



Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

Syria: Droughts



DREF Operation n°	MDRSY006	Glide n°:	DR-2021-000159-SYR
Date of issue:	20/10/2021	Expected timeframe:	6 months
		Expected end date:	30/04/2022
Category allocated to the of the disaster or crisis: Orange			
DREF allocated: CHF 748,415			
Total number of people affected:	5,500,000	Number of people to be assisted:	15,000 (3,000 HHs)
Provinces affected:	Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor, Homs (other provinces in Syria are also affected but to a lesser extent at the moment)	Provinces/Regions targeted:	Ar-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zor
Operating National Society presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): 8,031 active volunteers, 5,749 staff, 14 branches and 73 active sub-branches across all the governorates of Syria.			
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Norwegian Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross.			
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: UN Agencies, International non-governmental organizations (INGOs), Local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs)			

This DREF has been triggered by the result of assessments Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) has gone through during the last week of September in several high-risk areas affected by the ongoing droughts: Further to the ongoing severe drought situation in Syria, SARC has been assessing and monitoring the situation in different areas of Syria. Unfortunately, the **negative impact keeps deteriorating causing more vulnerability**. Based on this, **SARC has decided to initiate a specific response to the drought** situation and is seeking IFRC support in this regard using the DREF support as a start noting that SARC is also coordinating with other partners to ensure a scale response. The number of people that are food insecure and in acute need of humanitarian assistance increased by 400,000 during the first half of 2021 bringing the total number to 12.8 million people, an increase of more than 60% compared to 2021¹. According to the FAO,² Syrian farmers face challenges preparing for the upcoming planting season due to lack of liquidity and access to credit, while prices of inputs such as fertilizers and fuel are increasing. Furthermore, access to seeds will likely be difficult and seed quality poor with

¹ Syria Food Insecurity, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021 Mid-Year Report, WFP.

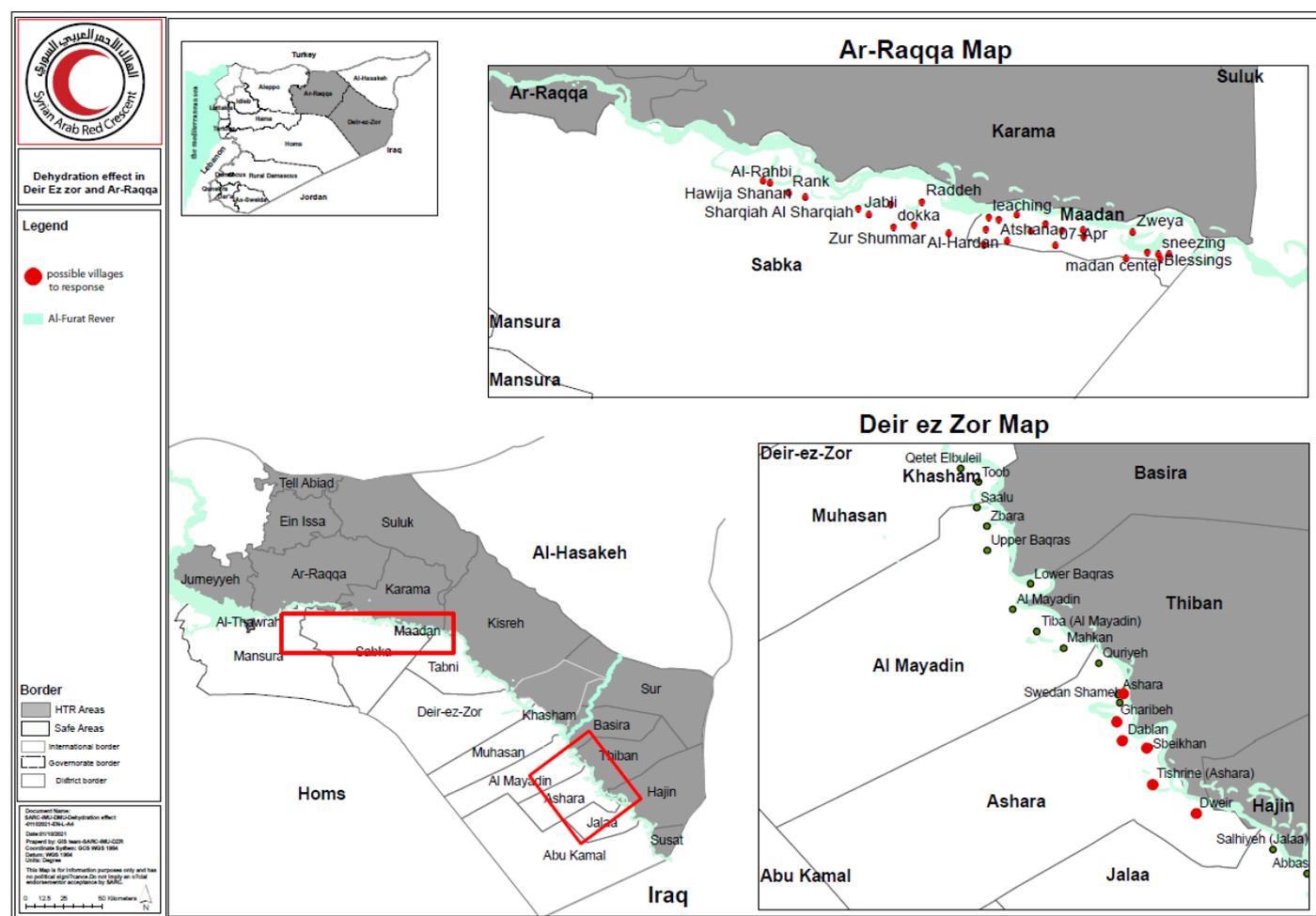
² Syrian farmers face challenges preparing for the new season following poor harvest in 2020/2021, Press Release 18 October, 2021.

low germination rates due to the drastically reduced 2020/2021 harvest. This impacts in particular small-scale farmers that lack alternative livelihoods income sources and continue to cultivate their lands.

