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## Operation Update Report

### Syria: Wildfires

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF n° MDRSY005	GLIDE n° <a href="#">FR-2020-000208-SYR</a>
Operation update n° 1: 16 March 2021	Timeframe covered by this update: 23 October 2020 to 28 February 2021
Operation start date: 23 October 2020	Operation timeframe: 7 months / 31 May 2021 (3-months extension included from 28 February 2021)
Funding requirements (CHF): 510,650	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 510,650
N° of people being assisted: 12,500	
<b>Host National Society presence:</b> Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), with three branches (Latakia, Tartous and Homs) and 544 volunteers directly involved in the response operation.	
<b>Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation:</b> The Movement partners have been supporting the SARC wildfire response multilaterally and bilaterally. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); German Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross.	
<b>Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation:</b> UN Agencies such as WFP, International non-governmental organizations (INGOs), Local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs)	

#### Summary of major revisions made to emergency plan of action:

*This DREF operation is being extended for additional 3 months bring the end date to 28 May 2021. This will ensure sufficient time to complete multi-purpose cash distribution as a pilot following SARC's new procurement procedures, as well as completion of the monitoring and lessons learnt activities.*

*SARC team undertook a detailed assessment to decide piloting of the multi-purpose cash in emergency. However, a delay in completing the detailed assessment was caused by COVID-19 pandemic restriction measures and security concerns that affected the deployments of staff and volunteers to the field. As the target communities are from remote areas with high level of poverty, prior to the detailed assessment, SARC distributed food items to 256 villages and disseminated its mandates to the community leaders, stakeholders, and people to gain acceptance. These measures were essential and necessary to enable community access to SARC staff and volunteers. Furthermore, this is the first multi-purpose cash grant relief operation by SARC, as previously assistance has been in the form of non-food items (NFIs) and food parcels. The extended timeframe will ensure a due process with solid post distribution monitoring and feedback from the communities and stakeholders. The operating budget and response activities remain unchanged.*

## A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

### Description of the disaster

Between 8 and 12 October 2020, the eastern basin of the Mediterranean Sea has witnessed mass-destructive wildfires which is becoming a recurring annual event due to climate change. While possible causes of these wildfires vary, enabling elements including high temperatures, the warm eastern winds that are active during this time of year, dried herbs and bushes, and low humid trees come together to cause massive wildfires devouring acres of lands beyond rapid control of overwhelmed local capacities.

One of the hardest-hit countries in war-torn Syria, where wildfires have killed 4 people and left around 45 injured with breathing complications and skin burns. Wildfires were reported in 224 villages around 50 and 60 main fire points and tens of other locations were affected. A total of 300 fire points and villages of varying damage were reported.

Most of the rugged mountainous areas were

obliterated in the western countryside of Homs province, the eastern countryside of Tartus, and the northern countryside of Lattakia. These fires caused material and environmental damage, burning homes of residents, agricultural crops, large parts of vegetation, forests, and nature reserves. In addition to that, it is estimated that the wildfire incidents burned more than 30,000 hectares of agricultural and forest land across the coastal region of Syria, affecting at least 27,000 families through the destruction and damage to homes and livelihoods assets, loss of power and water supply.

The fires led to the temporary displacement of several people of some villages to neighboring areas, especially in Lattakia's countryside, as populated areas were surrounded by the fires. The displacement continued for two or three days at most. It had a serious impact on some houses and the infrastructure, as well. Many families have lost more than one source of livelihood.

### Summary of current response

#### Overview of Host National Society

SARC has a nation-wide presence in Syria, with active branches in all affected governorates. SARC responded from the beginning through mobilizing their resources effectively, supporting at early stages fire-fighters brigades on the front lines through provision of food and water, mobile tanks, trucks equipped with tanks and pumps to increase mobility, and first aid services. In coordination with the branches, SARC activated its emergency protocol while DREF being approved.

For SARC response operations, protection and safety of the staff and volunteers during the COVID-19 remain top priority. Local SARC branches in Lattakia and Tartus were supported by personal protective equipment for volunteers to conduct assessments and distribution activities. Preventive security and safety measures for branches and warehouses were raised to mitigate the fire hazard, in addition to necessary trainings sought from specialized trainers in field security and safety.

