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DREF operation update Russian Federation: Floods

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRRU016 GLIDE n° FF-2013-000100-RUS Update n°1 – 28 November 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.

Period covered by this update: 23 August 2013 - 15 November 2013.

Summary: CHF 412,626 was allocated on 23 August 2013 from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Russian Red Cross in delivering assistance to some 9,000 beneficiaries.

The Russian Red Cross (RRC) has been providing food, non-food, personal hygiene and sanitary items for the most vulnerable 9,000 beneficiaries affected by massive floods in three regions of the Far East area: Amur region, Khabarovsk krai, and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. The RRC branch in Khabarovsk krai was chosen as the leading agency for receiving and distributing all humanitarian aid, arriving in the region through different channels.

Back in August 2013, the Russian RC launched a country-wide resource mobilization campaign that allowed to attract an unimaginably large amount of funds internally. By 15 November 2013 around 4 million rubles were received in terms of donations, both cash and in-kind ones.



September 2013, The Russian Red Cross Society distributed urgently needed relief after the massive floods in Far East of Russia.

Photo: Russian Red Cross

Originally, this operation was expected to be implemented for four months, and completed by 31 December 2013. However, the operation has been extended until 31 January 2014 due to harsh weather conditions that were hampering the distribution. In line with Federation reporting standards, the final report is due 90 days from the end of the operation, by 30 April 2014.

The major donors and partners of the DREF operation in the Russian Federation 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's 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's Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. On behalf of the Russian Red Cross, the IFRC would like to extend their thanks to all of them for their generous contributions.

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The situation

At the beginning of August 2013, massive floods caused by torrential rain swept through the Far East Region of Russia covering three big regions: Khabarovsk krai, Amur region, and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (JAO). The level of water in Amur river significantly increased to its historical maximum from the last 100 years of 9,0 meters above normal that resulted in significant negative consequences. According to the Emergency Report of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM), 137 settlements, 6,321 houses populated by 34,135 people, 216 sections of local roads and 59 road bridges were flooded in 25 municipalities in the Far Eastern Federal District. Russian EMERCOM mobilized more than 20,000 rescuers to provide immediate rescue assistance for the population in affected area. Upon decision of Russian Government, more than 5,000 troops were also deployed to assist EMERCOM.

According to the assessment conducted by the Russian Red Cross, 3,000 families (9,000 people) were considered to be the worst affected by the floods in the Far East Region of Russia. The local authorities were doing their utmost to stabilize the situation but they also contacted the Russian Red Cross regional branches, asking for humanitarian aid. The Russian Red Cross Society asked for the support of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the provision of funds for food parcels, hygiene kits, bed linen sets, blankets, and pillows to be distributed to the 3,000 affected families. During August – September 2013, large territories of Far East with a total population of more than 134,000 people, were disaster-stricken areas; more than 10,000 people were evacuated to safe places, and the local authorities jointly with EMERCOM and Russian RC established over 20 temporary shelter points to accommodate more than 5,000 people that could not return to their houses.

Coordination and partnerships

From the date of launch of the DREF operation, the IFRC, through its Regional Representation in Russia, has been maintaining a daily coordination with the Russian public authorities, namely the Russian EMERCOM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as with local authorities in the disaster-stricken area through the Russian Red Cross. Public authorities identified the RRC branch in Khabarovsk krai as the leading agency for receipt and distribution of all humanitarian aid arriving in the region by different channels. The systematic exchange of information between IFRC and the Russian public authorities allowed to provide targeted assistance to the most vulnerable people.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
Outcome: 1: Families most affected by the massive floods will be supported through provision of essential food and non-food items.
Outputs and activities planned: 3,000 families (9,000 people) in the most affected areas will receive food parcels, hygiene kits, and bed linen.
Activities planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct needs and capacity assessments.• Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.• Preparation of final beneficiary lists.• Procurement of relief items in the region• Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user.• Distribution of emergency items by RC branches and their volunteers according to the prepared beneficiary lists.• Coordination with local emergency departments and social welfare authorities.• Monitoring and evaluation of the relief activities and quality of items and reporting on relief distributions

Progress: Since the first days of the disaster, the regional Russian Red Cross branches of all the three affected regions, Khabarovsk, Amur and JAO, have established close information sharing and coordination with the local authorities and the Task Force. The EMERCOM division for the Far East of Russia had contacted the Russian Red Cross Headquarters to coordinate joint efforts to support the local RC activity.