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

Since January 2021, Syria has witnessed unprecedented low water levels of the Euphrates River, falling from 500m³ to 214 m³ in June, resulting in two of the most significant reservoirs in Syria having significantly diminished and 54 out of 73 water stations severely impacted (OCHA, 2021)³ in Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Al-Hasakeh, and Ar-Raqqa governorates. Low levels of water in reservoirs resulted in reduced energy production capacity causing power blackouts across north-eastern Syria, with only 1-2 hours of electricity in some locations and up to three million people have been affected by reduced electricity generation and availability. Compounded by ongoing fuel shortages, water pumping stations have limited functionality, affecting safe access to and availability of drinking water of the population in north-eastern Syria.



At the same time, low and erratic rainfall during the 2020/2021 winter season, accompanied by higher-than-average temperatures, led to drought conditions in Northern and North-East Syria, as well as in other parts of Syria, with significant crop and livestock production losses in the south and central Syria. The Syrian Minister of Agriculture stated that 'this year is the most dangerous in terms of drought in Syria since 1953⁴. The combined effect of reduced water levels in the Euphrates river and drought conditions has impacted the food and nutrition

³OCHA (2021) Syrian Arab Republic. Euphrates Water Crisis and Drought Outlook

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Syrian%20Arab%20Republic%20-%20Euphrates%20water%20crisis%20and%20drought%20outlook%2C%20as%20of%2017%20June%202021.pdf>

⁴ <https://realitynews.news/11984/>

security of households dependent on agriculture in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor. Significant shortages and high cost of agriculture inputs, including diesel fuel, have limited the ability to provide supplementary irrigation for cultivated crops. Particularly in the northeast, Al-Hasakeh as the breadbasket of the country, reduction in both rainfall and river water for irrigation are predicted to further cause substantial harvest loss, indicating a major drop in barley production by 1.2 million tonnes, as low as in 2018. Al-Hasakeh, which together with parts of Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo, and Deir-ez-Zor Governorates, accounts for about 80 per cent of the country's annual wheat and barley production, has been particularly badly affected. Estimations suggest that up to 75 per cent of total rain-fed crop yield losses in Al-Hasakeh Governorate, and up to 25 per cent of irrigated yields losses in northern and northeast Syria (NES), have occurred. This is expected to have implications across all of Syria, including for food security. Moreover, with poor yields and crop failures undermining revenues, farmers will struggle to obtain necessary inputs for the sowing season in November, which will have an impact on the 2022 harvest season.

This, in turn, has an impact on the livelihoods and food security of five million persons⁵ (OCHA, 2021). Across the region, 60,150 agricultural landowners and their families, as well as 83,000 seasonal agricultural workers are impacted, seventy per cent of whom are seasonal women workers- the main group affected by the poor agriculture sector performance.

For livestock, the production of fodder crops has been adversely affected and pastures are not in good condition due to the erratic climatic conditions. Herders are unable to access some locations in the Badia for natural grazing of their animals (particularly sheep), as a result of the unstable security situation. This is expected to result in destocking and animal prices have dropped by at least 20 - 30 per cent.

As the drought-like conditions and economic crisis persist, the capacity of vulnerable farming households and small-scale livestock keepers to generate income and access to food continues to erode. Harmful coping mechanisms have increased with households taking on more debt, while debt payment already accounts for 13 per cent of average household expenditure in Deir-ez-Zor (the highest figure country-wide). There is an increased reliance on child labour and child marriage, impacting children's rights and increasing the risk of gender-based violence. Available data indicates that five per cent of children of IDP households work to support household income, with rates more than three times higher for female-headed IDP households, and particularly in North-East Syria (NES).

Due to the unavailability of clean water, households are increasingly consuming unsafe water, and with an increasing number of water-borne diseases, the public health system faces additional strain, which is exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation. In NES, the number of acute diarrhoea cases increased by 25% between January and June 2022 when compared to the same period in 2022. In addition, the latest assessments from August indicate that more than a third of 8,728 screened children have either severe acute malnutrition or moderate acute malnutrition (North-East Syria NGO, 2021). The reduction in safe and sufficient water is affecting hygiene and other preventative measures, such as handwashing which is critical to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Confirmed COVID-19 cases have continued to increase over the last weeks, with more than 131,000 cases reported in Syria as of 10 October. However, this is thought to be a significant underestimation due to most cases being undetected given the lack of access to testing facilities and equipment.

The lack of water and the drought situation contribute to the deterioration of living standards, coupled with increasing costs of food, water, and basic goods due to the massive devaluation of the local currency whilst the income and purchasing power of people are shrinking. The situation is particularly challenging for internally displaced and households returning to their areas of origin with a lack of very basic infrastructure including water and sanitation, health facilities, education, and electricity. There are an estimated 289,000 internally displaced persons in northern and north-eastern Syria (OCHA, 2021).

The aforementioned crises come on top of a situation where 13.4 million people in Syria are in need of immediate life-saving and continuous humanitarian assistance, 2.34 million more than in 2020. In Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Al-

⁵ Humanitarian Needs Overview, Syrian Arab Republic 2021, UN OCHA.

Hasakeh, and Ar-Raqqa, at the start of 2021, the UN estimated that around 4.5 million or more than two out of three Syrians already in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance⁶.

