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Final Report

Namibia: Fire Accident

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF	Operation n° MDRNA011
Date of Issue: 21 May 2021	Glide number: FR-2020-000174-NAM
Operation start date: 5 August 2020	Operation end date: 28 Feb 2021
Host National Society: Namibia Red Cross	Operation budget: CHF 92,961
Number of people affected: 1,200	Number of people assisted: 1,200
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners currently actively involved in the operation: British Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Erongo Regional Council, Walvis Bay Municipality and Private Companies	

<Please click [here](#) for the financial report and [here](#) for the contacts>

The major donors and partners of the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) include the Red Cross Societies and governments of Belgium, Britain, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland, as well as DG ECHO and Blizzard Entertainment, Mondelez International Foundation, Fortive Corporation, and other corporate and private donors. On behalf of Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS), the IFRC would like to extend gratitude to all for their generous contributions.

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the disaster

On 26 July 2020, a devastating fire of undetermined origin broke out, in Otweya informal settlement in Walvis Bay Rural Constituency, Erongo region. The fire resulted in the destruction of houses (shacks), leaving 154 households/924 people homeless and killing a 20-month-old boy died. The fire destroyed half of the shacks in Otweya informal settlement with affected families losing everything ranging from food, shelter, and other household belongings as they could hardly salvage anything. Hundreds of people, including children, live in deplorable conditions at the Otweya informal settlement. The affected settlement is one of the main areas highly impacted by the onset of COVID-19 cases and the destructive fire increased their vulnerability to Covid-19 spread. Affected families were relocated to a nearby site where they were accommodated in make-shift tents and some in classrooms.



Distribution of Hygiene Items, Photo by Namibia RC

On 5 August 2020, a CHF 92,961 [DREF grant](#) was allocated to Namibia Red Cross Society to provide emergency assistance to the affected families of Walvis Bay, while ensuring safety against further spread of Covid 19. On 08 December, an [Operation Update](#) was published, extending the operating timeframe by two months, to enable IFRC and Namibia Red Cross to complete the procurement process for replenishing items utilized during the response to the fire accident.

Summary of response

Overview of Operating National Society Response

Responding to the fire incident, on 27 July 2020, Namibia Red Cross Society (NRCS) availed 60 family tents and 154 family kits as immediate relief assistance for the affected people.

The distributed materials were part of wide IFRC preparedness stock (funded by British Red Cross) strategically kept in Windhoek, Namibia, to support locations within the Southern Africa Cluster.

This stock was replenished through this DREF operation. The NRCS has no branch in the affected region/area, however, it deployed two of its Disaster Management staff who carried out assessments together with the government authorities, engaged stakeholders, supported beneficiary identification and verification and distribution of the relief items.

Table 1: Summary of National Society Response:

Activities	People/Households reached (where applicable)				# of item distributed
	Total	HHS	Male	Female	
Provision of Family tents	188	60	89	99	60 Tents
Distribution of 154 Family kits	924	154	443	481	154 Family kits
Distribution of hand sanitizers		254			508 x 330ml
Distribution of mask	200				200 x face mask
Distribution of hygiene pack		200			Mixed hygiene items
Volunteer mobilization and training on RCCE/ECV	11		2	9	
Health awareness raising	1200		576	642	550 IEC materials 350 condoms

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The British Red Cross in-country delegate was instrumental in the design of the operation and guiding the National Society on technical aspects during the implementation. The National Society is receiving financial support from British, Spanish and German Red Cross societies towards livelihood, disaster preparedness and National Society Development.

IFRC Pretoria Delegation gave technical support from the onset of the incident and this continued throughout the implementation. IFRC Procurement Unit in Nairobi supported the National Society with relief stock replenishment from Dubai. ICRC Office in Pretoria has been consulted by IFRC Delegation and offered to support the National Society with incorporation of relevant elements of Safer Access in volunteers training.

Overview of other actors' actions in country

The Erongo regional council coordinated the response working closely with the Walvis Municipality. The government evacuated the affected people and offered them temporary accommodation in public places such as classrooms and in a few tents available.

The government supported the National Society with the transportation of relief items from Windhoek warehouse to Walvis Bay. As auxiliary to the public authorities, NRCS maintains a strong relationship with government bodies through participation or collaboration with the National Disaster Risk Management Committee (NDRMC); Regional Disaster Risk Management Committee (RDRMC) and Constituency office.