Currently more than 40 Russian RC staff and volunteers are involved in the response operation, and some 250 staff and volunteers have been mobilized since the beginning of the operation.

From the beginning of the disaster, Russian RC has been conducting the following activities.

- Russian RC HQ opened a bank account to collect donations for the affected population;
- All three branches of RRC in affected areas started to collect humanitarian assistance in kind (clothes, non-food items etc);
- The Red Cross volunteers and staff are actively involved in the disaster response actions at the community level: conducting needs assessment and participating in evacuation of disaster victims.

Based on the assessment of the results, it has been agreed that the operation implemented by the Russian Red Cross regional branches will support the affected families according to the following criteria. The average family size in the Russian Federation is rather small, 2-3 people per family):

- Families whose houses were damaged by the floods and are put up in temporary accommodation;
- Single-parent families;
- People living with disabilities;
- Elderly people living in remote areas without family support.

The list of the targeted beneficiaries was developed by the Red Cross regional branches and their volunteers in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and its locally operating Committees for Social Protection at the district level. The list of beneficiaries was checked and approved by RRC branch chairpersons and the Social Welfare Departments.

In September 2013, the procurement of the following relief items was conducted by Russian RC:

- Food parcels – 9,000 pcs. (90 metric tons)
- Hygiene kits – 9,000 pcs. (13.5 metric tons)
- Bed linen, pillows and blankets – 3,000 kits (4.5 metric tons).
- Chlorine tablets – 270 packs (270,000 pills).

All procurement was effected based on a tendering process: advertisements were posted on the websites of Khabarovsk and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (JAO). The tender documents were submitted to RRC HQ and IFRC Regional Representation in Russia and after checking all bids, they were approved for further purchasing. Relief items were procured locally in Far East region based on detailed specification of the parcels and kits.

All food parcels, hygiene kits and bed linen, pillows and blankets were packed in adequate individual bags for the beneficiaries, marked by IFRC and Russian RC logos and the title: *"Humanitarian Aid"* in Russian.

On 15 October 2013 Russian RC branches started relief distribution in all three regions of the Far East according to the agreed timetable for the distribution (see distribution table below):

Khabarovsk krai (distribution started on 26 October 2013; planned ending date 30 November 2013):

	Settlement	Food parcels (planned/distributed)	Hygiene kits (planned/distributed)	Bed linen +pillows and blankets (planned/distributed)	Chlorine tablets (planned/distributed)
1.	Khabarovsk city	1,000/1,000	333/333	333/333	1,000/1,000
2.	Nanaiski district, Troitskoe village	500/300	167/100	167/100	500/300
3.	Komsomolski district	1,500/600	500/300	500/300	1,500/600
	Total:	3,000/1,900	1,000/733	1,000/733	3,000/1,900

In Khabarovsk krai all 1,900 beneficiaries (about 64 per cent of the targeted beneficiaries) received food and non-food assistance in the framework of the DREF operation. The remaining 36 per cent (1,100 beneficiaries) will receive the envisaged food and non-food relief items until the end of November 2013.

Amur region (distribution started on 5 November 2013, planned ending date 30 November 2013):

	Settlement	Food parcels (planned/distributed)	Hygiene kits (planned/distributed)	Bed linen +pillows and blankets (planned/distributed)	Chlorine tablets (planned/distributed)
1.	Blagoveshensk city	2,500/1,000	833/313	833/313	2,500/1,000
2.	Belogorsk city	2,000/550	667/154	667/159	2,000/550
	Total:	4,500/1,550	1,500/467	1,500/472	4,500/1,550

In Amur region 1,550 beneficiaries (34.4 per cent of the planned beneficiaries) received food and non-food assistance in the framework of DREF operation. The remaining 65 per cent of the beneficiaries (2,950 people) will receive that assistance in the coming weeks.

