

# Operations update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Central America: Floods

Emergency appeal n° MDR43004  
Glide No. FL-2008-000198-HND, NIC,  
CRI, SLV, BLZ, GTM  
31 October 2008

Period covered by this Ops Update: 24 October to 31 October 2008

Appeal target (current): 1,513,927 CHF (USD 1,388,924 or EUR 970,466).

[<click here to view the attached Revised Emergency Appeal Budget>](#)

Appeal coverage: 20%; [<click here to link to contact details >](#)

### Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on a preliminary basis on 24 October 2008 for **1,110,911 CHF (USD 1,015,550 or EUR 707,586)**; for nine months to assist 30,000 beneficiaries.
- CHF 271,000 (USD 247,715 or EUR 172,611) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 20 October 2008 to support the National Societies.
- CHF 119,300 (USD 109,049 or EUR 75,987) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 28 October to support the National Society of Belize in delivering immediate assistance to some 2,000 beneficiaries.
- With this operations update the budget is revised to **1,513,927 CHF (USD 1,388,924 or EUR 970,466)** for nine months to benefit 32,000 beneficiaries

**Summary:** Since 16 October 2008, heavy rainfall has been affecting the countries of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, with floods affecting more than 330,000 people in these countries. Houses and public infrastructure were damaged and crops were lost. This Operations Update no.1 reflects updated information on the emergency, relief activities provided and the addition of another affected country, Belize. Belize received DREF funds in order to jump start relief distributions. The National Societies of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua main focus is on supporting a timely and appropriate response, through the delivery of essential emergency relief items, and on completing damage and needs assessments for early recovery activities (shelter, water and sanitation and other sectors). Heavy rains continue in the region which may cause the situation to worsen.

## The situation

The countries of Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador have been affected by heavy rain due to tropical depression number 16 since 16 October 2008. Even though Costa Rica was hit hard by the rains, it was not included in the appeal, as response activities could be covered by a DREF operation currently being implemented in the country.

Tropical depression 16 drenched **Belize** with constant rain, overflowing several rivers affecting many villages in Cayo, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Belize and Corozal districts. Several of these districts (Orange Walk and Corozal districts) were affected by floods due to tropical storm Arthur on June 2008. Several sections of Cayo district have been declared disaster area. Approximately 24 communities have been severely impacted affecting some 38,000 people. Temporary emergency shelters were opened housing 400 evacuated people. Livelihoods in farming, commerce and tourism have been affected due to floods, but mainly due to interruptions in transportation. Many of the people affected are farmers whose main subsistence are their crops and due to the floods have lost their corn, rice, beans and papaya. They may thus require food assistance. The Emergency

Committees in the rest of the affected districts have been responding to the emergency by evacuating people and distributing emergency relief items. Damage and need assessments are still ongoing.

In **Honduras**, torrential rains across the entire territory caused flash floods and mudslides, damaging or destroying bridges and roads, and forcing people out of their homes. Besides floods reported along the country and the new floods risks generated by the programmed discharges in the main dam, a moderate front cold is affecting the Atlantic coast of Honduras. National Red alert has been declared by the Permanent Contingency Commission (COPECO) for the municipalities of Corcuín and Cucuyagua in the Copán province, Belén, Gualcho in Ocotepeque and the province of Cortés.

The latest official figures show that 34 people have died, 16 are missing and there are more than 279,972 people affected of which 42,749 people are living in temporary shelters. The number of affected houses is 12,429. The damage reports in the agricultural sector are also increasing with more than 1,660 hectares affected.

In **Guatemala**, heavy rains continue and the government has declared a state of emergency in seven additional municipalities (in El Peten and Quiche) in addition to the previous 20 municipalities in Peten, Izabal, Alta Verapaz and Quiche, along rivers and lowlands of the country. The yellow alert is maintained at the national level. To date, the floods have claimed the lives of four people. The National Coordinator for Disaster Reduction (CONRED) reports that some 45,500 persons were affected, of which 12,800 were evacuated. Of these, some 6,800 are in temporary shelters. Some communities have been isolated; more than 5,000 houses and 114 roads were destroyed or damaged. In terms of infrastructural damage, loss of crops and damage to houses, the most affected department is El Peten; however, Alta Verapaz is reporting the highest number of affected persons (13,400), followed by Izabal (some 13,000 affected). Approximately 5,000 crops have been lost. CONRED is mobilizing its immediate response teams into various affected municipalities and is coordinating the response. The President of the country has allocated CHF 3,000,000 for the mayors and governors of the affected areas.

In **Nicaragua**, the intense rain left four people dead and 10,633 people affected in eight departments, including Chinandega, Madriz, Esteli, Leon, Managua, Granada and Rivas. 22 emergency shelters have been opened, housing approximately 1,500 people, while the rest are staying with friends and family. The department of Chinandega, which is 95 percent agricultural, has lost all its crops due to the floods. The members of the emergency centre (SINAPRED) are coordinating all emergency activities in their region.

## Coordination and partnerships

The International Federation is regularly coordinating response activities with the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), Regional Representations for Central America and Mexico in Panama and the Caribbean in Trinidad and Tobago with its teams present in all the affected countries. The National Societies are also coordinating the relief activities in their respective countries with governmental and non-governmental organizations and Partner National Societies (PNS).

The **Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS)** is working closely with NEMO and Partner National Societies (PNS) present in the field (Norwegian Red Cross). The U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has made contact with the Belize Red Cross to offer support.

