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# Emergency appeal operations update

## Serbia: Floods

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency appeal n° MDRRS009	GLIDE n° FF-2014-000059-SRB
Operations update n° 1	Timeframe covered by this update: 28 May 2014 – 20 June 2014
Emergency operation start date: 13 May 2014	Timeframe: 9 months
Appeal budget: CHF 4,485,096	Appeal coverage: 22 %
Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 290,926	
Number of people being assisted: 49,600 people or 12,400 families	
Host National Society(ies) presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): 60,000 volunteers, 865 staff, 183 branches in total out of which 42 are involved in the response operation	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: ICRC, Austrian Red Cross, Bulgarian Red Cross, Croatian Red Cross, Czech Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, German Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Hungarian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, Macedonia Red Cross, Montenegro Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Romanian Red Cross, Slovenian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross, Turkish Red Crescent	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Emergency Management Department of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, Municipalities, emergency headquarters of the endangered municipalities; EMERCOM of Russia, UN UNDAC, EU Civil Protection Mechanism	

This Emergency Appeal seeks CHF 4,485,096 to enable the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to support the Red Cross of Serbia in delivering assistance and support to some 12,400 flood-affected families (49,600 people).

The Red Cross of Serbia (RCS) – as a member of the Municipal Emergency Headquarters – has been providing humanitarian assistance by covering urgent needs through its local branches to all affected population eligible to receive humanitarian aid.



Field assessment by RCS in Krupanj.  
Photo: Red Cross of Serbia

## Summary

Torrential rainfalls began in Serbia on 13 May 2014, with an amount of rain in two days` time equalling to two months` average rainfall as a result of a low-pressure area that formed over the Adriatic Sea due to polar air from Central Europe meeting with the humid subtropical air of the Mediterranean basin.

After the rainfall ceased, the level of several rivers – specifically the Sava (Europe's second longest river after the Volga), Kolubara, Drina, Mlava and Velika Morava rivers – continued to rise.

The floods in Serbia have claimed at least 34 lives. A national state of emergency was declared on 15 May 2014 by the Government of Serbia. The situation is now slightly improving. Water has withdrawn and/or retreating. Evacuated people are beginning to return to their homes, and disinfection and cleaning processes are in progress. State of emergency is lifted nation-wide, but remains in effect in five municipalities: Obrenovac, Mali Zvornik, Krupanj, Bajina Basta and Ljubovija.

According to the latest statistics<sup>1</sup>, the total number of municipalities affected by the floods that still need assistance is **39**, while the total number of affected people is **1,643,832**, with over **32,000** people displaced since the beginning of the disaster.

The railway system is re-established, but alternative routes are used for transportation. Generally, most of the areas are now easier to access by road than it was the case at the beginning of the operation.

Work has begun to create conditions for flood evacuees to return to their homes. In Obrenovac, after the flood waters withdrew from the streets, field sanitation and disinfection have been taking place. Sewage and water systems and power supply are re-established. However, in most areas water from the pipes is not potable and can be used only for washing and household purposes. The Red Cross branch continues with delivery of food and beverages. There are three distribution points in Obrenovac, for those coming back to the city and for those who refused to evacuate.

The immediate focus of the RCS is on meeting the affected people's immediate needs. However, planning has already started to support their recovery as well.

## Coordination and partnerships

Coordination among Movement partners is being ensured through regular information exchange with IFRC and ICRC. Several NSs around the world have launched fundraising campaigns for the floods in the Balkans.

The IFRC assisted the Red Cross of Serbia through a DREF allocation in the total amount of CHF 290,926 to support the Red Cross of Serbia's disaster response operation. Partner National Societies do not have offices or permanent representatives in Serbia, but support has been provided through cash donations (Austrian Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Slovenian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross) and in-kind donations (Bulgarian Red Cross, Croatian Red Cross, Czech Red Cross, German Red Cross, Hellenic Red Cross, Hungarian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Luxembourg Red Cross, Macedonia Red Cross, Montenegro Red Cross, Romanian Red Cross, Slovenian Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross and Turkish Red Crescent).

The Red Cross of Serbia cooperated with social care centres in the process of identifying and selecting the beneficiaries of the relief operations.

Continuous assessment is ongoing as roads are becoming accessible by the local RC branches and National Society Disaster response teams in cooperation with the Sector for Emergency Management of the Republic of Serbia and municipal emergency response headquarters.