Observations and feedback from the beneficiaries from SARC's regular activities prompted SARC to undertake an assessment in the last week of September. The assessment findings confirmed the need for immediate humanitarian assistance in particular for returning internally displaced households triggered the launch of this Emergency Plan of Action. This plan targets areas and populations in need of immediate humanitarian assistance not covered by the UN OCHA Water Crisis in Northern and Northeast Syria: Immediate Response Plan that currently is less than 25% funded. Lastly, the outlook for the upcoming agricultural season is dire with agriculture-dependent households unable to access inputs (seeds and fertilizers) due to increased prices and lack of capital. The water scarcity and high prices of fuel make irrigation out of reach for many a household and the lack of pasture and high price of feed for animals has resulted in the destocking of weaker animals.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Operating National Society Response Action

Headquartered in Damascus, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) has a network of 14 branches across all the governorates of Syria and 73 active sub-branches manned by 8,031 active volunteers and 5,749 staff working across its headquarters, branches, and sub-branches.

SARC is well recognised by the authorities and is one of the key members of the Humanitarian and Disaster Response Committees both at national as well as governorate levels. Through its network of staff and volunteers, and presence across most of the country, it remains the largest national provider of humanitarian services in Syria. SARC works closely with local communities providing humanitarian assistance to more than five million internally displaced people, affected host communities, and returnees per year.

In the first half of 2021, SARC provided life-saving and life-sustaining health services to more than one million patients across a network of 150 health facilities both static and mobile-based. The National Society was also able to reach 80 per cent of the Syrian population with safe water through treatment and maintenance of damaged water infrastructure, the expertise which will be leveraged for this drought response.

SARC's staff and volunteer sector specialists at HQ and in branches and sub-branches have been monitoring the drought conditions throughout the recent months, observing the further deterioration of the situation over the past weeks, and are coordinating with the relevant local stakeholders for information sharing, response planning, and coordinated actions. SARC has a network of four active sub-branches in Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, the targeted governorates for the water crises response (Debsi Afnan and Sabka in Ar-Raqqa; Al Mayadin and Abu Kamal in Deir-ez-Zor) in addition to branch offices in the governorate capitals. A team of 710 staff and volunteers implement multi-sectoral programmes and operations including food security (regular food distribution with WFP), relief, water and rehabilitation, livelihoods, community services, and risk education. The combined number of registered SARC beneficiaries in the two governorates exceeds 700,000. SARC operates four health service centres/points in Deir-ez-Zor: one primary health clinics, one Mobile Health Unit (MHU), one nutrition centre, and one mobile physiotherapy team. 40 volunteers and 100 community health promoters are engaged in health risk communication, community engagement, and awareness-raising activities. SARC's WASH and rehabilitation department reaches 80% of the total Syrian population annually with water treatment, maintenance, and rehabilitation work of water stations, pipeline, and sewage systems as well as water emergency response. In Deir-ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa, SARC implemented 41 different water and rehabilitation projects in 2020, representing 15% of all water projects across the country. Food security and livelihoods have also been one of SARC's priorities in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor supporting the most vulnerable people through the distribution of food parcels and different livelihood interventions such as seed, agro tools, and sheep distributions, installation of water pumps or

⁶ OCHA (2021) Water Crisis in Northern and Northeast Syria: Immediate Response and Funding Requirements <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/water-crisis-northern-and-northeast-syria-immediate-response-and-funding>

food production projects. SARC's community services and risk education activities reached up to 30,000 people in Deir-ez-Zor in 2020. SARC has continued to provide the above-mentioned ongoing humanitarian assistance during the build-up to the water crises and drought conditions. SARC branches have collected information on the compound effects on the already vulnerable population in consultation and coordination with sub-national government departments and authorities and analyzed secondary data to inform the response strategy.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Actions in-country

The IFRC has been present in Syria supporting SARC in the implementation of its humanitarian work across the country since the mid-1990s and established a permanent representation office in 2007. Over the course of the last two decades, the IFRC has provided technical support to SARC in implementing its programmes and supported SARC with its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) mechanism to effectively respond to climate-related hazards such as droughts, floods, wildfires among others.

The ICRC supports technically and financially SARC's programmes and operations across Syria including in health, water and habitat, economic security, IHL, and restoring family links. ICRC continues to support ongoing operations and programmes in the areas targeted by the DREF operation while together with SARC and the Movement components present in Syria continue to monitor the development of the situation.

Currently, IFRC is building up Syria Crisis Country Plan for 2022 together with Movement components, with SARC at the helm, with the goal of ensuring the sustainability of its interventions and reaching all sections of the population, including vulnerable populations, and strengthening services delivered to communities affected by the conflict, COVID-19 and the ongoing economic crisis. This DREF will support the lifesaving emergency response to water crises and drought whilst the Syria Crises Country Plan focuses on addressing vast and severe pre-existing humanitarian needs in Syria and supporting national society development initiatives to SARC as the foremost humanitarian organization in the country.

Overview of other actors' actions in-country

On 9 September, UNOCHA issued an immediate response plan and funding requirements for the Water Crisis in Northern and Northeast Syria- seeking to reach 3.4 million people by February 2022 with a total budget of USD 251 million. The Syria Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in which SARC, IFRC, and ICRC have observer status, the Northeast NGO Forum (NES Forum), with the Syria Cross-Border Humanitarian Liaison Group (HLG) have coordinated the response planning and preparedness efforts, with support by the Whole of Syria Inter-Sector Group (ISG).

There are several coordination mechanisms established in Syria, and in Northeast Syria, humanitarian organizations have an established presence in Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo, and Hassakeh Governorates. Assistance is provided by UN Agencies, INGOs, NGOs, and local actors operating. Expanding operations further in Deir-ez-Zor has proved more challenging, leading to the presence of fewer humanitarian actors, despite acute needs.