SARC deployed 634 volunteers to conduct the rapid assessment as well as to support the relief distribution in more than 300 distribution locations covering villages and districts. The rapid assessment was also conducted in all 300 locations, and specifically in 265 most damaged villages between 8 to 12 October 2020. SARC used relief items from its emergency stock supported by both the Movement and non-Movement partners whereas costs related to the distribution and volunteers' management was covered through DREF funds. With the support of World Food Programme (WFP), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), IFRC, Norwegian Red Cross, German Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross - SARC reached to 46,834 families with urgent humanitarian assistance across four



*Figure 1: SARC detailed assessment team assessing damages caused by the wildfire in Tartous governorate. Photo: SARC*

governorates (Homs, Hama, Latakia and Tartous). The distribution activities were implemented between 12 October 2020 to 12 January 2021. The details of items distributed by SARC is given in the table below.

**Table no. 1: Relief distribution by SARC to wildfire affected people in early October 2020**

Sector	Items	Quantity	Unit	Number of family
Relief	Food parcel	489	Nos	17,434
	Canned parcel	16,985	Nos	
	Dates bar	141,225	Nos	
	Blanket	105	Nos	
	Jerry cans	24,445	Nos	
	Dates box	13,768	Nos	
	Hygiene Kit	16,916	Nos	
	Solar lump	12,280	Nos	
	Water bottle	636	Nos	
	Mattress	105	Nos	
Sleeping bag	25	Nos		
WASH	Water tracking	3,769	m3	29,400
<b>Total</b>				<b>46,834</b>



Figure 2: Relief distribution by SARC supported by the Movement and non-Movement partners in Latakia (above) and Tartous (below). Photo: SARC



Figure 3: SARC health team providing health care services through MHU in wildfire affected communities of Latakia governorates. Photo: SARC

In addition to relief distribution, SARC also provided health care support to the affected people through its Mobile Health Units (MHUs) and first aid services. To identify livelihoods and other needs of the affected people, SARC

conducted a detailed multi-sector assessment in Homs, Hama, Tartous and Lattakia between December 2020 to February 2021, in coordination with the branches. Findings from the detailed assessment is highlighted further in the need analysis section of this report.

### Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

SARC provides humanitarian response operations with the coordination of components and partners of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and is constantly planning and implementing taking into account the mandate of their respective work in covering all sectors (relief, health, livelihoods, psychological support, etc). SARC is responding to the affected people from fires in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) through this DREF response operation. Other Partner National Societies (PNSs) such as the German, Norwegian and Swiss Red Cross are supporting with other in-kinds.

Also, in coordination with ICRC providing emergency relief items including canned food parcels (ready-to-eat) and solar lamps, in addition to other WASH activities such as water trucking to those affected by the wildfires.

### Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

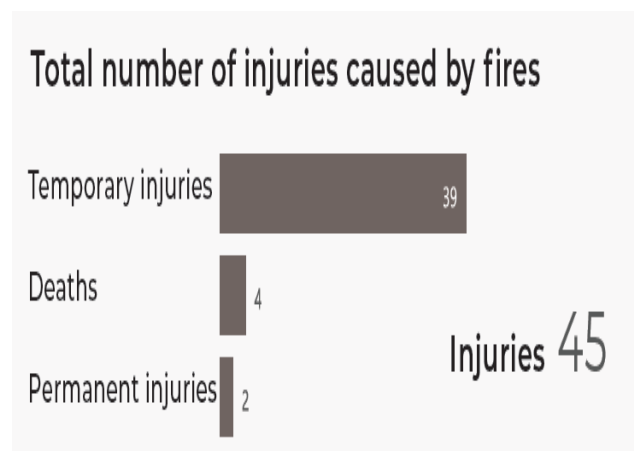
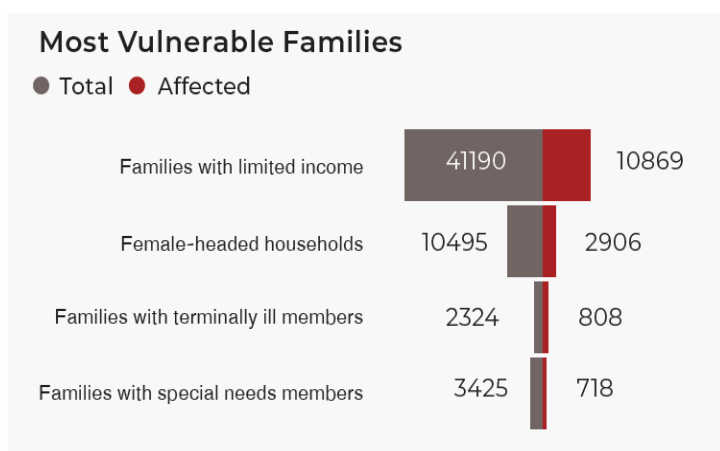
SARC coordinates with international NGOs and UN offices as the main partner in carrying out activities while maintaining their mandate without compromising the basic principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. UN agencies including WFP and UNHCR have provided items such as hygiene kits and jerry cans, also some food items (dates) to the affected families

