

Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Belarus: Population movement

DREF Operation	Operation n° MDRBY005 Glide n° OT-2014-000146-BLR
Date of issue: 29 October 2014	Time of the emergency: summer - autumn - winter 2014
Operation manager (responsible for this EPoA): Sergei Boltrushevich, Head of Office, IFRC Representation	Point of contact: Viktor Kolbanov, Secretary General of Belarus Red Cross
Operation start date: 28 October 2014	Expected timeframe: 28 October 2014 to 28 January 2015 (3 months)
Overall operation budget: CHF 126,229	
Number of people affected: 30,000	Number of people assisted or to be assisted: 2,400 Note: 1,200 people have already been supported by mobilizing NS emergency stocks.
Host National Society(ies) presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): 150 volunteers, 100 staff, Headquarters and 8 regional branches	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Citizenship and Migration office; Labour, Employment and Social Protection Committee; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education; local authorities, the Orthodox Church, ICRC, UNHCR, IOM.	

A. Situation analysis

Description of the emergency

Since June 2014 Belarus has seen increasing numbers of people fleeing the areas of conflict in Ukraine. At 16 October, the authorities reported that the number of asylum applications reached 511, while some 30,000 Ukrainian citizens are reportedly seeking other forms of legal stay in Belarus¹.

The Department on Citizenship and Migration of the Ministry of Interior of Belarus reports over 49,000 citizens of Ukraine registered in Belarus over nine months of 2014².

Overall, some 5,900 displaced people have applied for assistance to Belarus Red Cross headquarters and branches, with some 250 people coming to the Red Cross offices during the last week³. Belarus has a limited number of centres for temporary shelter (three centres in Gomel, Vitebsk and Brest) for a total of 69 persons and they are now completely filled. Temporary solutions sought for the rest of displaced people (relatives' homes, crisis rooms, host families, mother-and-child resting rooms at



Two newly displaced Ukrainian families from Pervomaisk, Luhansk region, receiving assistance from Belarus Red Cross branch in Vitebsk.
Photo: Belarus Red Cross

¹ Source: UNHCR operation update, 24 September - 20 October 2014.

² Source: Coordination Meeting, 23 October 2014.

³ Source: Belarus Red Cross, 17 October 2014.

railway stations, or temporary hotel accommodation at the recommendation of the Red Cross or other actors).

Offices of the Department on Citizenship and Migration of the Ministry of Interior of Belarus are providing consultations and support to the displaced people on obtaining legal status and additional protection in Belarus. State assistance can only be provided to those who apply for refugee statuses or additional protection.

Summary of the current response

Overview and action taken by the Host National Society

Belarus Red Cross sees its role in assisting the most vulnerable people affected by the out-bound population displacement from Ukraine with a strong focus on single parent families, families with many children, expectant mothers, elderly and disabled people.

Emergency relief assistance was provided by Belarus Red Cross throughout the whole summer period utilising their own emergency stocks and emergency funds, as well as re-allocating some other available resources.

On 8 September 2014, Belarus Red Cross headquarters issued an order so as to launch a coordinated countrywide operation for providing assistance to the displaced Ukrainian citizens. The order provides for setting up a task force at the National Society's headquarters; instructing regional branches to monitor the evolving situation; providing assistance to Ukrainian citizens coming to Belarus based upon the available resources; involving in relief activities Red Cross volunteer groups formed for the purpose in regional branches; informing the media and the public on the operation; organizing information support to Ukrainian citizens arriving in Belarus by rail and setting up an assistance centre at the central railway station of Minsk for people in need coming from Ukraine; organizing the work of the help line "201" on weekdays from 19.00 hours to 21.00 hours for information assistance to Ukrainian citizens; organizing activities for restoring family links broken as a consequence of the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk regions; developing proposals for the implementation of psychological support for Ukrainian citizens who arrived in Belarus; and organizing a targeted in-country fundraising campaign for the needs of the Ukrainian citizens. To date, the campaign has raised about CHF 60,000 in cash and kind, with almost half of these resources used for the provision of assistance.

A total of 5,904 displaced people have already received various types of assistance from Belarus Red Cross, including 1,829 food kits, 1,058 hygiene kits, 47,021 items of clothing and 2,455 pairs of shoes⁴. Distributions from National Society emergency stock also included blankets, bed linen, socks, kitchen sets and other household items. In addition, Belarus Red Cross provided referral, counselling and psychological support services, support with temporary accommodation, travel and medication.

