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Disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) Israel: Extreme Winter Conditions

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRIL001
GLIDE n° CW-2013-000153-ISR
17 December 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 113,005 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Magen David Adom in Israel in delivering immediate assistance to some 7,050 beneficiaries. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: MDA has mounted an extensive operation to support the most vulnerable of the 2 million citizens affected by the severe winter conditions between 12th and 15th December 2013. This DREF is for the support of MDA assisting 7,050 beneficiaries during this operation. The support includes an increase in the Emergency Medical



Shelter for homeless opened at MDA headquarters
Photo by MDA

Service (EMS; ambulance) response to the population in the cities affected by the snow, support to the public left without electricity, clinics in the temporary shelters in Jerusalem, and opening of a shelter at the MDA headquarters in Tel Aviv.

This operation is expected to be implemented over one month, and will therefore be completed by 16th January 2014; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 16th April 2014).

[<click here for the DREF budget; here for contact details>](#)

The situation

Starting Wednesday 12th December 2013, Israel has been suffering from a severe winter storm affecting the whole country. To date the storm has claimed four lives; 3,000 people have been transported to medical care; 4,000 have been assisted by the MDA, and the government has been rendering some kind of an assistance to 2,000,000 citizens affected by the storm.

Jerusalem has had up to 60 cm of snow, and the roads to the city are still blocked. Hundreds were stranded on the roads to the city, rescued by the police and hosted in temporary shelters. Due to the blocked roads those hosted in the shelters stayed there for 48 hours. Similar conditions affected the city of Zefat and the upper Galilee (north of Israel).

The road conditions are extremely dangerous, and the police warned the citizens to minimize any travelling by car to the greatest degree possible.

The storm has caused damages to the electric power supply infrastructure and, as a result, about 35,000 households are left without power supply and any heating capacity. Due to the freezing temperatures, the conditions for these households are very difficult.

The rest of the country was affected by heavy rains, associated with high winds and temperatures below average.

Coordination and partnerships

MDA is coordinating with the authorities at the local and national levels, primarily with the Police being the lead agency for the operation. As neighbourhoods became inaccessible even by cross-country vehicles and automobiles equipped with snow chains, the only solution was to use heavy armoured vehicles of the military, with MDA personnel to access those in need. As communication lines were interrupted, many could not contact their beloved ones. This generated numerous phone calls to MDA emergency lines. These calls were responded by joint teams of the local authority, police, fire brigades and MDA. The police activated their volunteers possessing cross-country vehicles to support MDA activities. MDA supported the temporary shelters organized by the Jerusalem municipality to assist those stranded on the roads to the city. Support to the homeless in Tel Aviv was coordinated with the local authority and NGOs assisting homeless population. MDA coordinated with the ICRC (who supported the shelter in MDA HQ), and with the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) around possible cooperation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

MDA has mobilized 1,000 staff and 2,000 volunteers so as to stand up to the challenges of the extreme weather conditions. They are increasing ambulance (EMS) response capacities in the locations affected by the snow, as the public are not able to reach health care facilities by their own means. Furthermore, they are providing support to the public left without electricity (specifically elderly and families with little children). They also providing shelter solution to homeless people in Tel Aviv.

MDA put themselves on the highest level of alert with all the available ambulances deployed in the affected cities. Resources have been mobilized nationwide to support the affected areas. Volunteers nationwide have been called into action, and mobilized for the affected areas.

MDA is using all of its four wheel drive ambulances and heavy duty vehicles to respond to the growing demand. In some places military armoured vehicles, with MDA personnel on board, are utilized to transport and access people in need.

The volume of emergency calls attended by MDA is extremely high, about five times the normal volume (in Jerusalem, Zefad and their surrounding areas). This has put a strain on existing ambulance equipment and teams.

MDA has opened clinics at the temporary shelters of the local authorities so as to assist the public stranded on the roads, by providing first aid and medical care. In addition, MDA has opened a shelter for homeless people at its national headquarters in Tel Aviv.