The NRCS Secretary General attended the meeting that was called by the Secretary to the Cabinet, who chairs the NDRMC, to discuss the response plan for the Walvis Bay situation. The government requested support from the National Society and some other institutions. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration issued re-issued the national documents for the affected people, that got lost in the fire. No UN agency or any other players were involved in the operation.

Needs analysis and scenario planning

The local government authorities conducted assessments to confirm the preliminary status of the situation and started with registration of families affected by the fire. Immediate needs identified included shelter, food, water, and sanitation facilities as well as household items (blankets, mattresses, clothing and hygiene items). The government has started the process of providing permanent houses to the affected people and all are anticipated to be housed by end May 2021.

The original settlement had few sanitation facilities, but the local municipality provided with five mobile toilets for the relocation site.

Most of the residents were under economic pressure as their livelihoods (formal and informal) had been disrupted by COVID-19 lockdown measures. Although the government provided food to vulnerable families, resources were not enough to reach all the families in need. The fire exacerbated the situation as it destroyed the coping capabilities through the loss experienced.

Affected families were left homeless by the fire. After the incident, families were moved into classrooms and into the tents that the local authorities managed to mobilize immediately. Additional tents (60) provided by the Red Cross helped to house 60 families, as classrooms and some bigger tents, being shared, were not conducive for family settings. The shelter support provided indirectly contributed to decongestion in classrooms and big tents, reducing the risk of COVID transmission among affected families. Congestion is one of the major challenges in the area, as in most instances a shack accommodates more than six people of different age groups, and this worsened the COVID-19 situation in the area. Tents are still being used by the families as they await their chances to be provided with permanent houses.

At the time of the fire, 95% of the COVID-19 confirmed cases in Namibia were recorded in Walvis Bay. In addition, Namibia has one of the highest per capita TB/HIV coinfection burden in the world and is ranked by the World Health Organization (WHO) among the top 30 high TB burden countries in the world (CDC Namibia, 2019). Overcrowding and poor ventilation in situations of displacement allow diseases like TB to thrive. The relocation of the families did not impact their access to health services, including HIV/TB and maternal and child health, as relocation site was not far from their original settlement. Normal health services continued to be accessed by the communities. To complement the efforts of the health facilities, which were overstretched due to COVID, NRCS volunteers were trained in prevalent health matters (COVID, TB, HIV, hygiene promotion etc.) to strengthen community-based health services.

The municipality provided the displaced families with electricity and piped water. At least five mobile toilets were provided by the Municipality. The need for building hand washing stations was identified and following this, hand washing stations were set up throughout the camp utilising Covid Operation resources. Volunteers created awareness on hygiene and sanitation related matters to avoid an outbreak of waterborne diseases. No disease outbreak was reported in the relocation site. Families received hygiene packs including soap, hand sanitizers and cloth face masks as well as dental and menstrual hygiene items to promote good hygiene.

Risk Analysis

The DREF operation, the needs assessment and its operational strategy considered the risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic and was 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 operational area was heavily affected by COVID-19 and remained under lockdown, stage 4, after the whole country was moved to stage 3 with most of the measures eased up. Although residents of Erongo region have been heavily burdened by the measures and demanding for easing of lockdown measures, no major protests or disruptions were reported during the response.

The level of infection in the area however presented a huge risk at ground level for people living in communal shelters and those responding to the outbreak. The NRCS explored preventive measure to safeguard the responders and affected people e.g., provision of PPE, emphasizing social distancing, use of sanitizers and frequent hand washing. The activities were also to follow the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization regulations on hygiene and social distancing especially during distribution of HHIs. No National Society staff or volunteers were reported to have contracted Covid-19 during this operation.

The police provided security at relocation site, and ensuring the safety of affected people, especially women and children and also re-enforcing adherence to COVID-19 preventative measures. Electricity was also provided to light up the relocation site at night for the displaced communities. No cases of GBV or PSEA were reported during the implementation period of this operation.

An anticipated risk which materialized was the delay in procurement of items to be replenished. Although the risk was anticipated and requesting the operation timeframe to be four (4) months to ensure completion of the process was taken as a mitigation measure, the process was only completely within 6th month, so to accommodate this, the operation was extended for two months in December 2020 through the [Operation Update](#). This is because there were changes in the global stock borrowing system.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The main objective of this DREF operation was to provide emergency relief to 924 people (154 families) in Otweya informal settlement in the areas of shelter and household items, as well as the health needs of people housed in evacuation centres.

The National Society reached 1,200 people (200 HH) through this intervention, while additional 46 vulnerable households (276 people) were reached with hygiene packs.