Furthermore, SARC is coordinating with the relevant authorities (government) through its relevant channels in order to join efforts in the response to fires.

## Needs analysis and scenario planning

### Needs analysis

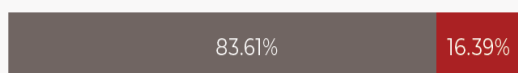
A detailed multi-sector assessment was carried out in the affected areas to identify affected people who have lost their livelihoods, damages to agricultural crops and actual needs on the ground. The assessment was completed between December 2020 to February 2021, including focused group discussion and household data collection to verify data collected during the rapid assessment and secondary information sources to fit with the updated criteria. Some of the key findings from the assessment is presented below.



Out of the total families in the affected governorates, 20 percent affected directly, and four (4) percent were affected indirectly.

### Percentage of affected agricultural land / donum

● Total land area ● Affected land area



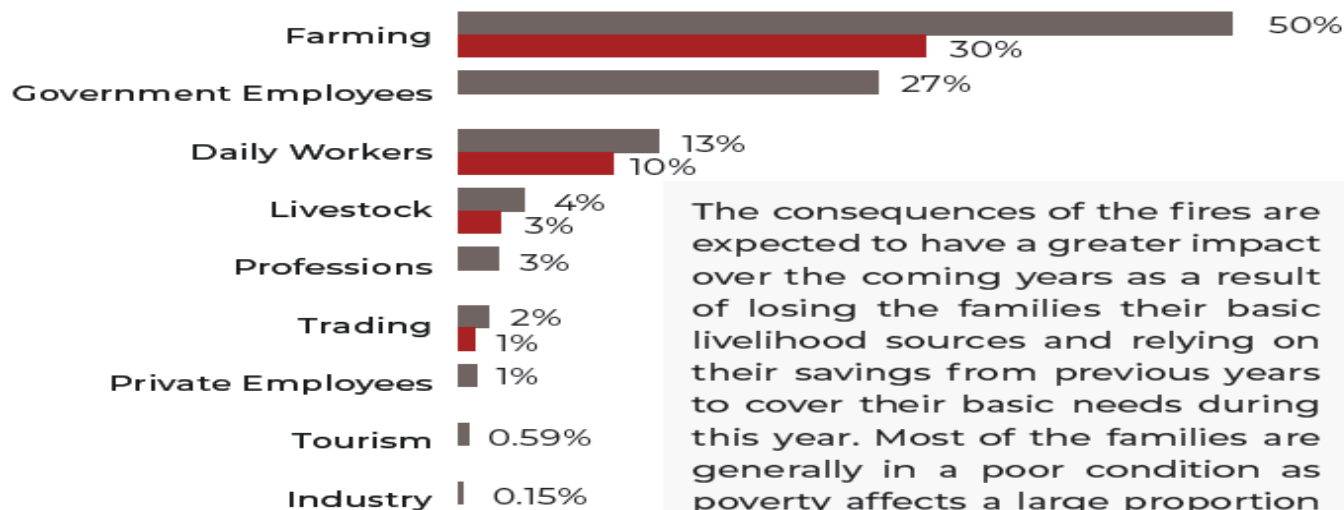
### Percentage of affected forest land / dunum