Together with IFRC and other partners, Belarus Red Cross is also working on an overall plan of action with a view to a comprehensive response to the needs of displaced people.

With the support of the IFRC, the Austrian, Icelandic, Danish and Swiss Red Cross Societies, Belarus Red Cross has managed to upgrade its level of services to the vulnerable population in comparison to previous years – an increase in the number of volunteers, in disaster preparedness, response and relief. At the same time, the National Society has managed to further work on improving its operational and organizational capacity to increase the level of quality support for the most vulnerable people, reaching out to individuals, families and communities based upon the Red Cross / Red Crescent principles.

Belarus Red Cross rescue teams have become operational by the equipment and the training provided through previous projects that enabled the teams to respond to the extreme weather conditions in winter, spring and summer.

Belarus Red Cross branches have volunteer emergency response teams trained in first aid, psychosocial support, search and rescue, deployment of relief camps and transportation of victims, as well as maintaining basic stocks of relief items including tents, clothing, and household items ready for distribution in case of a disaster.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

In Belarus there is IFRC presence with a country representation staffed by the head of office and a finance manager. IFRC ensures strong support to Belarus Red Cross by providing technical advice, tools and standards, facilitating organizational development and knowledge-sharing, monitoring and reporting.

The IFRC representation in Belarus and the National Society are cooperating closely in assessing the needs and the response to this emergency. The operation will be coordinated by Belarus Red Cross branch chairpersons in their areas of responsibility. Red Cross staff and volunteers will be responsible for delivering the emergency assistance.

ICRC are closely following the situation in Belarus, and on 1-6 September they carried out a joint assessment with Belarus Red Cross covering all regions of Belarus except Gomel and Brest. The purpose of the mission was to assess the needs of the displaced people and the Red Cross and other actors' response, as well as to advise on future action. The assessment confirmed that the needs remain high and that Belarus Red Cross own resources are exhausted by the provision of assistance. Belarus Red Cross needs support in providing assistance to those in dire

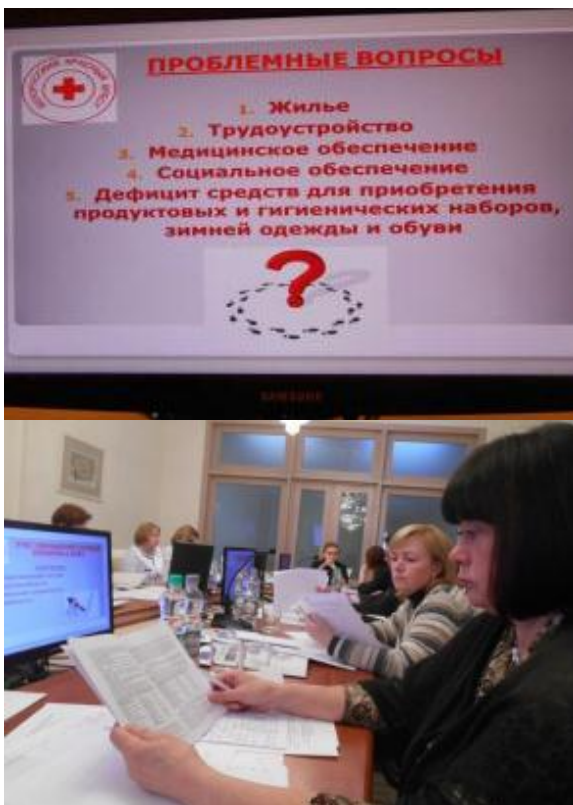
⁴ Source: Belarus Red Cross, 17 October 2014.

need, as well as in replenishment of the distributed stocks. Furthermore, Belarus Red Cross needs support in building capacities of staff and volunteers to provide assistance.

There is a delegate of the Swiss Red Cross currently in the country. Additionally, a Danish Red Cross delegate responsible for Belarus, who is based in Tbilisi, comes and visits Belarus Red Cross regularly.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Belarus and the Committees on Labour, Employment and Social Protection of the regional and city administrations are consulting and assisting the citizens of Ukraine in Belarus on the issues of employment and social benefits. A total of 4,000 displaced people have applied to the Ministry and Committees since 31 July 2014. At the moment, some 250 people are applying weekly. The Ministry created a database at its website containing 6,000 vacancies (including 2,000 with housing provided) available for foreign citizens. However, not all displaced people can take up employment (mothers with young children, expectant mothers, disabled and elderly people); therefore these vulnerable groups require urgent support with their daily subsistence needs.



