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## DREF Final report Belarus: Extreme winter condition

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

**DREF operation n° MDRBY002  
GLIDE n° CW-2013-000010-BLR  
20 June 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 25,631 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013 to support the Belarus Red Cross Society in delivering immediate assistance to some 5,000 beneficiaries.**

**Summary:** Freezing weather killed four people in Belarus in January 2013 when frosts went down to minus 25 degrees Celsius. Northern winds of six to seven meters per second aggravated the severe frosty conditions.

As soon as the harsh winter weather started, Belarus Red Cross immediately mobilised its trained volunteers at the regional branches' level. A total of 255 volunteers were engaged in the action. The activities within the DREF supported operation "Extreme Winter Conditions" were running in 45 towns of Belarus.



Belarus Red Cross DM coordinator just opening a warming station to assist the homeless in Minsk.  
*Photo: Belarusian Telegraph Agency BELTA*

During two months, the DREF allocations supported the Belarus Red Cross in assisting a total of 6,095 people including 1,521 homeless. Key activities of Belarus Red Cross response teams included the following:

- setting up 190 Red Cross distribution and warming-up stations to assist the affected population;
- deployment of six Red Cross emergency response teams at places where the homeless gather;
- search and rescue of people missing in severe winter conditions;
- assisting with the communication between the affected people and the authorities.

This operation was successfully completed by 25 March 2013.

The major donors and partners of DREF include the Australian, American and Belgian Governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Government, the Danish Red Cross and the Danish Government, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Irish and the Italian Governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg Government, the Monaco Red Cross and the Monaco Government, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Netherlands Government, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors.

On behalf of the Belarus National Society, the IFRC would like to extend their thanks to all donors and partners for their generous contributions.

CHF 25,631 was allocated for the implementation of the operation. The utilisation rate is 98.5%. There is a remaining final balance of CHF 391 left, which will be returned to the DREF.

[<click here for the DREF final financial report; here for contact details >](#)

## The situation

The second half of January 2013 was marked by severe frosts and snowfalls, for which many citizens of Belarus turned to be unprepared. The people were affected by the extreme frosts. The temperatures were below minus 25 degrees Celsius at night and minus 17 degrees Celsius during the day.

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

Continuous snowfalls throughout January and February further aggravated the situation (damage to power transmission lines, collapse of rooftops, snow drifts on roads). Snow layers exceeded the average levels by 100-150 per cent in some flood lands.

Heavy snow brought much of Belarus to a halt on 15 March 2013, leaving travellers stranded for hours on highways and forcing the government to call in the army to help clear roads. The snowstorm Javier paralyzed large parts of the country for almost two days. Within one day the snow depth in the country increased by 1.5 - 2 times, in some areas by 3 times. The wind was 22 meters per second according to the Belarusian Hydro-Meteorological Centre.

## Coordination and partnerships

The operation helped the Belarus Red Cross in strengthening its cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations working in the related areas.

From the very beginning of this emergency, Belarus Red Cross branches were in close contact with local authorities and the emergency services of the Belarus Ministry of Emergencies, who provided the Red Cross Society with hands-on information on the evolving situation and the needs of the people, in parallel to responding to the needs of the frost-affected people.

Belarus Red Cross liaised with local authorities to identify the sites where homeless usually gather, which included also dump sites. Red Cross staff and volunteers visited these sites regularly, bringing aid or personally informing people where they could receive assistance. Posters with information about the distributions were also placed at bottle buy-back centres where the homeless often appeared.



Belarus Red Cross DM coordinator receiving a cash cheque from Coca-Cola Director General for new tires. In addition, Coca-Cola provides for parking and maintenance of the RC's all-terrain vehicles.

*Photo: Belarusian Red Cross*

Red Cross response activities were supported by the authorities in all the regions. In Minsk city the authorities assigned vehicles for joint *Social Patrol* actions during which Red Cross volunteers distributed tea and food to the homeless. Distributions of food parcels and warm clothes were also organized in disinfection centres where homeless people could wash or take a shower.