SDC and USAID also provided assistance to the affected people through cash donations.

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<sup>1</sup> All figures mentioned in this document were updated between 16 and 19 June. However, please note that the numbers are changing on a daily basis, since people tend to return to their homes, move into private accommodation or move to centers that are in vicinity of their original place of living.

## Operational implementation

Over **4,985** Red Cross of Serbia staff and volunteers are working around the clock to provide support to the people affected by the floods, out of which more than **513,535** working hours performed by Red Cross of Serbia volunteers.

Across the country, the Red Cross of Serbia has reached more people in need through different channels than the sum that was initially planned in the preliminary emergency appeal.

This increase in the number of beneficiaries (approximately 8,000 additional beneficiaries) is due to the fact that in many affected communities, the water levels remained high for longer than expected. Thus the prolonged repatriation time created more needs. The detailed assessment conducted by RC teams a few weeks after launching the operation confirmed the recent numbers.

Belgrade's Emergency Headquarters has made a decision that all collective centres in Belgrade (**11 collective centers**) are to be handled by the Red Cross of Serbia starting from 22 May 2014.

These centres are now accommodating **approximately 1,328 persons**, mostly evacuated people from Obrenovac and Lazarevac municipalities. On top of that, there are additional **18,000 people** hosted in private accommodations in Belgrade.

In other parts of Serbia, excluding Obrenovac, there are 336 persons in collective centres and 5,331 persons in private housing establishments.



RC volunteers feeding an infant at the transition centre in Lazarevac.  
Photo: Red Cross of Serbia

## Progress

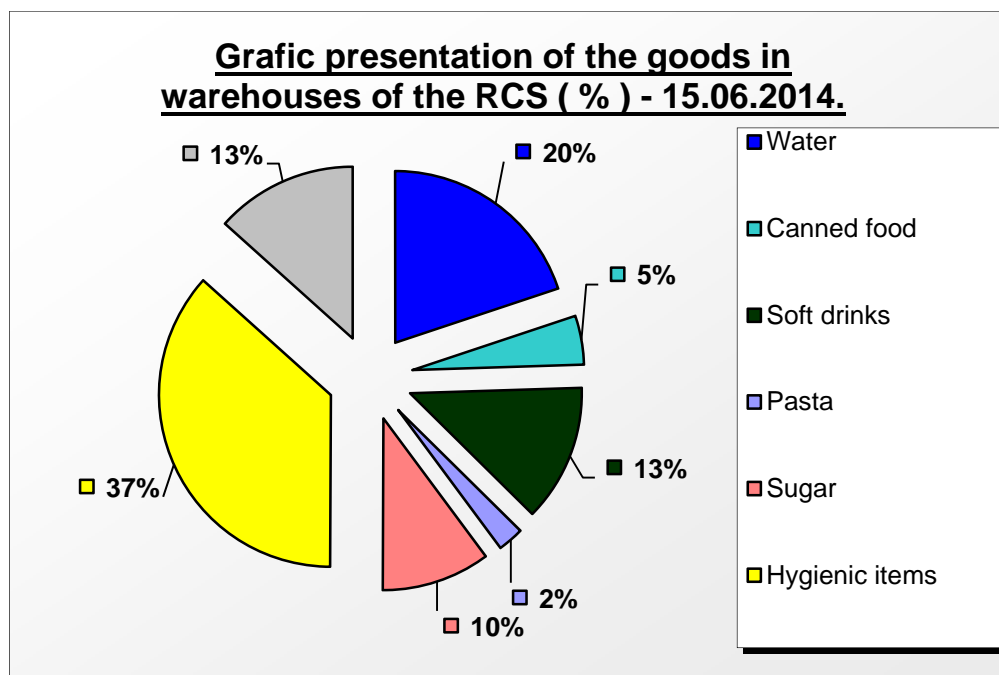
The Red Cross of Serbia is concentrating its current response efforts on several areas of intervention:

- Reception and distribution of humanitarian aid;
- Evacuation and shelter;
- Restoring family links (RFL);
- Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH);
- Early recovery phase – improving the conditions of the affected homes for people to be able to return.

