

Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) Belarus: Floods Preparedness

DREF operation n° MDRBY003 04 March 2013

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 88,166 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Belarus Red Cross Society in strengthening disaster response preparedness for delivering immediate assistance to some 10,000 people affected by the upcoming spring floods throughout Belarus. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: In January-February 2013 Belarus saw immense snowfalls with freezing temperatures. The ground now begins to thaw, and the snow is melting. Based on previous experiences, national experts¹ expect the beginning of extreme increase of water levels in the first half of March. In case of a sudden rise in temperatures during the beginning of March, the spring floods will be the heaviest to affect Belarus for the past decades.



Belarus Red Cross heavy duty vehicle on mission in Gomel region. Photo: Belarus Red Cross

The Ministry of Emergencies has officially requested Belarus Red Cross to play a support role in providing immediate assistance to the flooded communities. Belarus Red Cross has already started preparations to the forthcoming floods. Red Cross volunteer emergency response teams (a total of 356 people) are prepared to be deployed to the affected regions to implement relief distributions, namely blankets, food and hygiene items, to pump out water from flooded houses, and to help in evacuating people and their property. The items to be distributed will be procured in advance and prepositioned near the potentially affected areas. Support from Belarus Red Cross in water search and rescue activities will also be needed during the floods operation. In 2012 four missing people died in the flooded regions because they were found only too late.

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed by 4th June 2013; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 4th September 2013).

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

¹ Hydrologic Forecasts Department of the National Hydrometeorological Centre

The situation

By all appearances, this year spring floods will occur due to the high snow cover that fell during the winter. The average snow depth is currently around 45-76 cm depending on the region. In some lands that are highly exposed to floods, the snow layers exceed the average by 100-150 per cent. Most rivers are covered with a 14-45 cm thick ice. However, the rise of water levels on warmer days is registered at 17 cm per day. In some areas the water has covered the icy surface. The drainage basin of the river Pripyat has already started to be overflowed (in the region of Chernichi village), as well as Neman (near Belitsa), Ptich, Ubort, Sluch, Styr, Shchara, Lesnaya and Stviga rivers.

The water level on the river Pripyat near the town of Petrikov has almost reached the dangerously high level (780 cm above the station's zero) which previously meant flooding of road sections, residential houses and farmsteads in Petrikovski region of Gomel oblast. As of 28th February the water level was 772 cm with a daily rise up to 5 cm. In the coming days the rise of the water level on the river Pripyat near Petrikov will continue and may well reach and exceed the level of inundation.

According to the preliminary forecasts by the Ministry of Emergencies, approximately 10,000 people will be affected in Gomel, Brest, and Vitebsk regions, as well as in some parts of Minsk and Grodno regions. Based on the current hydro-meteorological conditions, in the coming period floods and overflow of waters can surge residential and industrial buildings, bridges and road sections on the territory of the following regions: Brestski, Pinski, Luninetski and Stolinski regions of Brest oblast, Verkhnedvinski, Miorski, Sharkovshchinski, Shumilinski, Gorodokski and Beshenkovichski regions of Vitebsk oblast, Borisovski, Berezinski, Stolbtsovski and Molodechnenski regions of Minsk oblast, Bobruiski, Chauski, Mstislavski, Slavgorodski and Mogilevski regions of Mogilev oblast, Rogachevski, Zhitkovichski, Petrikovski, Mozyrski, Rechitski, Checherski, Gomelski, Loyevski, Lelchitski, Yelski, Narovlyanski, Kalinkovichski, Svetlogorski, Zhlobinski, Vetkovski, Dobrushski and Braginski regions of Gomel oblast.

Coordination and partnerships

The overall coordination of the response and preparedness to the floods rests with the Ministry of Emergencies, which has already started the necessary preparations. The Ministry's emergency units are currently pumping water out from flooded roads. The Ministry also seeks assistance from Belarus Red Cross; the request was forwarded in an official letter, asking for pumping out water from flooded houses, as well as water search and rescue of people since the Government's own capacities are not sufficient. The affected population cannot afford purchasing power pumps themselves. Also the search and rescue of missing people is not possible without special resources and equipment. The Ministry of Emergencies therefore supports the initiative of the Belarus Red Cross for involving specially trained volunteers in water search and rescue activities of the missing people. Red Cross regional branches have been informed accordingly.

Belarus Red Cross is participating in the regional steering committees on preparedness and response to floods, which enables the National Society to monitor closely the situation at local level and respond when required. The Ministry of Emergencies and its departments provide the National Society with hands-on information on the evolving situation and the needs of the people.