The cooperation with the Belarus Ministry of Defence resulted in joint actions in Brest and Molodechno, where local military units set up tents and mobile soup kitchens while volunteers of the Belarus Red Cross provided tea, plastic cups and plates.

The business sector was especially active in the operation:

- *Coca-Cola Beverages Belarus*, through a cooperation agreement, offered its premises for parking and maintenance of Belarus Red Cross emergency vehicles, donated an ice maker, a refrigerator and 80 containers for drinking water (20 litres each) to prepare for the floods. Furthermore, the company agreed to repair at its own expense three heavy duty vehicles of the Belarus Red Cross emergency service, which broke down during the operation (two all-terrain Pinzgauers and one Toyota Land Cruiser) and also purchased special tires for the Belarus Red Cross off-roader for the amount of CHF 4,300. The company's staff organized a collection of clothing and warm footwear for homeless people. As a result, a total of 491 items of clothes and footwear were collected and distributed to the most vulnerable.
- The *A-100 Group of Companies* purchased 100 pairs of felt boots (CHF 2,000) for the homeless which were distributed at city dumps near Minsk and also supplied three laptops (CHF 1,500) for the Belarus Red Cross emergency response team.

38 radio amateurs were involved in the action with equipment deployed in private cars.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Belarus Red Cross Society took up its role in assisting the people affected by severe frosts with a strong focus on the homeless. In reaching the most vulnerable target group, the homeless, Belarus Red Cross effectively used its experience in responding to extreme winter conditions in 2012 (also supported by DREF) when the Red Cross encouraged the homeless to organize themselves in self-help groups.

The Belarus Red Cross Coordination Committee met weekly to monitor the situation and agree on further activities. The IFRC representation in Belarus and the Belarus National Society cooperated closely in assessing the needs and preparing the response to both severe winter and spring floods emergencies.

Before the DREF allocation that was effected on 25 January 2013, the Belarus Red Cross started rendering assistance to the most vulnerable people via mobilizing own resources, and assisted around 850 people by providing them food rations, hygiene parcels, thermo cover sheets and hot drinks.

DREF support took place in the form of setting up 190 distribution points with hot drinks, meals, warm clothing and blankets.

Food kits for the homeless contained the following items: instant soup, canned meat or fish, crisp bread. Hygiene kits for the homeless included shampoo, soap and sanitary napkins.

The daily activities of Belarus Red Cross response teams included the following:

- distribution of clothing, blankets, felt boots, food and hygiene items to the homeless at municipal dump sites;
- assistance in the form of medical check-ups including X-ray examination, sanitary treatment, distribution of food and hygiene items, clothing, footwear to the homeless at disinfection and sterilization centres followed by further referrals (if necessary) to medical institutions;
- assistance to vulnerable city dwellers with hot drinks, using the equipment purchased with DREF support in 2012 (winterized tents, generators, fan heaters, vacuum flasks, thermo pots, etc.);
- search and rescue activities.



Belarus Red Cross volunteers distributing assistance packages including felt boots, food and hygiene parcels to homeless people at an official dump site in Minsk.

*Photo: Belarusian web portal tut.by*

In addition, the Red Cross offered advocacy and psycho-social support to the homeless, helping them replace lost documents, doing the necessary paperwork for obtaining pensions, finding lodging and employment, as well as search of the homeless who were reported as missing by their fellow homeless.

On 15-16 March 2013 in response to the snowstorm, Belarus Red Cross deployed its volunteers to provide assistance to the residents in Orsha and on the international route E95 Odessa – Saint Petersburg. Volunteers of '4x4 Club' and the '7<sup>th</sup> Minsk auto-channel' worked in Minsk. Assistance was provided to 87 drivers whose cars were stuck in the snow. 102 people were served hot tea.