SARC coordinates with INGOs and UN agencies as the main partner in carrying out humanitarian activities while maintaining its mandate without compromising the basic principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Furthermore, SARC is coordinating with the relevant authorities (government) through its relevant channels in order to join efforts in the response to the water crises and drought.

Needs analysis, targeting, scenario planning and risk assessment

Needs analysis

According to available needs assessment data, due to the water crisis and drought conditions compounded by pre-existing crises, 5.5 million people have reduced access to safe and sufficient water with severe implications for public health, 3.4 million are experiencing poor agricultural production and loss of livelihoods, leading to or

exacerbating food insecurity and increasing malnutrition rates, and 3 million people are affected by reduced electricity generation and availability⁷.

The immediate needs for the next six months include⁸:

- Ensure access to safe water for 3.44 million people through retrofitting and rehabilitating and provision of chlorine for water stations and tanker filling stations, water trucking, and water provision for health and education facilities.
- Provide immediate food assistance and livelihoods for 3.36 million people through the provision of food rations, crop seeds, livestock production support, and treatment for malnourished children and pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Scale-up essential health services at hospitals and health centres, set up rapid response teams to support early detection of water-borne diseases and acute malnutrition.
- Carry out protection-related activities to mitigate protection risks including GBV, PSS, and child protection.

According to SARC data from Deir-ez-Zor, the drought conditions and low water level in the Euphrates river have had a severe negative impact on the areas between the countryside of the Ma'dan Atiq area bordering with Ar-Raqqa governorate to the city of Al-Bukamal, bordering with Iraq. This area is known for agriculture and livestock. In total, it is estimated that 29,460 hectares under wheat cultivation have been damaged, with large areas of land for other crops being taken out of the production process due to lack of water for irrigation (both rain and river-fed irrigation).

While the water crisis has impacted the entire governorate, the most affected areas in the southern part of Deir-ez-Zor include the agricultural areas of Al-Ashara area, Subikhan Al-Gharbia, and Dublan. These areas are dependent on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihoods as a result of the effects of more than 10 years of crisis and the destruction of irrigation stations. More than half of the population are internally displaced returnees.

The following impact was reported by SARC branches in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor based on primary data collection and analysis:

- The wheat crop has been completely damaged, resulting in a decrease in the percentage of wheat supply and an increase in prices.
- A large number of farmers refrained from cultivating cotton as a result of drought and the low level of rain.
- Sesame cultivation areas have been damaged. Sesame is considered a lower-cost alternative to cotton and wheat in the targeted area under agriculture and many families in particular in Deir-ez-Zor rely on the staple to make their living. It requires less water, labour, and pesticides than cotton.
- Livestock-dependent households, destocking large numbers of animals due to the combined effect from lack of pastures as a result of drought and lack of irrigation and high price of the allocated fodder.
- Increasing the number of families migrating out of the country or into urban areas as a result of the severely worsened food security situation.
- The livelihoods and income for farmers have been impacted and have led to job loss in rural livelihoods.
- The income and purchasing power of people are shrinking.

SARC branch teams report an increase in the prevalence of water-borne diseases due to water shortage including intestinal infections - fungal infections, and skin diseases. The affected rural areas in particular from Al-Mayadin towards Al-Ashara and Subikhan suffer from a lack of medical services.

⁷ WATER CRISIS IN NORTHERN AND NORTHEAST SYRIA Immediate Response and Funding Requirements, 8 September 2021, UN OCHA.

⁸ Water Crisis in Northern and Northeast Syria - Immediate Response and Funding Requirements – 9 September 2021. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/water_crisis_response_plan-september_2021.pdf

Deir-ez-Zor returnee households affected by drought⁹

Area	# of returnee households most severely affected by the water crisis/drought	# of returnee households
Sbaykhan	3,450	5,452
Al-Ashara	2,000	2,777
Gharibah	1,500	1,765
Dablan	1,400	1,647
Al Dowayr	1,300	1,355
Al Keshmah	2,550	2,767
Total	12,200	15,763

Table 1: Most affected areas in Deir-ez-Zor

Based on the information collected by SARC, Deir-ez-Zor governorate is more affected by Ar-Raqqa, and the immediate needs that can be covered by the DREF are food and awareness-raising for health and hygiene. Distribution of food parcels¹⁰ will reduce negative coping strategies and ensure sufficient food intake. It will free up money for the household to meet other basic needs. Health and hygiene awareness is assumed to reduce the morbidity of water-borne diseases and promote COVID-19 preventive measures.

Targeting

SARC intends to assist 15,000 of the most vulnerable people among those in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of water crises and drought conditions (3,000 households). These are the households most severely affected by the drought and low water level in the Euphrates, as well as the consequences, and who have a high level of vulnerability and low coping capacity as a result of the compound effects from ten years of crises and COVID-19. The households are currently part of SARC's regular food distribution programme receiving food parcels every four months to cover a portion of their basic food needs, but not enough to cover the entire food gap due to the impact of the drought. The final selection criteria will be refined during the detailed assessment, targeting, and registration with the following criteria serving as guidance:

- Households directly affected by the water crisis and drought conditions.
- Households whose livelihoods and economic status have significantly deteriorated.
- Internally displaced returnee households.

The geographical areas targeted by this operation include the most affected localities in the governorates of Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, where SARC has ongoing activities. In these areas, SARC has established branches and sub-branches with trained staff and volunteers in emergency relief operations as well as support staff. Sex and age disaggregated household data will be collected during the beneficiary registration and presented in the final report.

Scenario planning

Scenario	Humanitarian consequence	Potential Response
Likely scenario:	The expected rainfall for the autumn season is significantly below average further	SARC/IFRC launching DREF to cater to the humanitarian needs of 3,000 targeted households with food and health interventions.