● Total land area ● Affected land area



### Percentage of Damage According to the Source of Income

● Total Percentage ● Affected Percentage



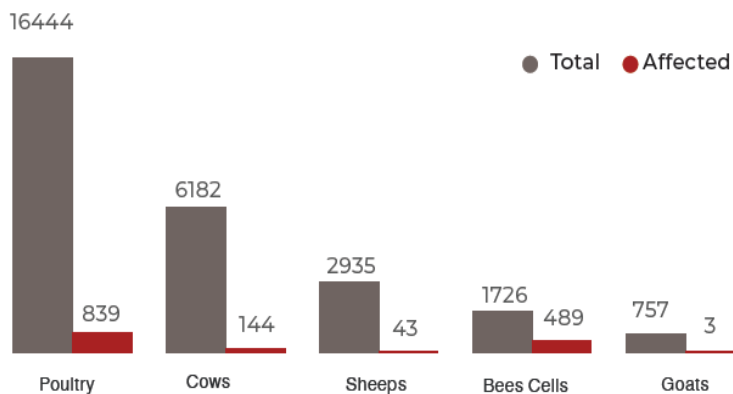
The consequences of the fires are expected to have a greater impact over the coming years as a result of losing the families their basic livelihood sources and relying on their savings from previous years to cover their basic needs during this year. Most of the families are generally in a poor condition as poverty affects a large proportion of families.

The average percentage of those depending on cash transfers: 0.432%

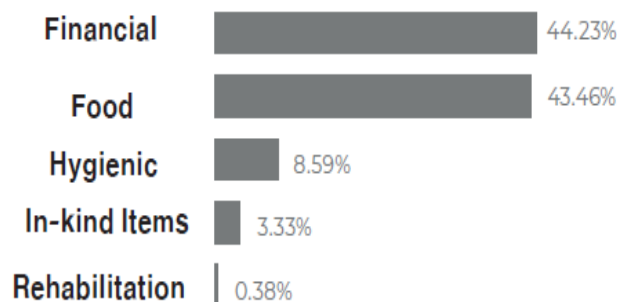
In the wildfire outbreak, 18,800 poultry, 9,400 bee cells and 300 sheep and cows died. Majority of families who lost their assets in the wildfire reported that they are adopting negative coping mechanisms such as buying less expensive food (52.45%), borrowing money (36.98%), selling productive assets (7.17%), and taking out students from school to work (3.4%).

Most of the affected communities are from remote areas with chronic poverty, wildfire resulted in complete loss of livelihoods assets for many. Some families uprooted the burnt olives and sold them as firewood. So, they identified financial assistance (44.23%) and food parcels (43.46%) as their priority.

### Affected Families Depending on Livestock



### Type of interventions



More information is available in the detailed assessment report, available [here](#)

## Operation Risk Assessment

The DREF operation, the needs assessment, and its operational strategy consider the risks related to the current COVID-19 pandemic and is aligned with the IFRC global Emergency Appeal that supports National Societies to deliver assistance and support to communities affected or at risk of being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The planned DREF activities are also following the Ministry of Health (MOH) and World Health Organization (WHO) regulations on hygiene and social distancing especially during the distribution of household items.

As of 8 March 2021, a total of 16,042 COVID-19 confirmed cases registered in the country, with 1,068 deaths and 10,454 recoveries, according to MOH<sup>1</sup>. Below table indicates potential impact of the pandemic on this DREF operation and how SARC will respond to the situation.

COVID-19 measures	Standard epidemic control measures	Temporary lockdown of society (schools, shops, public functions)	Sustained lockdown and restriction of movement during implementation period
<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>
Impact on operation	No impact on the operation. SARC will ensure to adhere to the epidemic control measures in place.	SARC is operating in close coordination with local Government and there is no indication that SARC will not be able to operate even in the event of temporary lockdown.	Lockdown measures have been made a bit more flexible since early June, so it is unlikely that sustained lockdown will be required, unless there is a drastic increase in the number of Covid-19 cases in the country.
Mitigating measures	As the epidemic control measures were already in place before the civil unrest, the operation is designed to adhere to the measures.  Trainings will be conducted in small groups, with due respect to social distancing measures.  Distribution exercises will ensure to adhere to Social distancing norms.	Same as under standard epidemic control measures. In addition, some delays might be experienced with procurements. If this happens, a timeframe extension may be requested.	Same as under standard epidemic control measures and temporary lockdowns of society.

Though, all areas are considered "easy to access" for SARC teams, despite the geographical distance of the areas and the difficult roads conditions that lead to the countryside. Raising conflict sensitivity should be regarded as important points for attention, between members of the affected community when providing aid.