Altogether, 45 staff and 255 volunteers were engaged in the action by Belarus Red Cross in all the six regions of Belarus.

All relief items were procured and distributed as planned, including 10 sets of tools to remove snow and ice (shovels, axes, flickers, torches, etc.), 100 magnets with logos for volunteer motorists and hardware for a four-channel phone help line.

Food and non-food supplies procured and distributed under the DREF operation:

- for the homeless: 1,521 food packages; 200 hygiene kits; 200 pairs of felt boots and socks; 100 blankets (procured and pre-positioned through DREF operation in 2012); 491 other items of clothing and footwear (collected by *Coca-Cola Beverages Belarus*)
- for city dwellers: 5,000 teabags and plastic cups;
- for Red Cross emergency response teams: 20 towing ropes and 10 sets of tools, including shovels, axes, flickers, torches, etc.;
- for power generators to heat the Red Cross winter tents and for driving the vehicles in action: 2,140 liters of fuel.



A volunteer of the Red Cross regional disaster response team 'Simuran' serving hot tea to socially disadvantaged people near a bottle buy-back point in Gomel.

*Photo: Belarusian Red Cross*

Belarus Red Cross also activated its own emergency reserve fund: CHF 2,000 was allocated for the remuneration of response staff in regional branches and CHF 1,000 was allocated for the production of bags with RC logo for food parcels.

In addition, each RC regional branch received CHF 1,300 (CHF 8,900 in total) from the Belarus Red Cross emergency fund to cover all extraordinary expenses during the operation.

In close cooperation with the IFRC Country Representation, the Belarus Red Cross Headquarters monitored the progress of the operation and provided the necessary technical expertise. Regional focal persons provided regular updates for meetings of the coordination committee set up at the Belarus Red Cross headquarters. Monitoring of the operation was carried out in Gomel, Vitebsk, Minsk city, and Minsk region by members of the coordination committee and the Secretary General of the Belarus Red Cross.

## Achievements against outcomes

<b>Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)</b>
<b>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</b>
<b>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</b>
<b>Activities planned:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local procurement of emergency items</li> <li>• Preparation of distribution plan</li> <li>• Setting up Red Cross distribution points and tents for 5,000 homeless and other vulnerable city dwellers</li> <li>• Reaching potential beneficiaries to inform them about assistance available at the Red Cross</li> <li>• Distribution of emergency items by RC branches and their volunteers through the established distribution points</li> <li>• Coordination with local emergency departments and local administrative authorities</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting</li> </ul>

### Achievements and impact:

- A total number of 1,521 homeless were assisted. These target beneficiaries were reached through Red Cross visits to official dump sites, bottle buy-back points, and through clients' personal attendance to RC branches.
- A total of 4,120 vulnerable city dwellers were assisted with warming services and hot tea servings.
- 256 drivers received assistance at border terminals of Belarus.
- 198 motorists who were involved in accidents or were caught in frozen cars received technical and humanitarian assistance from mobile Red Cross teams.
- 45 Red Cross staff were involved in the operation.
- 255 trained volunteers from among emergency response teams and the Red Cross youth volunteer movement were mobilized to provide support to the homeless and the general population affected by frosts.
- 15 active TB cases were detected among the homeless through X-ray examination. All these homeless were placed for treatment in TB hospitals.

Distributions by regions are detailed in the table below.

Region	Number of staff involved in the operation	Number of volunteers involved in the operation	Number of homeless people who received aid	Number of people who were served hot tea	Towns most actively involved in the operation
Brest region	5	20	107	510	Brest, Pinsk, Baranovich, Ivatsevichi
Vitebsk region	5	34	256	490	Vitebsk, Polotsk, Novopolotsk
Grodno region	5	21	101	330	Grodno, Lida, Slonim, Ivie, Smorgon
Gomel region	6	26	352	450	Gomel, Rogachev, Zhlobin
Mogilev region	1	3	31	600	Mogilev, Bobruisk
Minsk City	8	33	356	1050	Minsk
Minsk region	10	57	120	409	Molodechno, Slutsk, Vileika, Stolbtsy
Railroad branch	2	61	198	281	Minsk + belt highway
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>1,521</b>	<b>4,120</b>	

**Project Outcome 1** has been fully achieved. Belarus Red Cross relief activities received genuine support from the authorities and the public.