⁹ SARC primary data analysis, Deir-ez-Zor branch.

¹⁰ SARC monthly standard food parcel for a family of five includes e.g. rice (6kg), bulgur (4kg), beans (2kg), lentils 2kg), vegetable cooking oil and olive oil (4l), tomato paste, salt, sugar, halawa, vegetable ghee and tea. The contents may slightly vary depending on the availability in the market.

	<p>exacerbating the impact of the drought conditions and leading to an increase in the number of people in need of immediate food, water, and health services.</p> <p>Short-term action is not sufficient to meet the basic needs of the affected population.</p>	<p>SARC with the DREF temporarily complements its current regular food distribution programme to meet the additional humanitarian needs due to the drought conditions. SARC's staff and volunteers in the targeted localities conduct beneficiary targeting in coordination with response agencies and local authorities.</p>
Most likely scenario:	<p>Drought: large-scale crop failure and elevated livestock death and de-stocking, depleting food security and livelihoods at a large scale. water-borne diseases continue to raise with existing health facilities unable to meet the increased needs. Public authorities request humanitarian agencies scale up the response to meet basic needs and early recovery/restoration of livelihoods.</p>	<p>SARC seeks bigger scale intervention and requests for multi-sectoral support including livelihoods, food security, basic household items, WASH, health including resilience support.</p> <p>Clear selection criteria for households targeted clear community engagement and communication /information sharing plan to address the rationale and basis for beneficiary selection criteria "who is selected/how" among communities and stakeholders. Strong coordination mechanism led by SARC to engage with other Humanitarian actors for complementarity of relief and addressing unmet needs including in remote areas.</p>

Operation Risk Assessment

RISK AREA	CONTROLS MANAGEMENT
<p>Staff and volunteer health: lack of COVID-19 personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and volunteers increases the risk of contracting COVID-19 during community-based activities in the response, resulting in the reduced operational capacity of SARC at branch and sub-branch levels.</p>	<p>SARC started immunizing all staff and volunteers in April 2021, and the majority of those involved in the operation have been fully vaccinated.</p> <p>The operation is designed to adhere to the measures as per SARC's epidemic control measures.</p> <p>Humanitarian organizations are exempt from possible lockdown measures. So are the transport of food and relief items.</p> <p>Trainings will be conducted in small groups, with due respect to social distancing measures. Distribution exercises will ensure to adhere to physical distancing norms.</p> <p>SARC is currently in the process of procuring PPEs for staff and volunteers with IFRC and Movement partners' funding.</p>
<p>Limited or disrupted access to areas and beneficiaries targeted by the operation prevents the delivery of impartial and neutral humanitarian assistance to the most affected and vulnerable populations.</p>	<p>Continued coordination and collaboration with local actors to maintain access and acceptance. Thorough community engagement and accountability activities throughout the operation with the beneficiaries and communities targeted through the operation.</p>

Delays in the procurement of food and household items having a negative impact on the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance	Prepositioned food parcels are used to start the operation while the procurement for further distribution and replenishment will start immediately upon the launch of the DREF. If severe delays in the procurement, a time extension may be requested.
Shortage of fuel preventing humanitarian assistance from reaching the people in need with the required assistance and delays field assessments.	Available fuel will be prioritized for the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance. Fuel will be included in the rented trucks.
Security constraints prevent beneficiaries being reached with assistance.	Continuous monitoring of security situation through SARC staff and volunteers in branches and sub-branches in the target areas. Frequent coordination between SARC and ICRC security focal points. SARC security protocols are followed. Refresher security training provided to staff and volunteers as needed.
Lack of enough skilled human resources in the affected areas to respond to the increased needs	SARC will mobilize more trained volunteers from the affected branches to support this particular operation.

B. Operational strategy

Overall Operational objective:

The overall objective of this DREF operation is to provide humanitarian assistance to 15,000 most vulnerable people (3,000 households) affected by drought conditions in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor through the distribution of food parcels and delivery of hygiene promotion messages and disease prevention awareness-raising for water-borne diseases and COVID-19 through SARC volunteers and community health promoters. This DREF operation address new humanitarian needs caused by the drought conditions and it does not duplicate or overlap response under the ongoing Syria Complex Emergency Appeal that will be closed in December 2021 or the 2021 Syria Crisis Country Plan.

An emergency plan of action has been developed based on analysis of primary and secondary data sources and SARC's in-depth knowledge about the conditions in the targeted areas through its network of staff and volunteers. The following activities have been undertaken:

- Carrying out a primary needs assessment and multi-sector data collection by SARC's branches in Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor
- Performing analysis of primary and secondary data sources.
- Developing an emergency plan of action to meet the immediate humanitarian needs over the next six months.
- Initiating a multi-sectoral planning process for a longer-term response that combines immediate life-saving humanitarian assistance with early recovery to support a more sustainable solution that builds the resilience of the population to drought conditions.

The response strategy for the immediate phase (six months) focuses on food security, hygiene promotion, and health awareness-raising as well as the conduct of a detailed multi-sector impact and needs assessment to inform the response strategy for the subsequent phase covering a multi-sectoral and holistic approach integrating food security, health and WASH. Response sectors and geographical areas may be changed or expanded in a possible scaled-up response based on detailed needs assessments and the development of the drought conditions over the next months.

This operation will complement the ongoing and regular food distributions undertaken by SARC in the drought-affected areas by meeting new and additional needs that surpass the scale of the regular distributions. As this is

an expansion of an ongoing humanitarian response operation in the area, food parcels will be distributed instead of cash and voucher assistance which would introduce a new modality to only a portion of the population covered by the regular distributions in the same affected communities. The areas covered by this operation are also remote and sparsely populated with long distances to market and financial service providers. The approach follows that of the inter-agency immediate resource plan which seeks to provide four-month protection food rations to vulnerable farming and food-insecure households while ensuring coordinated targeting and delivery of services with different actors.