Coordination meeting between key stakeholders discusses issues of assistance to the people arriving from Ukraine. Minsk, 23 October. Photo: IFRC

The Ministry of Health is providing free of charge emergency medical care to the citizens of Ukraine. The Ministry is also providing for medical check-ups and issuance of health certificates required for employment. The provision of vital medicines for the displaced with chronic diseases (e.g. insulin) is a critical issue and the Ministry is trying to address it on an individual basis with the support of local authorities. Since 1 September 2014, a total of 12,181 displaced people, including 9,088 from Donetsk and Luhansk regions have applied to Belarus health institutions for assistance. 312 females gave birth in Belarusian maternity homes and continue to receive the necessary medical treatment while 219 expectant mothers from Donetsk and Luhansk regions are being observed in health institutions. Children of the displaced are provided with vaccinations free of charge. The Ministry of Health raises concerns with regards to cases of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis detected among the displaced.

From the very beginning of this emergency, Belarus Red Cross headquarters and branches have been in close contact with relevant state and non-state actors, who provide the National Society with hands-on information on the evolving situation. Regular operational contacts are maintained by the National Society with the Citizenship and Migration Office, Labour, Employment and Social Protection Committees, Education and Health departments, local authorities, UNHCR, and IOM.

Belarus Red Cross and other stakeholders cooperate closely on the provision of assistance to displaced people from Ukraine. UNHCR and partners jointly look for opportunities to provide adequate support to the displaced people taking into account the challenges they face.

UNHCR, in cooperation with Belarus Red Cross, organized two coordination meetings with all relevant state and non-state actors. The second coordination meeting held on 23 October 2014 expressed their appreciation for Belarus Red Cross efforts in providing assistance to the displaced people from Ukraine. The participants confirmed their readiness to continue their activities on assistance to the Ukrainian nationals and discussed further steps to be taken in this direction. The participants also recommended for all actors to continue collecting and sharing data on the situation and evolving needs; to update jointly prepared information and referral materials for staff working with citizens of Ukraine and for the displaced on how to get a legal status, how to get employment, where to get assistance; to pay special attention to TB prevention campaign targeting the displaced; and to seek for additional donor support in order to meet emergency needs of the displaced. It was agreed to organize a follow-up meeting in December 2014 to measure progress toward the set-up targets.

The Belarusian Government's attitude towards the displaced people is in general positive despite the existing legal and financial barriers, and the State is helping quick registration, employment, housing, medical and social assistance. On 30 August President Lukashenko signed a decree "on the stay of citizens of Ukraine in the Republic of Belarus". The decree was adopted in view of the steadily increasing influx of citizens of Ukraine arriving in Belarus from Donetsk and Lugansk regions. According to the Belarusian legislation, for foreigners to get a job in Belarus they must have a special permission. The decree exempts Ukrainian citizens from this requirement. Besides, employers hiring foreign specialists must pay a state duty. Now the companies that hire citizens of Ukraine are exempt from this requirement, which significantly simplifies the process of employing the Ukrainians. The deadline for taking a decision on the issue of special permits for employment in Belarus of citizens of Ukraine shall not exceed five working days, and the

deadline for the issue of an opinion on the possibility of employment is two working days. The document also simplifies the procedure of granting public welfare payments to the citizens of Ukraine, gives these people the right to preschool, secondary, and professional education on an equal basis with the Belarusians. Besides, they are exempt from payment for medical pre-employment check-ups. All these norms concern only the displaced from Donetsk and Lugansk regions who have lived in those regions for not less than a year.

The Belarusian Orthodox Church also decided to launch a charity campaign for Ukrainian displaced people and announced a collection of all kinds of basic necessities at its parishes.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

According to Belarus Red Cross assessment, the most affected by population displacement are the following vulnerable target groups:

- Single parent families arriving to Belarus without males with working ability. These can be pensioners or mothers with children. Upon arrival these families face extreme situations due to absence of income and social benefits.
- Families with many children (at least three minors) face particular challenges related to meeting their nutritional, hygiene and clothing needs as all of this becomes completely unaffordable.
- Expectant mothers even though they receive free of charge prenatal care cannot find employment and the payment of social benefits is only possible after childbirth. Extreme poverty, the stress of displacement and uncertainty about their future may affect to their health and health of their children.
- Elderly pensioners face difficulties related to transfer their pensions to Belarus. Those who receive pensions, face loss of 15-20 per cent of the expected amount due to the Hryvna's devaluation.