**Outcome 2: Establishing a telephone hot line related to emergency assistance for approximately 500 vulnerable people calling during a two month period**

**Output: The information about the vulnerable people out in the streets as well as information for the general public will be dealt with so as to help 500 people during the period of harsh winter frosts**

**Activities planned:**

- Hardware for telephone hot line has been established
- Link between telephone hot line centre and mobile responding 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 someone is reported missing to the RC, volunteers will start coordinating the action with governmental authorities
- Coordination with local emergency departments and local authorities
- Monitoring and reporting

**Achievements and impact:**

- Belarus Red Cross Minsk City branch opened a hot line to provide information on people missing/feared lost. Four missing people were found. The hot line operation helped to improve coordination in providing information and assistance to the affected population between the Red Cross, radio amateurs and state emergency services.
- Currently one 24-hour emergency telephone line is being serviced by one staff and four volunteers.
- An agreement was received from the Belarus Ministry of Communications to provide a short emergency number 201.
- Belarus Red Cross also mobilized the national and local media to raise public awareness for prevention of chilblains and frostbites.
- Information on the missing people was disseminated in public places.
- Information about assistance available was provided through posters at bottle buy-back centres and shops, through Red Cross volunteers and the homeless themselves.
- Search activities were organized by a joint search-and-rescue team of Belarus Red Cross and the NGO 'ANGEL'. Four missing people were found by Belarus Red Cross search team 'ANGEL' (one teenager and three elderly people). The Belarus Red Cross Railway Branch and the Minsk City Branch organized road patrolling in the vicinity of Minsk to provide assistance to victims of accidents related to bad weather conditions, and to search for the homeless who need help.
- Radio amateurs with their equipment in private cars were also involved in patrolling Gomel, Vitebsk and Minsk regions.



Leader of the Belarus Red Cross search-and-rescue team 'ANGEL' is enquiring a homeless woman about the people missing during severe frosts.  
*Photo: Belarusian web portal tut.by*

**Project Outcome 2** has been fully achieved despite some challenges.

## Challenges:

The range of services provided through the Red Cross hot line still needs to be developed. In the coming months Belarus Red Cross intends to start providing psycho-social support, SMS messaging for emergency purposes, collecting information and referring people to other agencies. This process has been delayed due to a number of special permissions required from the authorities and the lack of trained volunteers. Belarus Red Cross continues working to enhance its hot line services. Two additional volunteer psychologists have been recruited recently to support hot line activities.

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## Contact information

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

- **Belarus Red Cross Society:** Viktor Kolbanov, Secretary General; Minsk;  
Phone: +375 17 327 14 17, email: [info@redcross.by](mailto:info@redcross.by)
  - **IFRC Office in Belarus:** Zlatko Kovac, IFRC Representative;  
Phone +375 17 223 34 46, email: [zlatko.kovac@ifrc.org](mailto:zlatko.kovac@ifrc.org)
  - **IFRC Europe Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Disaster Management Coordinator;  
Phone: +36 1 888 4500; email: [alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org](mailto:alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org)
  - **IFRC Geneva:** Christine South, Operations Support;  
Phone: +41 22 730 4529, email: [christine.south@ifrc.org](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org)
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## DREF history:

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**Click here**

1. Click [here](#) to see the DREF final financial report
  2. Click [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.