The Red Cross of Serbia conducted a field assessment in 24 communities affected by flood and landslides on the territory of Obrenovac municipality. Through interviews and focus groups techniques (including women and older people) Red Cross of Serbia teams collected data on the needs in the mentioned areas. In addition to that, in-depth assessments started recently, including early recovery intervention planning.

### Reception and distribution of humanitarian aid

- ✓ Since the beginning of the disaster, the Red Cross has been tasked by the Serbian authorities to organize the **reception and distribution of humanitarian assistance**. Just for the period from **16 May 2014** to **19 May 2014**, RCS received **2,383 metric tons** and distributed **2,065 metric tons** of food and non-food relief items that were hand out to the most vulnerable people affected by floods all over Serbia.
- ✓ The urgent **distribution of food items** has been organized by the RCS disaster management warehouse and so far more than **42,000** ready-to-eat meals and **135,000** different canned meats were distributed from the NS disaster management stock. In addition, Red Cross of Serbia is procuring canned meats and ready-to-eat meals for a total of 35,000 beneficiaries for additional seven days to continue with the emergency food distribution to those people who are unable to make their own meals due to damaged households, or to those who have still not returned to their place of living.



#### Evacuation and shelter

- ✓ Beside distribution of humanitarian aid, the Red Cross of Serbia assists those sheltered in collective centres with food and non-food items including second hand clothes, mattresses, and blankets where needed. The same approach is applied for people coming to RC branches for assistance that are staying with their relatives and friends or in rented apartments.
- ✓ Red Cross of Serbia teams participated in the rescue activities of 4,692 persons and evacuated 8,804 persons.

#### Restoring family links

- ✓ Over 38,000 evacuees are in the database of the Red Cross of Serbia. So far, RC volunteers are present in all the centres, registering evacuated/accommodated people and offering them restoring family links services. With the support of the ICRC Regional Delegation in Belgrade, the Tracing Service compares allegations on disappearance with lists of evacuated people on a daily basis, trying to bring families together, narrowing down the list of persons from whom family members have no news. There are still 23 open cases out of the 119 ones that were started.
- ✓ The main RFL services provided are:
  - Free phone calls;
  - Making lists of sought persons (tracing requests);
  - Offering transportation to the most vulnerable family members accommodated in different collective shelters.

#### WASH activities

- ✓ As for water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (**WASH**) activities, the total amount of distributed bulk hygiene items is **503,905** kg, while **3,994,631** litres of potable water has been provided to people so far. The distribution of bottled water is still on-going, since the National Society received enough quantities from the donors to meet the needs of the beneficiaries in those municipalities where tap water is not potable yet. The Red Cross of Serbia has made available 13 water tanks of 1,000 litres each in three municipalities (Cicevac, Obrenovac, Vladimirci) and 2 water tanks of 5,000 liters in Obrenovac.

The table below shows the content of the family hygiene parcel.

No	item	Unit	amount
1.	Washing detergent 3/1 kg	pcs	1
2.	Shampoo 1/1 lit	pcs	1
3.	Soap 0.200 kg	pcs	4
4.	Toilet paper	pcs	4
5.	Tooth paste	pcs	2
6.	Tooth brush	pcs	4
7.	Shaving foam	pcs	1
8.	Razors	pcs	4
9.	Sanitary pads	pak	2
10.	Liquid detergent for dishes 1/1 lit	pcs	1

#### Early recovery activities

- ✓ Within the **early recovery activities**, mobile technical teams of the RCS are helping people in the affected cities where water is receding by pumping the water out of the flooded houses, using wall dehumidifiers etc. so as to help people return to their homes. The Red Cross of Serbia teams used 42 mud pumps in 95 objects, and 62 dehumidifiers in 113 objects/houses. The number of working hours of mentioned dehumidifiers was 16,821. The Red Cross of Serbia is currently engaging 130 dehumidifiers with more to arrive in the country soon, thus bringing the number of dehumidifiers up to 250.

The main **planned intervention areas** this Emergency Appeal seeks to cover now and in the future are the following:

- Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH);
- Shelter and settlements (and household items)
- Food security, nutrition and livelihoods;
- Restoring family links (RFL);
- Health and care;
- National Society capacity building.

The IFRC aims to publish soon a revised Emergency Appeal, which will include, in addition to multilateral contributions, all bilateral contributions as well received by the Red Cross of Serbia from donors, in order to present an overall picture of the support received by the Red Cross of Serbia.

## Contact information

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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.