Jewish AO (distribution started 15 October 2013 and finished 10 November 2013)

	Settlement	Food parcels (planned/distributed)	Hygiene kits (planned/distributed)	Bed linen +pillows and blankets (planned/distributed)	Chlorine tablets (planned/distributed)
1.	Leninski district	596/596	202/202	202/202	596/596
2.	Smidovichski district	500/500	137/202	137/202	500/500
3.	Birobidzjan district	144/144	67/67	67/67	144/144
4.	Obluchensk district	110/110	44/44	44/44	110/110
5.	Octyabrskiy district	150/150	50/50	50/50	150/150
	Total:	1,500/1,500	500/500	500/500	1,500/1,500

In the Jewish Autonomous Oblast all 1,500 beneficiaries (100 per cent of planned beneficiaries) received food and non-food assistance in the framework of DREF operation.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Outcome 2: The risk of waterborne and water related diseases has been reduced through the provision of access to safe water to 3,000 households.
Outputs and activities planned: 3,000 households (9,000 beneficiaries) will be assisted with access to safe water via chlorine tablet distribution.
Activities planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct rapid water and sanitation emergency needs and capacity assessment in coordination with local authorities. • Monitoring and evaluation. • Print and distribute disaster awareness and hygiene promotion materials to the target population. • Arrange public awareness campaigns among the affected population (leaflets/posters will be distributed among the affected population in disaster stricken districts).

Progress:

At the beginning of the disaster response operation, Russian Red Cross branches in the affected areas, jointly with health authorities, conducted a joint assessment of the situation, aimed at identifying the most risky areas of spreading water borne infection diseases.

The following risk sources of water borne diseases were identified:

- Central water supply systems of urban and rural settlements due to flooding by river water;
- Draw-wells in rural area, flooded by river water.

Taking into account the large number of population living in the above indicated risk areas, local authorities conducted a wide vaccination campaign for the population, particularly children on typhoid, hepatitis A..

The Russian Red Cross, in its turn, concentrated its efforts on information awareness campaigns among the affected communities.

Since a significant part of the population had been evacuated to temporary shelters: schools, hotels, etc., and another part returned to their houses, the high risk of water borne diseases still remained. The community awareness-raising campaigns concentrated on those two groups of population.

In September 2013, Russian Red Cross developed, with technical support of the IFRC, information leaflets containing information about some frequent types of water borne diseases and ways of their prevention.

The leaflet was tested at branch level and in total **9,000 pcs** were printed.

In addition, Russian RC set up information desks at 14 temporary evacuation points, where the evacuated population could also receive some basic information about the prevention of water borne diseases.

During September – November 2013, Russian RC volunteers distributed information leaflets and chlorine tablets: (30 tablets per person for one month. Each tablet serves for purifying 20 liters of water).

See distribution table below:

	Settlement	Chlorine tablets (planned/distributed) (1 pack-30 tablets)	Information leaflets (planned/distributed)
<i>Khabarovsk krai</i>			
1.	Khabarovsk city	1,000/1,000	1,000/1,000
2.	Nanaiski district, Troitskoe village	500/300	500/300
3.	Komsomolski district	1,500/600	1,500/600
	Sub-total:	3,000/1,900	3,000/1,900
<i>Amur region</i>			
1.	Blagoveshensk city	2,500/1,000	2,500/1,000
2.	Belogorsk city	2,000/550	2000/550
	Sub-total:	4,500/1,550	4,500/1,550
<i>Jewish AO</i>			
1.	Leninski district	596/596	596/596
2.	Smidovichski district	500/500	500/500
3.	Birobidzjan district	144/144	144/144
4.	Obluchensk district	110/110	110/110
5.	Octyabrskiy district	150/150	150/150
	Sub-total:	1,500/1,500	1,500/1,500
	Total:	9,000/4,950	9,000/4,950

At 15 November 2013, more than 55 per cent of the beneficiaries were covered by information campaigns: chlorine tablets and information leaflets were distributed to 4,950 beneficiaries. Other part of beneficiaries will be covered until 15 December 2013.

In the aftermath of the disaster, local authorities organized a timely delivery of drinking water to rural areas which also contributed to the prevention of spreading water borne diseases.