The IFRC Representation in Belarus is cooperating closely with the National Society's leadership and disaster management team at headquarters level in assessing the needs and the response to the evolving floods situation. The operation will be coordinated by Belarus Red Cross branch chairpersons in their areas of responsibility. Red Cross volunteers will implement the delivery of the emergency assistance.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Belarus Red Cross has started active preparations to the upcoming floods in accordance with its contingency plan. Red Cross volunteer emergency response teams (a total of 150 people) are prepared to be deployed to affected regions to provide immediate assistance to the affected population. In addition, 105 volunteers of Belarus Red Cross general search and the rescue team 'ANGEL' are ready to go and conduct search and rescue activities for the people missing in floods. 25 more volunteers of the Belarus Red Cross club 'Vnedorozhnik 4x4' (Off-roader), as well as 56 trained RC volunteers on five radio channels are ready to provide transportation and communication support. Based on the MoU signed in 2012, 20 trained RC volunteers from the Coca-Cola Beverages Belarus Company are ready to join the core Belarus Red Cross teams. Altogether, 356 volunteers and 70 staff will be mobilized by the operation.

The needs

Currently, around 10,000 people are at risk for being affected by the forthcoming spring floods as a result of the snow melt. Out of these, 3,000 people are estimated² as the most vulnerable, whose access to appropriate hygiene and food is of a concern. These people who are the most at risk in case floods happen will have an urgent need for warm blankets, food and hygiene support.

The communities possibly affected by the floods will also seek for reliable information on the risks, assistance in evacuation and search and rescue of missing people.

To provide effective response at all levels, Belarus Red Cross water search and rescue teams need the following items:

- One inflatable motor boat with compressor for evacuation and search & rescue activities
- Motor pumps for pumping out water from flooded houses;
- Life saving boards for transportation of victims and their belongings (up to 100 kg);
- Waterproof thermal uniforms and life saving jackets for Red Cross volunteer emergency teams;
- Searchlights for search and rescue works, illumination in dark time while pumping out water;
- Communication equipment (radio station) for coordination of volunteer rescue operations in the affected areas;
- Search and rescue tools and materials (ropes, navigators)
- Training for volunteers on working with the new equipment and searching people lost in flooded areas.

The table below lists the needs of 3,000 most vulnerable floods-affected people as identified by the Belarus Red Cross:

Item	No. of units
Complementary food parcels (canned meat and fish, cereals, crisp bread, bottled drinking water, chocolate)	3,000
Complementary hygiene kits (soap, disinfectants, napkins)	3,000
Blankets	500

The proposed operation

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
Outcome: Resilience of the potentially affected communities is increased by a preposition of the emergency stock for 3,000 vulnerable people
Output: Access to complementary basic food and hygiene needs of 3,000 people is ensured during the period of spring floods
Activities planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local procurement of emergency items and prepositioning at Belarus Red Cross central and regional warehouses• Advancing to the affected regions• Coordination with local emergency departments and local authorities• Prepositioning of procured materials close to the affected areas• Preparation of distribution plan according the existing contingency plan• Monitoring of procurement and supply chain

² The estimation is made based on previous experiences and the numbers of lonely elderly, disabled and other disadvantaged people residing in the flood risk areas.

Early warning, disaster response preparedness

Outcome: The operational capacities in the country are strengthened to cope with the forthcoming floods

Output 1: Belarus Red Cross has mobilized its search and rescue teams, volunteers and materials for effective response

Activities planned:

- Procure essential equipment and materials to increase Red Cross disaster response capacity
- Pre-position the supplies and materials in the regional Red Cross branches
- Mobilize and equip volunteers, including insurance, uniforms and visibility
- Conduct the refresh training necessary to carry out the operation as specified above

Output 2: The emergency telephone number will be activated for possible floods and awareness material will be distributed as prevention in the affected area

Activities planned:

- Procure essential equipment and materials for the emergency number
- Production and dissemination of awareness materials
- Coordination with local emergency departments and local authorities
- Monitoring and reporting

The Belarus Red Cross Headquarters, in close cooperation with IFRC Country Representation, will monitor the progress and provide the necessary technical expertise. The hydro-meteorological situation will be reported, and once floods materialize the National Society will consider the revision of the DREF operation to reflect the actual activities implemented. Weekly operation updates will be sent to the IFRC Europe Zone Office.

Visibility of the work of the Red Cross volunteers will be ensured during the operation through the local media.

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
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Click here

1. To see the DREF operation Budget **[below](#)**
 2. To see the Map of the affected area **[below](#)**
 3. **[here](#)** to return to the title page
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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