Disabled people have similar problems related to receipt of their social benefits, care and medication while their employment is impossible due to disability.

Field assessments show the following critical needs of these population groups:

- emergency food distributions to meet the needs of newly arriving displaced people (to be supported by DREF).
- emergency hygiene kits to meet the needs of newly arriving displaced people (to be supported by DREF)
- distribution of basic household items such as blankets, kitchen sets, bed linen (partial replenishment of Belarus Red Cross emergency stock for these items to be supported by DREF)
- winter clothing and footwear (supported with Belarus Red Cross own funds and under consideration for additional support by other partners within an overall plan of action)
- housing (taken care of by authorities)
- employment (taken care of by authorities)
- restoring family links (supported by Belarus Red Cross and ICRC)
- emergency cash, e.g. for transportation costs, medication, etc. (supported with Belarus Red Cross own funds and under consideration for additional support by other partners within an overall plan of action)
- psychosocial support (building Belarus Red Cross capacities in psychosocial support are supported by Danish Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia).

Risk Assessment

The influx of displaced people arriving from Ukraine may not continue with the same pattern. At the moment, only few people are reportedly going back to Ukraine while more and more Ukrainian citizens arrive in Belarus from Russia. They are not registered at the border due to a free traffic between Russia and Belarus.

Belarus Red Cross reports 246 displaced people applying for the first time for assistance to the National Society's branches between 11 and 17 October (335 people between 6 and 10 October). The number of displaced people who applied for assistance from Belarus for the second time reached 585 people between 11 and 17 October (552 people between 6 and 10 October).

More Belarusian people call to Belarus Red Cross help line 201 to find information for their friends or relatives planning to move to Belarus. Belarus Red Cross and IFRC will gauge the situation and mobilise additional means of assistance if needed both in country and internationally.

B. Operational strategy and plan

Overall objective

The overall objective is to provide immediate assistance to 2,400 people, of whom 1,200 people are affected by population displacement, and to replenish the emergency stock that was used earlier to support 1,200 affected beneficiaries.

Proposed strategy

To achieve the overall objective, Belarus Red Cross will focus its assistance on the 1,200 most vulnerable newly arriving displaced people (approximately 100 families with many children, 20 expectant mothers, 480 single parent families, 300 disabled and 300 elderly) who apply to the Red Cross directly or are referred there by the authorities.

The distributions will start immediately through the provision of vouchers so as to meet basic needs of the target groups for food and hygiene. Belarus Red Cross has already contacted a number of potential suppliers and received a positive response from ALMI supermarket network, a transnational retail chain with shops of various sizes and profile in each well represented in each region of Belarus. The grant amount is set at CHF 50 per person to cover emergency food and hygiene needs for one month. A cash desk with a Red Cross logo will be established in each shop of the network and the cashier will be instructed on how to work with the vouchers. The following items will be provided through the voucher mechanism:

- food items: including canned meat and fish, tea, coffee, sugar, salt, cereals, beans, water, juice and cocoa products, etc.;
- hygiene items: soap, washing powder, tooth paste and brush, feminine pads, pampers for infants, disinfectants, napkins, razor blades, shampoo, etc.

With this DREF, Belarus Red Cross will also replenish the distributed stock to be prepared for an eventual emergency in future, and to improve the resilience capacities of the potential affected persons.

The replenished non-food items will include blankets, kitchen sets and bed-linen.

Actions conducted by Belarus Red Cross will be in accordance with the Sphere minimum humanitarian standards.

Operational support services

Human resources

Belarus Red Cross has mobilized 150 volunteers and 100 staff to date for assessments and distributions.

For the planned operation, Belarus Red Cross staff will be providing support to its volunteers. Taking into account the DREF operational needs, a DM officer will be needed, who will manage operation activities and will be responsible for volunteer and financial management, as well as reporting to IFRC country office. The DM officer will be temporarily contracted for the period of the operation by Belarus Red Cross.