It is important to underline that due to coordinated activity of local authorities and the Russian Red Cross, no increase of level of water borne diseases in the affected area was observed.

In the period between 26 and 30 October 2013, a joint IFRC/Russian Red Cross monitoring exercise was conducted.

The head of the IFRC Regional Representation in Russia, representatives of Russian RC HQ and Far Eastern branches visited Khabarovsk krai: Khabarovsk city and Komsomolsk in Amur rayon, as well as the Jewish Autonomous Oblast.

The head of IFRC RR visited the disaster affected areas, some distribution points and temporary shelters in Khabarovsk, Komsomolsk, Nanaiski rayon, Birobidzjan town, met with representatives of local authorities, beneficiaries, staff, volunteers and representatives of mass media.

The main outcomes of the monitoring visit are as follows.

- The process of relief distribution in the framework of the DREF operation was well-organized, in accordance with IFRC requirements: the list of beneficiaries as well as distribution lists were developed according to IFRC requirements; the contents and the packaging of food, non-food and hygiene items complied with IFRC standards and the DREF operation agreement between IFRC and RRC.
- The relief distribution points in Khabarovsk and Komsomolsk in Amur were organized according to good standards that allow RRC staff and volunteers to distribute humanitarian assistance openly, transparently, with high respect and dignity to the beneficiaries, in full accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- The Russian Red Cross was the first that began to provide help to the people affected by the floods. The provision of such large scale relief aid was possible thanks to the operational assistance by the Russian Red Cross and IFRC, for which the local people expressed their deep gratitude on behalf of all beneficiaries. During the relief distribution many beneficiaries and representatives of local authorities expressed their great thanks to the IFRC and the Russian Red Cross for their timely support, kindness, warmth, and humanism.
- The Khabarovsk branch of the Russian RC demonstrated a high level of partnership with public authorities at regional as well as local level. The Khabarovsk branch developed a close cooperation with the authorities in the process of relief distribution, at the same time kept independence on decision making, equal partnership, based on a high level of trust and credibility.
- Thanks to joint efforts taken by the IFRC and Russian Red Cross, the profile of the Russian Red Cross Regional branches has been considerably improved, because now many people and authorities are aware about the Red Cross's activities.
- The Russian RC branch in JAO started rendering assistance from their own sources from the first days after disaster, that was positively received by the Government of the Oblast.
- The large amount of humanitarian assistance received by RRC branches in affected area requires from RRC practical skills and knowledge on receiving goods, proper distribution, analysis of statistical data, and high quality reporting to IFRC and local authorities. IFRC will continue providing technical support to RRC on the above indicated issues.

Challenges

- During the process of the relief distribution, Russian RC branches were faced with objective challenges and obstacles due to the big distances between different locations: for example Komsomolsk in Amur area, is located more than 700 km away from the centre of the region.
- Some of the settlements are still flooded; the level of the water in some villages of Khabarovsk and Amur regions is higher than normal, which makes the disaster relief process difficult. Thanks to coordinated work of Russian RC and rescuers, the delivery of the food and non-food assistance to the affected population is taking place on time.

- The capacities of communities in disaster-prone areas of Khabarovsk krai, Amur oblast and JAO to prepare for, and respond to, future disasters through community-based disaster preparedness should be strengthened.
- Regional staff responsible for Local Disaster Response committees and volunteers are to be trained how to respond to disaster risks in the target areas and link them with Russian Red Cross Disaster Management planning systems, using a coordinated regional approach.
- Local Disaster Response committees should be formed at least in three regions of the Far East prone to disasters.
- It is recommended that the Khabarovsk, Amur and JAO Russian Red Cross Regional Branches should continue to work on obtaining a minimum reserve stock of non-food essentials at least for 300 people that the Local Disaster Response committees can distribute.

It is important to mention that, due to the big volume of work related to disaster response and relief distribution, the Russian RC requested the postponement of the Lessons Learned session scheduled for December 2013 by IFRC and Russian Red Cross until the end of January 2014 when the distribution will be finalized.

Contact information

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DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 23 August 2013 for CHF 412,626 for four months to assist 9,000 beneficiaries.
 - First Operation Update and extension of timeframe until 31 January 2014 on 28 November 2013.
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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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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.