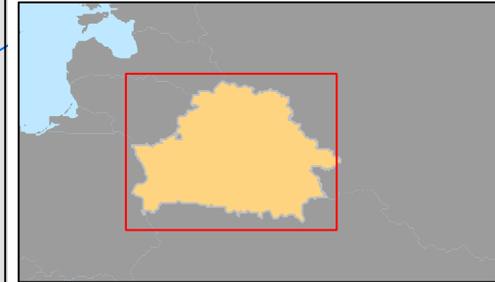
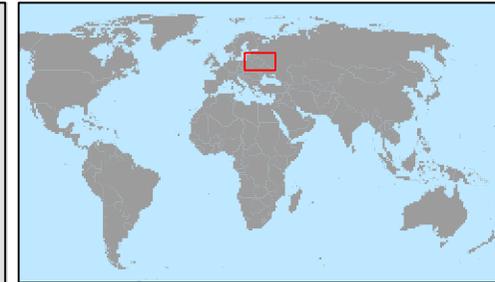
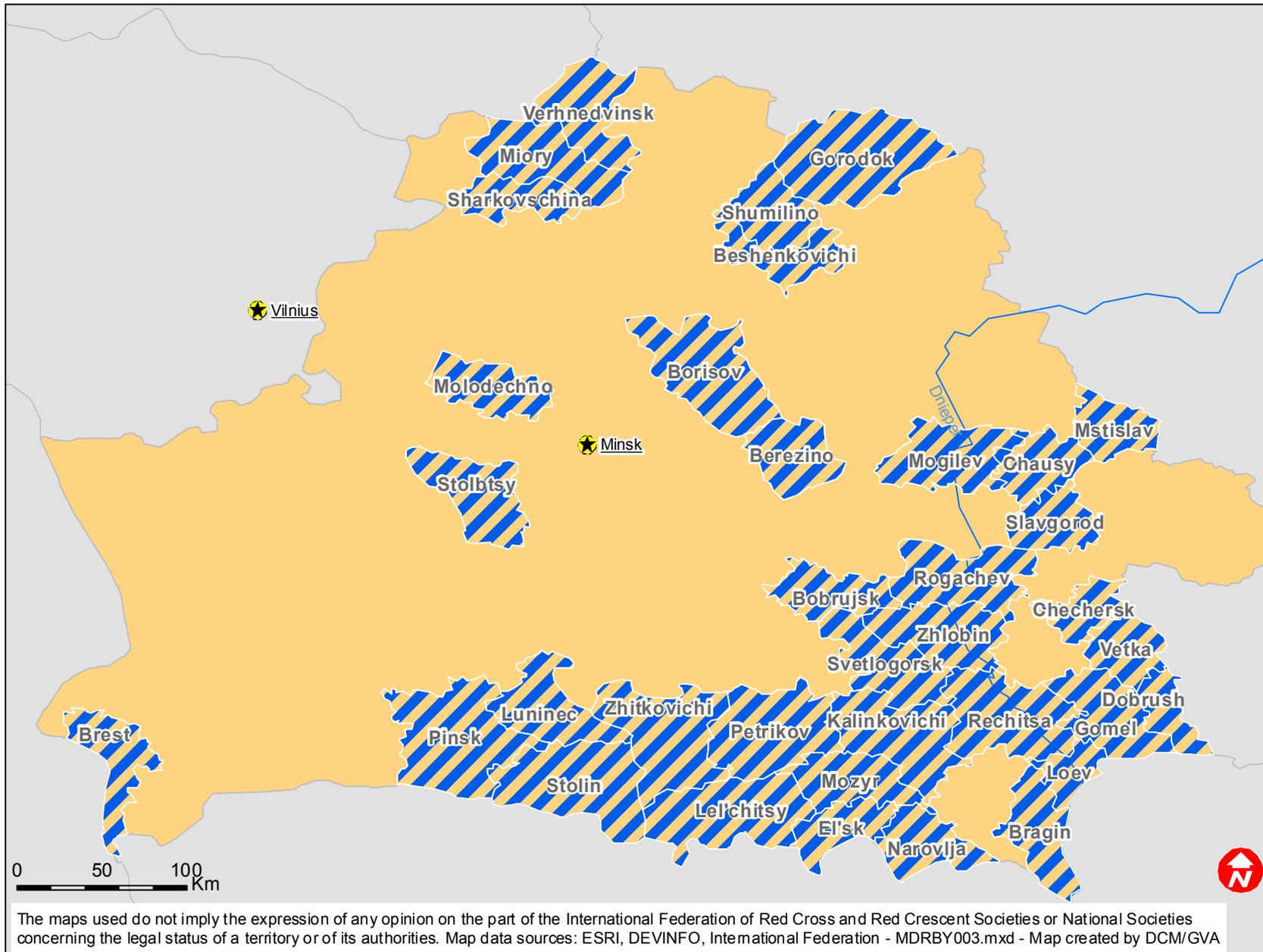
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MDRBY003 Belarus: Floods Preparedness

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	16,200
Food	18,000
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	12,000
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Utensils & Tools	5,900
Other Supplies & Services	2,500
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	54,600
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	1,000
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	5,000
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	6,000
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	900
Transport & Vehicle Costs	5,000
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	5,900
International Staff	0
National Staff	2,000
National Society Staff	2,785
Volunteers	2,200
Total PERSONNEL	6,985
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	3,000
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	3,000
Travel	
Information & Public Relations	3,000
Office Costs	
Communications	400
Financial Charges	
Other General Expenses	
Shared Office and Services Costs	2,900
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	6,300
Partner National Societies	
Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	5,381
Total INDIRECT COSTS	5,381
TOTAL BUDGET	88,166



Belarus: Spring Floods Preparedness



 Regions at risk