During the timeframe of the DREF operation, a detailed multi-sectoral needs assessment, taking into account gender and diversity aspects will be undertaken by specialized teams of SARC staff and volunteers to cover relief, water, food security, protection, and health needs. The methodologies for the assessment ensure community participation and include household interviews, Key Informant Interviews with communities, observation, and collection and analysis of secondary data from relevant local government departments and institutions.

Human resources

In all of Syria, SARC has a network of 13,780 staff and trained and active volunteers. In Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor 710 staff and volunteers are involved in delivering a large range of multi-sectoral services to those most in need. Based on need, additional staff and volunteers can be deployed for the implementation of the operation from other branches and sub-branches. The DM department at SARC's HQ has the overall responsibility for the timely and quality implementation of the operation in coordination with other sectoral departments including livelihoods, health and water, and rehabilitation. The Partnerships and Performance Support Department (PPSD) will be responsible for supporting inter-departmental coordination and reporting and data collection and analysis together with the other departments. The IFRC Syria country delegation will support SARC in the monitoring and reporting of the operation with the IFRC MENA regional office based in Beirut providing technical inputs and support. A rapid response deployment will support the operational aspects together with SARC HQ.

Logistics and supply chain

Logistic support to the intervention will be provided following IFRC procedures to ensure efficient and timely provision to affected people. IFRC's in-country Procurement Delegate and IFRC's MENA regional office will support SARC with the local procurement of items required for the operation.

Communications

Public communication content will be produced and published on IFRC MENA social media platforms and [IFRC.org](https://www.ifrc.org). In collaboration with SARC, testimonies of people who have benefitted from the grants will be collected and published. Information on the operation will be disseminated in coordination with the IFRC and Movement partners to highlight the response to the humanitarian needs and the evolving and emerging humanitarian concerns. IFRC in the country and MENA region will provide support to SARC to produce updates for different media channels on the implementation of the operation. Information will also be shared via the IFRC Go Platform.

Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

CEA is integrated throughout the intervention to ensure maximum and meaningful participation of affected communities. SARC has been strengthening its capacity in CEA through community-based programmes in 2021. CEA was first addressed within the needs assessment where community perspectives around their needs were captured and utilized to support the design of this appeal. Additionally, SARC has established feedback mechanisms through activating a hotline to allow two-way communication and ensure accountability of the operation by addressing potential complaints/feedback from the target households and non-target communities. SARC will be also collecting community feedback throughout the satisfaction surveys and regular monitoring activities. Moreover, the key community stakeholders and leaders will be engaged in all community level distributions to ensure the ownership of the community. Learnings from previous operations including the response to 2020 wildfires will also be applied in the CEA mechanisms for this operation.

Safety and Security

To undertake the planned activities, SARC will coordinate with the Movement partners and evaluate the evolving security situation. Access challenges may occur due to the sporadic presence of Islamic State across the M20 road, particularly around As Sukhnah. The IFRC Country Delegation and Regional Security Coordinator will provide support as needed, in supplement to that which is provided by Movement Partners. Personal protection equipment (PPEs) for volunteers' safety will be provided for COVID-19 infection prevention and control.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER)/ Information Management (IM)

SARC HQ will be monitoring and supporting the implementation of the operation undertaken by the branches and sub-branches. Data collection and information communication procedures will be put in place to measure progress against the set indicator targets for the intervention. This process will also inform the development of a possible emergency appeal. The monitoring process will be as a following:

- Monthly progress reports are prepared by implementing branches and sub-branches.
- Regular 'task-force' meetings.
- Field visits and monitoring from SARC HQ.
- Hotlines: dedicated staff and volunteers will manage hotline calls according to established procedures. Data will be collected on the type and number of calls and how they have been responded to.
- Regular budget vs expenditure follow-up and budget modifications if required.
- An end-of-operation lessons learned workshop will be organized by IFRC and SARC to reflect on the DREF implementation and to take stock of that for future responses and to inform response preparedness planning efforts.

Technical PMER capacity and technical support will be provided through the IFRC MENA Regional Delegation PMER team. This will help identify and, where possible and necessary, resolve any issues. An end-of-operation lessons learned exercise will take place to capture the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the operation. It will also be used to measure qualitative outcome indicators and to ensure that the best practices are captured to inform the planning and designing of the long-term projects towards improved ways of working and increasing effectiveness and efficiency to the communities. The IFRC MENA regional IM will be supporting the Syria Country Delegation as well as SARC in reporting through the [IFRC GO platform](#) to share updated field reports, information bulletins, documents, and updates to the emergency page on GO.

Administration and Finance

SARC will be responsible for managing the funds in accordance with standards procedures for IFRC working advance transfers. The IFRC through the country office and finance department in MENA regional office will provide necessary operational support for review, validation of budgets, bank transfers, and technical assistance to the SARC on procedures for justification of expenditures, including the review and validation of invoices and receipts.

C. Detailed Operational Plan



Livelihoods and basic needs

People targeted: 10,000 (2,000 HHs)

Male: 4,875

Female: 5,125

Requirements (CHF): 586,023

Needs analysis:

In this sector and based on the assessment and data collection undertaken by SARC, the immediate need among the target population is food assistance. Due to the failure of the winter rains in 2020/2021 and the extremely low water level in the Euphrates river, large areas of land under rain-fed agriculture have been affected and will yield lower than normal harvests. This has negatively impacted the availability of food and income for households that are completely reliant on agriculture. In addition, negative coping mechanisms are on the rise, including destocking of animals due to a lack of fodder for the most affected households, a lack of pasture, and market-high fodder prices. There have also been reports of households moving into urban areas in search of livelihoods or migrating to other countries via unsafe routes.