Proposed strategy

A total number of 11 volunteers were engaged in the operation. Capacity building in RCCE, CEA, and PGI was prioritized to ensure services provided are not compromised in any way. Red Cross volunteers have been providing relief and creating awareness among the affected population.

Activities implemented included:

a) Shelter & household essentials

The NRCS focused on the provision of immediate shelter services to households who were displaced by the fire. As per plan, the National Society carried out the following activities:

- Distribution of 60 family tents (1 per household), and this has in total benefited 188 people (89 females and 99 males).
- Distribution of 154 household kits (1 per household), altogether 154 household benefitted from the kits (443 males and 481 females).
- Volunteers raised awareness on protection, gender-based violence, fire safety and information on where to look for help as part of the awareness package. The training that was given to the volunteers mainstreamed these elements.

The relief items distributed were part of the IFRC pre-positioned preparedness stocks (family tents and household kits) stored in NRCS warehouse in Windhoek. The relief items are funded by British Red Cross and were released by IFRC Nairobi Logistics office for immediate use and replenishment.

Apart from support given by the Red Cross, the private sector donated relief items, which complemented what the government and Red Cross provided. The government transported the relief items from Windhoek to Walvis Bay, while the Walvis Bay Municipality provided the storage space.

b) Health and care

NRCS ensured provision of community-based disease control and health promotion by the 11 volunteers who were trained using the RCCE and ECV toolkit the week of the 17th of August 2020. Trained volunteers disseminated information in the community on COVID-19 as well as other relevant public health matters such as diarrheal diseases, TB, and HIV/AIDS. Overall, 350 condoms provided by the Ministry of Health and were distributed among the affected people.

Hygiene items (700 sets) including 5 bars of soaps and 5 cloth masks (200) were distributed to all 154 families to promote hygiene. Families (154) received one kit each during the first distribution and two kits per family during the second one to minimize distribution logistics. The pack consisted of soap x 3 (175g), toothpaste x 3 (100ml), toothbrush x 6, sanitary pads and tampons x 3 packs, Vaseline x 1 (450ml), hand sanitisers x 1 (500ml), disposable gloves x 2 pairs, face mask x 2, face cloths x3 and diapers x 1 pack (50). Due to competitive prices offered with the bulk procurement, there were additional items acquired that allowed families with babies and women to get additional items such as diapers and pads. Additional 46 vulnerable households that were impacted by the fire incident received hygiene kits.

Community engagement and accountability (CEA): Through community meetings, staff and volunteers engaged the community and discussed aspects such as distribution plans and feedback on the items and services provided. Suggestion boxes were also used, kept by the community leaders and feedback was given during community meetings. Affected families expressed appreciation for the support received, however due to general poverty in the area, there was a bit of tension as unaffected people wanted to benefit from the operation. The situation was resolved through engagement of community leaders and volunteers explaining the purpose of the operation.


Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI): Volunteer training included a session on gender-based violence and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse risks. Volunteers in return, disseminated information to the affected people during awareness sessions including where to seek help and report incidences of abuse. Families with children and vulnerable members were prioritized, specifically getting additional hygiene items and tents.

Continued assessments and monitoring were an integral part of the operation and this ensured that the services provided are in line with the evolving situation/needs on the ground.

Post-distribution monitoring sessions were carried out to understand the usefulness of distributed items and get feedback on the relevance of relief items provided as well as distribution approaches used. Beneficiaries appreciated the support provided with most recommending that food should have been considered as most people have lost their income due to Covid-19. There were no reports of misuse or exchange/sale of relief items distributed by the affected people.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of affected households that improve their living conditions according to the emergency housing rules	100% or 154 HH	100%
# of families provided with tents	60	60
# of families provided with household kits	154	154
# of joint assessments carried out with NS participation	1	2
# of coordination meetings attended	3	5
# of shelter items replenished	60 tents and 154 household kits	60 tents and 154 household kits
# households benefiting from safe shelter messages	154HH	154HH
# of volunteers trained on safe shelter	15 volunteers	11 volunteers
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>As highlighted during the assessment, one of the pressing needs of the affected population was shelter and household items. The National Society team carried out joint assessments with local stakeholders to validate the needs of the vulnerable people. Continuous assessments of needs or any other emerging situation continued throughout the implementation. The NRCS distributed 60 tents and 154 household kits to the families affected. Dissemination of fire safety messages by the volunteers was done on a regular basis to reduce similar incidences in the future. Distributed tents afforded dignity to families and helped with decongestion which lowered the risk of Covid-19 transmission among the affected people.</p> <p>The household items distributed gave the families access to basic item that were all destroyed by the fire. This was more appreciated by the women who are tasked with the responsibility of providing food for the families.</p> <p>The team attended coordination meetings with the Erongo Regional Council, Walvis Bay Municipality and the Erongo Ministry of Health and Social Services and outlined how the National Society would support the affected families. The information sharing helped eliminate duplication of services by stakeholders. The NS also managed to distribute 700 hygiene kits to the fire victims. Due to small size of the operation, only 11 volunteers were mobilised to support the operation and they were all trained in relevant technical aspects include safe shelter. All 154 households benefitted from the safe shelter awareness messages.</p>		
Challenges		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitation on number of people allowed to gather due to Covid-19 lengthened the distribution processes. • Security was a challenge especially during the distribution of hygiene packs as adjacent communities felt they also needed to benefit from relief items as they are equally vulnerable. Engagement of community leaders to explain the rational of the operation diffused the tension. 		