There is no need for international staff deployment as the required technical support, including monitoring and reporting, adherence to standard IFRC procedures and financial management will be ensured by IFRC national staff based in Minsk.

200 Belarus Red Cross volunteers have already been covered by the insurance that was budgeted in the DREF operation 'Belarus: Extreme winter conditions'. Red Cross volunteers involved in this operation will be insured again starting from January 2015.

Logistics and supply chain

Belarus Red Cross has a logistics officer and procurement procedures which follows IFRC procurements standards. The local market allows alternatives in terms of suppliers for all budgeted items. The National Society also has a warehouse and vehicles to carry relief items for distributions.

Information technologies (IT)

In this operation Belarus Red Cross uses the hot line 201 established with the equipment procured in a previous DREF operation.

Communications

Visibility of the work of the Red Cross volunteers will be ensured during the operation through the local media. Belarus Red Cross senior management, public relations and DM officers will periodically inform the authorities and the general public regarding the progress of the operation. The Red Cross is also working closely with the media to raise public awareness on the needs of people seeking refuge in Belarus.

If necessary, support will be provided to the National Society by IFRC Europe Zone communication team.

Regular operation updates will be provided by IFRC office in Minsk to the Europe Zone Office Disaster Management team.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

The Belarus Red Cross Headquarters, in close cooperation with IFRC Country Representation, will monitor the progress and provide the necessary technical expertise. In addition, IFRC Minsk-based staff will receive support from Europe Zone Office Disaster Management Coordinator.

For monitoring and reporting purposes, IFRC staff based in Budapest and Minsk will assist the National Society with fulfilling these tasks. It is however foreseen that IFRC Europe Zone Office Disaster Management team will also carry out monitoring of the operation.

In January 2015 a workshop will be held for Red Cross staff and volunteers to share best practices and lessons learned from the operation.

A Beneficiary Satisfaction Survey targeting 100 people will be carried out in two weeks after provision of the assistance. The BSS will be carried out by the trained staff and volunteers. A BSS training was conducted in Minsk by the IFRC EZO PMER team in October 2014.

Narrative and financial reports will be produced according to IFRC requirements. This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed by 29 January 2015; a final report will be made available three months after the end of the operation, by 29 April 2015.

Administration and Finance

The National Society administration and finance costs are in line with the DREF guidelines and will not cover structural and normal office costs; the costs are limited to supporting only the DREF operation work plan for three months. The cost of IFRC human resources are not supported by the DREF operation. IFRC staff based in Minsk will oversee the operation and will work closely with Belarus Red Cross.

Budget

Click [here](#) to see the attached budget.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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DREF OPERATION