Due to the remoteness of the targeted areas and lack of financial services at the immediate stage of the operation, food parcels will be provided instead of multi-purpose unconditional cash grants. The multi-sectoral assessment will consider the feasibility of cash and voucher assistance.

Risk analysis: The drought emergency intensifies, and communities are taking negative coping strategies. Malnutrition and health problems will worsen if families do not receive food assistance. The population in the target area relies mostly on the natural resource base to meet daily needs (livestock and small-scale farming), but serious environmental issues such as desertification, climate change, aquifer depletion, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and pollution all negatively impact the resilience of the rural livelihoods.

Population to be assisted: Food assistance will be provided to 2,000 households through food parcels estimated to cover the food intake of a family of five persons for one month. The food parcels will be distributed to the households two times during the operation. The communities will be consulted and informed of the selection criteria and how they can contact SARC. The beneficiaries will also be consulted during the post-distribution monitoring and during the detailed needs assessment conducted during the timeframe of the DREF operation.

- Households are directly affected by the water crisis and drought conditions.
- Households whose livelihoods and economic status have significantly deteriorated.
- Internally displaced returnee households.
- Women-headed households, widows, divorcees, separated, single parents with no income.
- Households with people with disabilities.

Public

- Households with multiple children.

The beneficiary targeting will be undertaken by SARC staff and volunteers familiar with the areas and in coordination with the local authorities and other organizations working in the areas. The contents list of a standard SARC food parcel is available upon request.

Programme standards/benchmarks:

P&B Output Code	Livelihoods and basic needs Outcome 1: Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods	# of households reached with food assistance (Target: 2,000)														
P&B Output Code	Livelihoods and basic needs Output 1.2: Basic needs assistance for livelihoods security including food is provided to the most affected communities															
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6									
AP008	Carry out the process of identification, registration, and verification of people to be assisted															
AP008	Procure food parcels															
AP008	Distribute food parcels															
AP008	Conduct post-distribution monitoring															



Health

People targeted: 5,000

Male: 2,437

Female: 2,563

Requirements (CHF): 24,121

Needs analysis: In drought-affected governorates, local communities are facing the issues of water shortage, existing water sources, and dry agricultural land. SARC's initial assessment reports an increase in the prevalence of water-borne diseases due to water shortage and quality of water including intestinal infections - fungal infections, and skin diseases. The affected rural areas in particular from Al-Mayadin towards Al-Ashara and Subikhan suffer from a lack of medical services. The health facility infrastructure has been severely affected by the 10 years of crisis and the lack of access to medical services is challenging in the rural remote areas. The impact from the COVID-19 has put an additional burden on the already weak health system. COVID-19 reported cases have been on the increase in the entire country in recent weeks including in the areas affected by the drought.

SARC's priority will be to provide health education to the people in the target communities through Community Based Health and First Aid volunteers (CBHFA) and community health promoters. The existing Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials will be adapted to provide culturally appropriate and standardised messages to the affected communities on health, hygiene and COVID-19. SARC's volunteers and health promoters are trusted sources of information that can engage in two-way communication and dialogue with the communities allowing dispelling misinformation and debunking myths. Context-specific COVID-19 messages addressing misperceptions and vaccine hesitancy will form a part of all awareness-raising activities.

Population to be assisted: A total of 5,000 people will be targeted by health interventions.

Programme standards/benchmarks: SARC will coordinate and harmonize the health interventions with humanitarian actors. For each activity, the minimum standards indicated in the Sphere handbook, the IFRC Health Guides will be used.

P&B Output Code	Health Outcome 2: The immediate risks to the health of the affected populations are reduced through improved access to medical treatment							# of people reached with services to reduce relevant health risk factors (Target: 5,000)										
	Health Output 2.1: Improved access to health care and emergency health care for the targeted population and communities.							# of people reached through awareness-raising activities (Target: 5,000)										
	Activities planned	1	2	3	4	5	6											
AP022	Sensitize and mobilize the health volunteers to engage the key community stakeholders in health promotion activities																	
AP022	Conduct gender-balanced health promotion/ awareness raising sessions at the community level																	
AP022	Develop/adapt IEC materials/messages to reinforce health and COVID-19 related behaviours at the community level																	
AP022	Conduct disease surveillance for water-borne diseases through SARC medical facilities																	



Water, sanitation and hygiene

People targeted: 5,000

Male: 2,437

Female: 2,563

Requirements (CHF): 24,121

Needs analysis:

In drought-affected governorates, local communities are facing the issues of water shortage, existing water sources, and dry agricultural land. The population to be assisted does not usually have access to good and safe water for consumption. Based on the assessments carried out by the SARC, the population has unmet basic needs, especially in terms of access to water for their household needs. Hygiene-related diseases and health issues are on the increase. Many of the water sources in the area are not adequately treated and are difficult to access and units need to be rehabilitated to provide clean drinking water.

Population to be assisted: Hygiene promotion and awareness-raising activities will be provided to 1,000 households in the targeted areas

Hygiene promotion will take place at distribution points and during community gatherings. Key messages on COVID-19 prevention and transmission will be integrated into the hygiene promotion.

Programme standards/benchmarks: The aim of WASH intervention is to promote good personal and environmental hygiene practices. SARC bases its WASH activities on the Sphere minimum standard.