Lessons Learned		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed vulnerability and capacity assessment needs to be done, to be followed by the design of long-term disaster risk reduction programme. There is a need for basic First Aid and firefighting trainings to be provided to the communities, to be able respond quicker in emergency situations. The Red Cross will work together with Walvis Bay Municipality to jointly mobilise resources and ensure these trainings are prioritised in the future. 		
 <p>Health People reached: 1,200 Male: 576 Female: 624</p>		
Indicators:	Target	Actual
% of affected people targeted provided with hygiene items to reduce immediate risks	100% or 154 households	129%, 200HH
Number of hygiene packs distributed	154	700
% of affected people targeted with community-based disease control	100% or 154 households	100%
Percentage of people reached with information to reduce their health risk factors	50%	100%
Number of people reached with health messages	924	1,200
Number of volunteers trained on health matters	15	11
Number of IEC materials distributed	500	550
% of affected population practicing good hygiene	80%	80%
Number of condoms distributed	200	350
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>The National Society procured and distributed 700 hygiene packs that were distributed to all affected families and additional 46 vulnerable households. The pack consisted of soap x 3 (175g), toothpaste x 3 (100ml), toothbrush x 6, sanitary pads and tampons x 3 packs, Vaseline x 1 (450ml), hand sanitiser x 1 (500ml), disposable gloves x 2 pairs, face mask x 2, face cloths x3 and diapers x 1 pack (50).</p> <p>The RCCE/EVC training that was carried out for the volunteers included introduction to prevention of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and TB as well promotion of general hygiene. IEC materials were printed and distributed, using already approved materials from the Ministry of Health. In total 550 IEC materials were distributed during the operation. Awareness sessions especially on Covid prevention due to high number of cases that was in Walvis Bay at the onset of this operation. Distributed hygiene materials contributed to prevention of not only hygiene related diseases but to Covid-19 too.</p> <p>It is worth noting that the Covid-19 cases in Walvis Bay have gone down and all movement restrictions have been lifted. Residents are required to use masks and to socially distance.</p> <p>Overall, NS reached more people than planned with hygiene kits and sensitization, summing up to 1,200 people (576 males and 624 females).</p>		
Challenges		
Social distancing was a general challenge as the living space for the families were limited.		
Lessons Learned		
When distributing diapers, one needs to consider right sizes are bought to ensure they fit the babies. Some mothers had to exchange diapers amongst themselves after the first distribution. The sizes matter was however addressed during the procurement of items for the last combined distributions.		

Strategies for Implementation

Outcome 1:

Indicators:	Target	Actual
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Number of volunteers insured	15	11
% of operational decisions based on community feedback	At least 70%	70%
# of monitoring visits	4	4
# of community meetings organized	At least 3	5
# of IFRC monitoring visits	2	1
# of Lessons learned workshop conducted	1	1
Narrative description of achievements		
<p>The National Society decided that the 11 volunteers mobilised would form part of the National Society volunteers insured through IFRC on an annual basis. On an ongoing basis, community meetings were organised for dissemination of information and distribution of relief items. Community meetings formed the basis of community feedback to the National Society. The DM technical staff of the National Society visited the operation to monitor and support the volunteers as required. The visits were also used to engage communities, coordinate with stakeholders which resulted in successful implementation of the project.</p> <p>IFRC Operations Manager joined the Lessons learned meeting which was conducted in Walvis Bay in December 2020. The Lessons learned meeting was attended by stakeholders such as Constituency Councillor, Municipality Fire Department, Office of the Mayor of Walvis Bay, Ministry of Health as well as Ministry of Safety and Security. National Society and volunteers as well as the senior management of the National Society also attended the meeting. All external stakeholders appreciated the quick Red Cross response and requested for the opening of a Red Cross branch in Walvis Bay.</p>		
Challenges		
<p>Due to the absence of a RC branch in the area, supporting volunteers was a bit challenging as it was being done remotely at the onset of implementation due to movement restrictions. The Covid-19 travel restrictions have allowed IFRC to conduct only one supervisory visit towards the end of the operation.</p>		
Lessons Learned		
<p>Recommendations were made on how to strengthen disaster risk management in the Walvis Municipality and exploring ways of keeping disaster preparedness stock. A recommendation was also made to make coordination structure clear to avoid delay in response.</p>		

D. Financial Report

The overall amount allocated for this operation was CHF 92,961 of which CHF 72,415 (78%) were expensed. A balance of CHF 20,546 will be returned to the DREF.

Explanation of variances:

- **Water Sanitation and Hygiene:** This budget line was expensed by CHF 8,989 despite not being budgeted for due wrong budgeting under health, whereas this is a WASH activity. Reporting has been done under WASH, which has created this variance.
- **Teaching materials:** This budget line remained unspent because of wrong expense booking, the IEC materials expenses were booked under a wrong account code of Information and Public Relations.
- **Transport and Vehicles Costs:** This budget line was expensed by CHF 1,144 despite not being budgeted, due to wrong account coding, as this was budgeted for under relief/shelter.
- **Logistics Services:** This budget line was expensed by CHF 3,547 despite not being budgeted because transportation costs that were booked on this instead of shelter/relief budget line.
- **National Society Staff:** An over expenditure of CHF 1,429 (39.7%) was recorded on this line due to payment of hotel isolations costs by staff, as it was a government requirement when the operational area was under lockdown.
- **Volunteers:** The budget line was overspent by CHF 316 (17.8%) because involvement of volunteers for more days than was planned for at the design stage.
- **Information and Public Relations:** This budget line was expensed by CHF 1,498 despite not being budgeted for due to IEC materials and training materials that were booked here.

Contact information

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.

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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

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2020/08-2021/04	Operation	MDRNA011
Budget Timeframe	2020/08-2021/02	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 19/May/2021

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRNA011 - Namibia - Fire Accident

Operating Timeframe: 05 Aug 2020 to 28 Feb 2021

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	92,961
DREF Allocations	92,961
Expenditure	-72,415
Closing Balance	20,546

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction			0
AOF2 - Shelter	58,547	46,623	11,924
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs			0
AOF4 - Health	12,746	11,103	1,643
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene			0
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	71,293	57,726	13,567
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	10,951	2,295	8,656
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management	4,059	10,460	-6,401
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners	5,799	1,900	3,899
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC	858	35	824
Strategy for implementation Total	21,667	14,689	6,978
Grand Total	92,961	72,415	20,546

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2020/08-2021/04	Operation	MDRNA011
Budget Timeframe	2020/08-2021/02	Budget	APPROVED

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MDRNA011 - Namibia - Fire Accident

Operating Timeframe: 05 Aug 2020 to 28 Feb 2021

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	58,591	41,945	16,646
Shelter - Relief	30,448	15,150	15,299
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene		8,989	-8,989
Medical & First Aid	11,968	2,914	9,054
Teaching Materials	545		545
Other Supplies & Services	15,630	14,892	738
Logistics, Transport & Storage	7,327	10,668	-3,341
Distribution & Monitoring	7,327	5,977	1,350
Transport & Vehicles Costs		1,144	-1,144
Logistics Services		3,547	-3,547
Personnel	5,366	7,111	-1,745
National Society Staff	3,594	5,023	-1,429
Volunteers	1,772	2,088	-316
Workshops & Training	4,356	2,616	1,740
Workshops & Training	4,356	2,616	1,740
General Expenditure	11,647	5,656	5,991
Travel	4,356	1,136	3,220
Information & Public Relations		1,498	-1,498
Office Costs	327	245	82
Communications	52	66	-14
Financial Charges	806	745	60
Other General Expenses	6,106	1,966	4,140
Indirect Costs	5,674	4,420	1,254
Programme & Services Support Recover	5,674	4,420	1,254
Grand Total	92,961	72,415	20,545