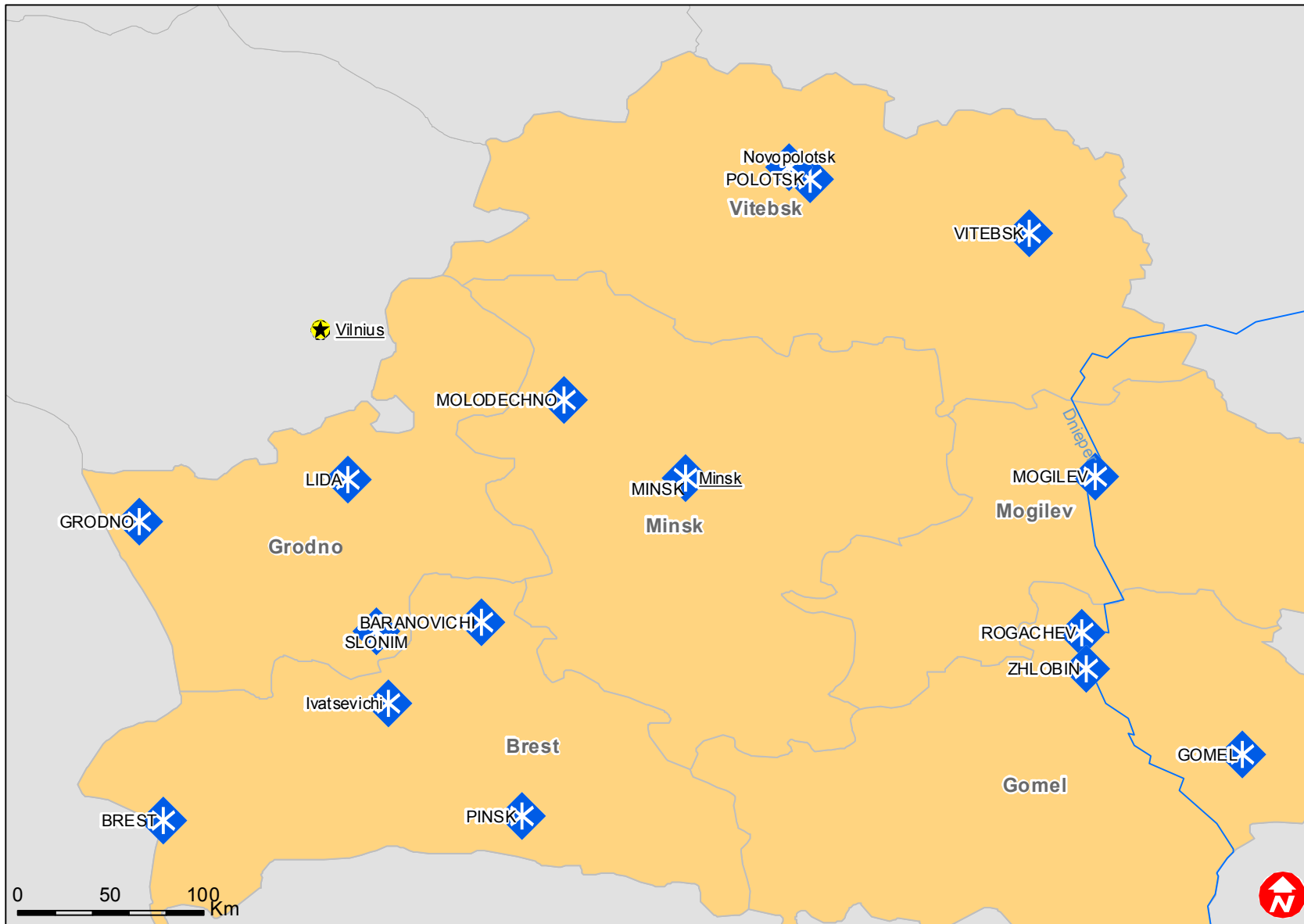
25/01/2013


Belarus Extreme Winter Conditions

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	2,000
Food	5,000
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	1,000
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Utensils & Tools	4,400
Other Supplies & Services	
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	12,400
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	6,000
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	6,000
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	200
Transport & Vehicle Costs	2,000
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	2,200
International Staff	
National Staff	
National Society Staff	1,937
Volunteers	1,450
Total PERSONNEL	3,387
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	0
Travel	
Information & Public Relations	
Office Costs	
Communications	80
Financial Charges	
Other General Expenses	
Shared Office and Services Costs	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	80
Partner National Societies	
Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	1,564
Total INDIRECT COSTS	1,564
TOTAL BUDGET	25,631



Belarus: Extreme winter conditions



 Towns currently hosting the operation