*Please refer to the original DREF plan of action for details on the need analysis and scenario planning, available [here](#).*

## B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

### Proposed strategy

#### Overall Operational objective:

The overall objective of this operation is to contribute to the provision of humanitarian assistance to 12,500 people affected as a result of wildfire disasters in worst affected governorates of Latakia, Tartous and Homs through Cash Assistance. This proposal is based on unconditional and unrestricted multi-purpose cash transfer value on once-off through remittance companies to support the most vulnerable people affected by the wildfires to meet their basic

<sup>1</sup> [MoH Syria - official website](#)

needs. SARC will complete the tendering process following its new procurement procedures which is in line with the IFRC standards.


### Monitoring, evaluation and learning

SARC will be monitoring the intervention to ensure a detailed feedback on the usage of cash. As well as, at the end of the projects, there will be a collection of information about the indicators set for the interventions, changes in the living condition of the targeted households and it will be assessed the satisfaction level of the beneficiaries with the program. The monitoring and evaluation process will be as a following:

- Baseline survey whenever possible
- Post distribution monitoring including market assessment and satisfaction survey
- Hotlines: Provide contact details of the relevant programme heads in the affected communities who can contact and share their problems for SARC actions. SARC has Complaint Response Mechanism in each governorate with dedicated staff.
- Lesson learning exercise to gather operational learning and improve future response efforts, at the end of DREF response operation.

Please refer to the original DREF plan of action for details on the intervention strategy, available [here](#).

## C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

 <p><b>Livelihoods and basic needs</b></p> <p>People reached: 0 Male: Female:</p>		
<b>Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods</b>		
<b>Indicators:</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
# of vouchers / cash assistance	2,500	0
<b>Output 1.1: Households are provided with unconditional/multipurpose cash grants to address their basic needs</b>		
<b>Indicators:</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
#of vouchers / cash assistance	2,500	0
<b>Progress towards outcomes</b>		
<p>Following the rapid assessments conducted in early October 2020, SARC team undertook a detailed assessment to decide piloting of the multi-purpose CASH in emergency. However, a delay in completing the detailed assessment was caused by COVID-19 pandemic restriction measures and security concerns that affected the deployments to the field to make the assessment on time. The assessment conducted was a multisector assessment, not for CASH because our target to integrate with all sectors for that it needed more time. Before carrying out the detailed assessment, SARC distributed food items to 256 villages and established a complaint response mechanism to facilitate community feedbacks, as situation remains sensitive in some areas. Upon completing data collection on 20 January 2021, SARC conducted data analysis and verification based on agreed criteria, as number of affected people was huge and resources available for cash not sufficient to target all people. This process was completed on 21 February 2021. SARC prioritised to target the most vulnerable people especially people with disabilities, fully damaged households, women headed families and severely affected families. The people in the target communities are poor and they completely lost their livelihoods and other productive assets in the wildfire. The cash assistance aims to support these vulnerable families to meet their basic needs such as food, health, agriculture, etc. based on their family priorities. The use of cash will be captured through a post-distribution monitoring exercise.</p> <p>Tender for finance service provider (FSP) framework agreement was launched by SARC in October 2020. The intention was to use this framework agreement for all cash-based interventions implemented by SARC in 2021 including the DREF. SARC's procurement procedures were revised (with the technical support from the Norwegian Red Cross) at the end of 2020 to comply with the Movement's standard procedures. As multi-purpose cash grants relief operation to be piloted for the first time by SARC, more time required to study about FSP access in the governorates. This and the size of the DREF triggered new tendering process in late February 2021 to finalize the cash FSP.</p>		



## Disaster Risk Reduction

People reached: 3,000

Male:

Female:

### *Outcome 1: Communities in high-risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to disaster*

#### Indicators:

# of EPoA developed

Target

Actual

1

1

### *Output 1.1: Communities take active steps to strengthen their preparedness for timely and effective response to disasters.*

#### Indicators:

# of community members who participated in awareness sessions

Target

Actual

3,000

3,000

### **Progress towards outcomes**

SARC conducted a coordination meeting with stakeholders (Ministry of Agriculture, relief committee, and Agriculture Directorates) and based on the discussions, SARC developed key messages to raise community awareness that reached to approximately 3,000 people. It was found that the community can't buy equipment to clean their land and pay for the running costs due to their poor economic situation.