**Disaster Response Financial Report**

MDRBY002 - Belarus - Extreme Winter

Timeframe: 25 Jan 13 to 25 Mar 13

Appeal Launch Date: 25 Jan 13

Final Report

**Selected Parameters**

Reporting Timeframe	2013/01-05	Programme	MDRBY002
Budget Timeframe	2013/01-03	Budget	APPROVED
		Project	*

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

**I. Funding**

	Raise humanitarian standards	Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people	Strengthen RC/RC contribution to development	Heighten influence and support for RC/RC work	Joint working and accountability	TOTAL	Deferred Income
<b>A. Budget</b>		25,631				25,631	
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>		0				0	
<b>Income</b>							
<u>Other Income</u>							
<i>DREF Allocations</i>		25,631				25,631	
<b>C4. Other Income</b>		25,631				25,631	
<b>C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)</b>		25,631				25,631	
<b>D. Total Funding = B + C</b>		25,631				25,631	

**II. Movement of Funds**

	Raise humanitarian standards	Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people	Strengthen RC/RC contribution to development	Heighten influence and support for RC/RC work	Joint working and accountability	TOTAL	Deferred Income
<b>B. Opening Balance</b>		0				0	
<b>C. Income</b>		25,631				25,631	
<b>E. Expenditure</b>		-25,240				-25,240	
<b>F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)</b>		391				391	

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### III. Expenditure

Account Groups	Expenditure						TOTAL	Variance
	Budget	Raise humanitarian standards	Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people	Strengthen RC/RC contribution to development	Heighten influence and support for RC/RC work	Joint working and accountability		
	A					B	A - B	
<b>BUDGET (C)</b>			<b>25,631</b>			<b>25,631</b>		
<b>Relief items, Construction, Supplies</b>								
Clothing & Textiles	2,000		2,069			2,069	-69	
Food	5,000		7,129			7,129	-2,129	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	1,000		984			984	16	
Utensils & Tools	4,400		2,533			2,533	1,867	
<b>Total Relief items, Construction, Sup</b>	<b>12,400</b>		<b>12,715</b>			<b>12,715</b>	<b>-315</b>	
<b>Land, vehicles &amp; equipment</b>								
Computers & Telecom	6,000		5,821			5,821	179	
<b>Total Land, vehicles &amp; equipment</b>	<b>6,000</b>		<b>5,821</b>			<b>5,821</b>	<b>179</b>	
<b>Logistics, Transport &amp; Storage</b>								
Distribution & Monitoring	200						200	
Transport & Vehicles Costs	2,000		1,999			1,999	1	
<b>Total Logistics, Transport &amp; Storage</b>	<b>2,200</b>		<b>1,999</b>			<b>1,999</b>	<b>201</b>	
<b>Personnel</b>								
International Staff			200			200	-200	
National Society Staff	1,937		1,936			1,936	1	
Volunteers	1,450						1,450	
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>3,387</b>		<b>2,136</b>			<b>2,136</b>	<b>1,251</b>	
<b>General Expenditure</b>								
Travel			83			83	-83	
Information & Public Relations			754			754	-754	
Office Costs			127			127	-127	
Communications	80		65			65	15	
<b>Total General Expenditure</b>	<b>80</b>		<b>1,029</b>			<b>1,029</b>	<b>-949</b>	
<b>Indirect Costs</b>								
Programme & Services Support Recove	1,564		1,540			1,540	24	
<b>Total Indirect Costs</b>	<b>1,564</b>		<b>1,540</b>			<b>1,540</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)</b>	<b>25,631</b>		<b>25,240</b>			<b>25,240</b>	<b>391</b>	
<b>VARIANCE (C - D)</b>			<b>391</b>			<b>391</b>		

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**IV. Breakdown by subsector**

Business Line / Sub-sector	Budget	Opening Balance	Income	Funding	Expenditure	Closing Balance	Deferred Income
<b>BL2 - Grow RC/RC services for vulnerable people</b>							
Disaster response	25,631	0	25,631	25,631	25,240	391	
Subtotal BL2	25,631	0	25,631	25,631	25,240	391	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>25,631</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,631</b>	<b>25,631</b>	<b>25,240</b>	<b>391</b>	