MDA is supporting the transportation of elderly and incapacitated who are left without electricity.

They are coordinating with the PRCS and with the authorities continuously at local and national levels.

The needs

Based on the needs assessment conducted by the local MDA branches and also on the weather forecast and information provided by authorities, MDA are targeting the following categories.

1. Increased EMS capacities because normally in Israel, at least half of those who require urgent medical assistance will reach the emergency departments in the hospitals by their own means. Due to the road conditions, and police instructions the public, those patients in need were not able to use their private cars, which resulted in an increase of demand for EMS ambulances up to five times the normal volume, and has increased the number of calls from 500 to 2,000 or more per day. All the public requiring EMS response will be supported by MDA. MDA is seeking DREF support to maintain this important level of service.



MDA personnel and Police assisting elderly in a snowy Jerusalem
Photo by MDA

2. During the storm some 35,000 households were left without power, for various time periods varying from several hours to 2 days.

3. MDA is supporting those affected by the lack of electric power – elderly and those with little children by providing them transportation services to relatives who have power. As of 15th December, 15,000 households are still with no power; restoring the service is expected to take several days, while very cold temperatures are expected during these days and especially during night times. As the number of homeless is substantial in Tel Aviv, there has been a need to support the homeless population by setting up a shelter in the National Headquarters of MDA to support 50 homeless people with hot food, beverages and non-food items such as sleeping bags, mattresses etc. and to support those who were not willing to reallocate to the shelter with some basic shelter materials (plastic sheeting and blankets).

The proposed operation

Emergency health

Outcome: Increase EMS (ambulance service) response capacities in the affected community

Output: 40 additional team are set up and equipped in Jerusalem, Zefad and neighbouring communities to support and response the needs of 6000 people.

Activities planned:

- Provide additional 40 EMS teams in 3 shifts a day (25 in the Jerusalem area, 15 in the Zefad area), during the coming days.
- Support the increase in EMS activities by mobilization of vehicles, staff and volunteers.
- Support the activity by providing food to the team members.
- Support volunteers using their private four wheels drive vehicles in the operation by reimbursement of fuel costs.
- Procure snow chains for the cars, warm clothing, anti-freeze fluid
- Repair broken resources (ambulance) and replenish resources used up in the operation

Emergency shelter

Outcome: Providing emergency assistance (basic food and clothing items) to approximately 1,050 beneficiaries and 50 homeless hosted at MDA HQ

Output: The food and hygiene needs of the most vulnerable 1,050 people will be met through distribution of food and non-food items and clothes.

Activities planned:

- Provide shelter to 50 homeless at MDA HQ.
- Procurement and distribution of sleeping bags, towels, mattresses for the shelter
- Support 1,000 beneficiaries left without power supply with transportation to relatives

The MDA Headquarters, in close cooperation with IFRC Europe Zone Office, will monitor the progress of the DREF operation and will provide the necessary technical expertise.

Weekly operation updates will be sent to the IFRC Europe Zone Office.

The visibility of the work of MDA volunteers and staff will be ensured during the operation through the local media.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in 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.



The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

DREF OPERATION

Israel - Snow

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	3,801
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	3,735
Food	5,534
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Ustensils & Tools	
Other Supplies & Services	
Emergency Response Units	
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	13,074
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles Purchase	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machiney & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0
Storage, Warehousing	
Dsitribution & Monitoring	
Transport & Vehicle Costs	88,474
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	88,474
International Staff	
National Staff	
National Society Staff	
Volunteers	
Total PERSONNEL	0
Consultants	
Professional Fees	1,564
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	1,564
Workshops & Training	
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	0
Travel	3,000
Information & Public Relations	
Office Costs	
Communications	
Financial Charges	
Other General Expenses	
Shared Support Services	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	3,000
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	6,897
Total INDIRECT COSTS	6,897

TOTAL BUDGET

113,005