Target areas selected by SARC for the DREF are remote and the level of chronic poverty is very high. SARC undertook thorough community engagement and accountability, dissemination of SARC's role and mandate to community leaders, stakeholders, and population to gain acceptance. This was done in parallel with and during the multi-sector needs assessment through FGDs and vital to explain the criteria for the beneficiary selection in a context where the level of chronic poverty is very high, and the operation can only cover a proportion of those severely affected.

## Strengthen National Society

### *Outcome 1: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected*

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of volunteers that are debriefed and protected	634	634

### *Output 1.1: Effective and respected surge capacity mechanism is maintained.*

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of surge deployments	1	0

### *Output 1.2: IFRC and NS are visible, trusted and effective advocates on humanitarian*

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of communication products	n/a	n/a

### *Output 1.3: IFRC produces high-quality research and evaluation that informs advocacy, resource mobilization and programming.*

Indicators:	Target	Actual
# of produced reports Include LL WS report	1	0

### **Progress towards outcomes**

SARC mobilised 634 staff and volunteers who were actively engaged in the rapid assessment, detailed assessment, and relief distribution activities. Prior to the detailed assessment SARC conducted a two-day workshop from 22 to 23 December 2020 and trained 86 volunteers on data collection process.

SARC communication team, updated its official Facebook page with photos and updates on the wildfire response on a regular basis. There is a plan to produce posters in order to disseminate information related to cash assistance process in the target communities.

SARC will use its existing MEAL and IM team to assist the cash team in monitoring the cash assistance intervention, including PDM, volunteers visit, FGDs, consultation and feedbacks to the FSP as per SARC humanitarian assistance principles. SARC management wants to ensure collection of learnings and lessons from the cash pilot to strengthen SARC's cash response readiness, systems and procedures including coordination among departments for the future. There will be a lesson learnt workshop to capture the learning from cash pilot and FSP tendering process at the end of the operation.

## D. Financial Report

The operating budget and response activities remain unchanged.

# DREF Operation

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2020/10-2021/01	Operation	MDRSY005
Budget Timeframe	2020/10-2021/01	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 15/Mar/2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

## MDRSY005 - Syria - Wildfires

Operating Timeframe: 22 Oct 2020 to 28 Feb 2021

### I. Summary

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funds &amp; Other Income</b>	<b>510,650</b>
DREF Allocations	510,650
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>-500,000</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>10,650</b>

### II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction			0
AOF2 - Shelter			0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	196,750	500,000	-303,250
AOF4 - Health			0
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene			0
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
<b>Area of focus Total</b>	<b>196,750</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>-303,250</b>
SF11 - Strengthen National Societies	93,720		93,720
SF12 - Effective international disaster management			0
SF13 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SF14 - Ensure a strong IFRC			0
<b>Strategy for implementation Total</b>	<b>93,720</b>		<b>93,720</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>290,470</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>-209,530</b>

# DREF Operation

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2020/10-2021/01	Operation	MDRSY005
Budget Timeframe	2020/10-2021/01	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 15/Mar/2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

## MDRSY005 - Syria - Wildfires

Operating Timeframe: 22 Oct 2020 to 28 Feb 2021

### III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
<b>Relief items, Construction, Supplies</b>	<b>184,742</b>		<b>184,742</b>
Cash Disbursement	184,742		184,742
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>68,000</b>		<b>68,000</b>
International Staff	8,000		8,000
Volunteers	60,000		60,000
<b>Workshops &amp; Training</b>	<b>16,000</b>		<b>16,000</b>
Workshops & Training	16,000		16,000
<b>General Expenditure</b>	<b>4,000</b>		<b>4,000</b>
Communications	4,000		4,000
<b>Operational Provisions</b>		<b>469,484</b>	<b>-469,484</b>
Operational Provisions		469,484	-469,484
<b>Indirect Costs</b>	<b>17,728</b>	<b>30,516</b>	<b>-12,788</b>
Programme & Services Support Recover	17,728	30,516	-12,788
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>290,470</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>-209,530</b>

## Reference documents

Click here for:

- Previous Appeals and updates
- [Emergency Plan of Action \(EPoA\)](#)

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

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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 Humanitarian 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.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



**Save lives.**  
protect livelihoods,  
and strengthen recovery  
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**  
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion  
and a culture of  
**non-violence** and peace.