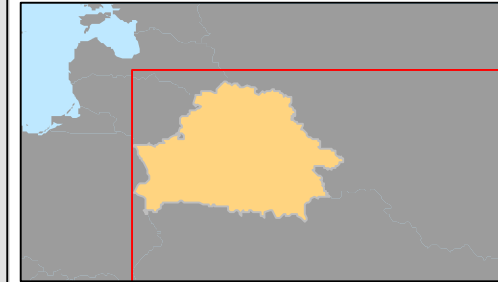
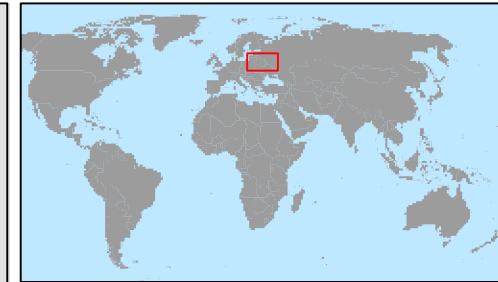
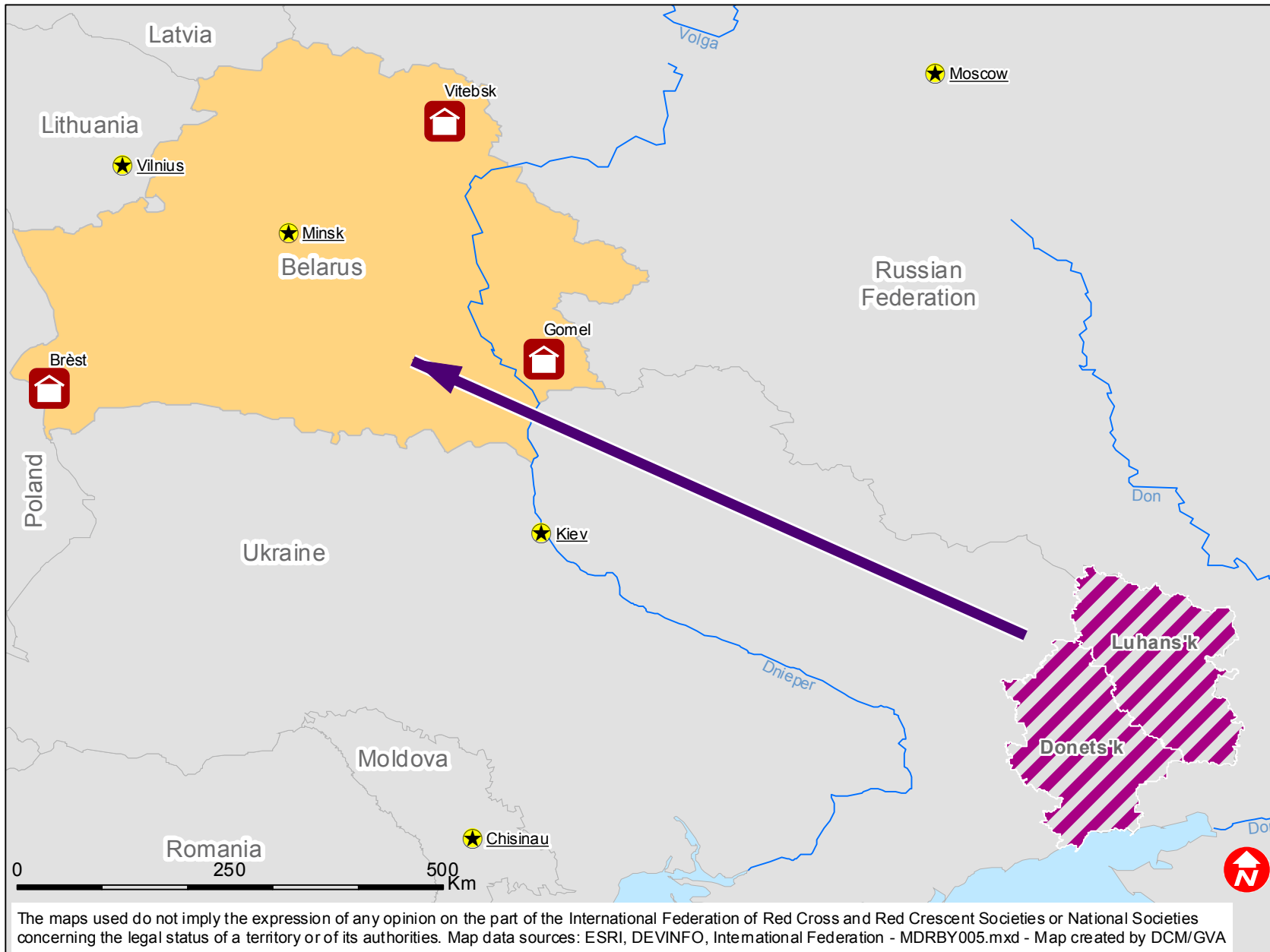
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BELARUS DREF OCTOBER 2014

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	
Shelter - Transitional	
Construction - Housing	
Construction - Facilities	
Construction - Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	25,000
Food	60,000
Seeds & Plants	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Utensils & Tools	18,000
Other Supplies & Services	
Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	103,000
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles	
Computer & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	0
Storage, Warehousing	
Distribution & Monitoring	400
Transport & Vehicle Costs	3,600
Logistics Services	
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	4,000
International Staff	
National Staff	1,613
National Society Staff	
Volunteers	300
Total PERSONNEL	1,913
Consultants	
Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0
Workshops & Training	2,000
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	2,000
Travel	1,100
Information & Public Relations	4,000
Office Costs	
Communications	2,000
Financial Charges	512
Other General Expenses	
Shared Office and Services Costs	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	7,612
Partner National Societies	
Other Partners (NGOs, UN, other)	
Total TRANSFER TO PARTNERS	0
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	7,704
Total INDIRECT COSTS	7,704
TOTAL BUDGET	126,229



Belarus: Population movement



-  9,088 people are from these regions
-  Centres for temporary shelter