P&B Output Code	WASH Outcome1: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted communities	# of people reached through awareness-raising activities (Target: 5,000)													
	WASH Output 1.5: Hygiene-related goods (NFIs) which meet Sphere standards and training on how to use those goods is provided to the target population														
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6								
AP030	Mobilize SARC volunteers to provide hygiene messages to targeted households.														
AP030	Design/Print IEC materials - if required														
AP030	Continuously monitor the water, sanitation and hygiene situation in targeted communities														
AP026	Conduct multi-sectoral needs assessment including assessment of the water, sanitation and hygiene situation in targeted communities														

Strategies for Implementation

Requirements (CHF): 114,150

P&B Output Code	S1.1: National Society capacity building and organizational development objectives are facilitated to ensure that National Societies have the necessary legal, ethical and financial foundations, systems and structures, competences and capacities to plan and perform	# of NS governorates branches that are well functioning (in the operation) (Target:2)															
	Output S1.1.4: National Societies have effective and motivated volunteers who are protected	# of volunteers that are debriefed and protected (Target: 100)															
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6										
AP040	Distribute PPEs to staff and volunteers (will be provided through other sources)																
AP040	Ensure volunteers are properly trained in safety and security																
	Recruit SARC Ops Coordinator for this response operation																
P&B Output Code	Outcome S2.1: Effective and coordinated international disaster response is ensured	Effective and coordinated international disaster response ensured . (Target: Yes)															
	Output S2.1.1: Effective and respected surge capacity mechanism is maintained.	# of surge deployments (Target: 1)															
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6										
AP046	Deploy surge support to the operation																
P&B Output Code	Output S2.1.3: NS compliance with Principles and Rules for Humanitarian Assistance is improved	# of community feedback systems in place (Target: 1)															
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6										
AP084	Establish a community feedback system and feedback acted upon and used to improve the operation																
P&B Output Code	Outcome S3.1: The IFRC secretariat, together with National Societies uses their unique position to influence decisions at local, national and international levels that affect the most vulnerable.	# of accountability tools adopted by the NS (Target:2)															

	Output S3.1.1: IFRC and NS are visible, trusted and effective advocates on humanitarian issues							# of communication products (Target: TBD)											
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6												
AP053	Develop communication products																		
P&B Output Code	Output S3.1.2: IFRC produces high-quality research and evaluation that informs advocacy, resource mobilization and programming.							# of multi-sectoral needs assessments conducted (Target: 1)											
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6												
AP055	Conduct multi-sectoral needs assessment in drought-affected governorates																		
AP055	Scale and revise the response plan based on multi-sectoral needs and impact assessment																		
AP055	Conduct post-distribution monitoring																		
P&B Output Code	Outcome S3.2: The programmatic reach of the National Societies and the IFRC is expanded.							# of Lessons Learned workshop. (Target: 1)											
	Output S3.2.1: Resource generation and related accountability models are developed and improved							M&E plan produced. (Target: Yes)											
	Activities planned Month	1	2	3	4	5	6												
AP058	Train SARC staff and volunteers, engaged in this operation, on evidence-based reporting standards required to uphold accountability throughout this operation																		
AP058	Produce an M&E plan																		
AP058	Conduct an end-of-operation lessons learned workshop																		

Funding Requirements

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

all amounts in
Swiss Francs
(CHF)

DREF OPERATION

MDRSY006 - SYRIA - DROUGHT

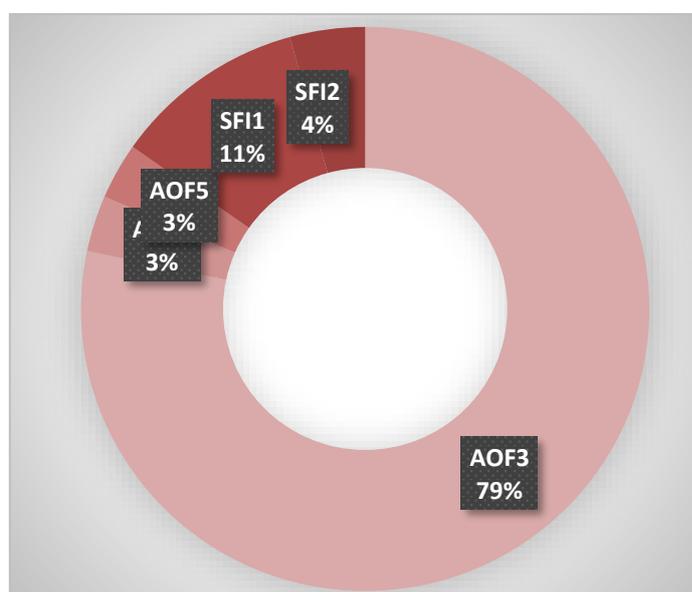
5/10/2021

Budget by Resource

Budget Group	Budget
Food	545,256
Teaching Materials	10,000
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	555,256
Transport & Vehicles Costs	42,631
Logistics, Transport & Storage	42,631
International Staff	30,000
National Society Staff	818
Volunteers	39,431
Personnel	70,249
Workshops & Training	15,000
Workshops & Training	15,000
Travel	14,000
Information & Public Relations	3,000
Office Costs	1,500
Communications	1,000
Financial Charges	100
General Expenditure	19,600
DIRECT COSTS	702,737
INDIRECT COSTS	45,678
TOTAL BUDGET	748,415

Budget by Area of Intervention

AOF1	Disaster Risk Reduction	
AOF2	Shelter	
AOF3	Livelihoods and Basic Needs	586,023
AOF4	Health	24,121
AOF5	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	24,121
AOF6	Protection, Gender and Inclusion	
AOF7	Migration	
SFI1	Strengthen National Societies	82,200
SFI2	Effective International Disaster Management	31,950
SFI3	Influence others as leading strategic partners	
SFI4	Ensure a strong IFRC	
TOTAL		748,415



Reference documents



Click here for:

- Previous Appeals and updates
- Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:**In the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)**

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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**.