In **Honduras**, COPECO and the Municipal Emergency Coordination Commission (Comite de Desarrollo Municipal –CODEM) have been coordinating relief actions with the Honduran Red Cross (HRC). PNS including the Italian Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross, as well as other humanitarian agencies present in the field, are cooperating with the HRC. Additionally, the governments of Italy, Spain and the United States of America have committed to cooperate. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs sent a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to the country. The International Federation and HRC are participating in the UN cooperation, ECHO partner and international NGO meetings. An International Federation shelter delegate is currently in the country participating in the shelter coordination group. The HRC and OCHA will carry out a programme thanks to the generous contribution supplied by USAID and OFDA.

In **Guatemala**, CONRED has been coordinating actions and evaluating the needs with the Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC), the Ministry of National Defense, the Armed forces Humanitarian Rescue Unit, the National Police, and municipal fire department among other governmental agencies. The Norwegian Red Cross has provided financial support for the mobilization of National Intervention Team (NIT) members. The UN

Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) is consulting with the government on UN assistance. The World Food Programme (WFP) has distributed 68.7 metric tons of food to 18,000 affected people for ten days.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross** is working with PNS present in the country including Canadian Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross. NRC is also working in coordination with the National Emergency Centre (Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, mitigación y atención de Desastres – SINAPRED) and other humanitarian agencies present in the field, including the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF).

## National Society Capacity Building

A pre-hurricane meeting took place in Panama in May of 2007, where countries prone to hurricanes – including Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua – participated actively in the development of a Contingency Plan for the Region. This helped in exploring and further developing available disaster preparedness tools and response strategies to strengthen the region in order to rapidly respond when disaster strikes. In the pre-hurricane meeting that took place in Panama in May of 2008 the lessons learnt from the emergencies encountered were discussed and adapted accordingly in the Contingency Plan for the Region.

The **Belize Red Cross (BRC)**, **Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC)**, the **Honduran Red Cross (HRC)** and the **Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC)** have ample experience in disaster response, as hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural hazards often affect these countries. National Intervention Team (NIT) trainings in Guatemala and Honduras have increased in number and have come to strengthen the capacities of the National Societies, especially those of their volunteers. The GRC has offered several risk reduction workshops for its volunteers as well as for those affected. The experience has had a positive impact on the participating branches in all three countries and their volunteers.

All National Societies affected by tropical depression no.16 were well prepared with pre-positioned stocks, radio networks both within country and between National Societies in the region, trained personnel and pre and post emergency coordination meetings. The National Societies are part of the National Emergency Operations Centres in their countries and are assigned specific roles within their country's National Disaster Plan.

The Plan of Action will seek to strengthen this response capacity of the four National Societies. In addition, a programme to restore the storage capacity of the NRC will be implemented.

Furthermore, on the longer term the Plan of Action will improve the capacity of the National Societies to respond to the needs of affected communities concerning their livelihoods.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The **Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS)** has been conducting damage and need assessments since the beginning of the emergency in all the affected areas of the country. BRCS has been providing hot meals for people in shelters. To date, BRCS has provided 268 hot meals, 2,500 liters of water, 57 blankets and 59 school kits. National Intervention Team (NIT) members specialized in water and sanitation and first aid responded swiftly to the emergency to attend injured people, one emergency water plant was installed and one portable water unit was relocated to Cayo from Belize City and will be providing water for smaller villages not reached by the Emergency Water plant. Volunteers in Southern Belize, including NIT's and CDRT's assisted with evacuations from affected areas. More than 30 NIT members have been deployed to the Cayo area to perform assessments and deliver supplies.

BRCS continues to perform evaluations and has elaborated a preliminary plan of action for 400 families that includes distribution of food and non food items.

The **Honduran Red Cross (HRC)** has activated its NIT since the beginning of the emergency. Volunteers in the local branch in San Lorenzo provided food items, clothes and blankets to the people housed in temporary shelters. HRC activated regional warehouses and mobilized food items to distribution points. The HRC has elaborated a preliminary plan of action that includes the distribution of food and non-food items and early recovery and capacity building activities for 3,000 families. The Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) to be deployed two disaster management delegates, and a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) to Honduras to provide assistance to the assessments, the elaboration of a plan of action and the distributions of relief items. HRC is developing a multidisciplinary mission with PNS after working on a detailed budget that includes early recovery activities: shelter, Water and Sanitation and livelihoods.

To date, the HRC has dispatched and distributed hygiene and kitchen kits to 1,420 families from their own pre-positioned stocks. In addition, thanks to fundraising efforts through a television network, clothes and other items were collected in the country and the Honduran Red Cross has also been transporting and distributing these items.

The **Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC)** with the support of the Norwegian Red Cross has activated its NIT since the beginning of the emergency and has performed evacuation activities and damage and need assessments in the affected areas. NIT members specialized in water and sanitation, along with equipment has been deployed to the areas in most need (department of Peten and Izabal). GRC volunteers from several local branches in the affected areas have distributed 1,500 family kits supplied by the National Disaster Secretary. A preliminary plan of action aims to deliver food and non-food assistance to 2,000 families. One RIT member, deployed by PADRU is providing assistance to the operation.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC)** is conducting assessments in the affected areas and is coordinating with members of the national emergency centre (SINAPRED). NRC has provided an initial plan of action (PoA) that includes provisions of food items and non-food items for 1,000 families. A water and sanitation officer has been present in the country to assist the National Society.

### Progress towards objectives

This operations update demonstrates early relief distribution items sent by the RLU to some of the affected countries. It also incorporates Belize's preliminary plan of action to benefit 400 families.

#### Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

<b>Objective:</b> 6,400 families (3,000 families in Honduras, 2,000 families in Guatemala, 1,000 families in Nicaragua and 400 families in Belize) will benefit from the provision of essential food items and non-food items to recover from the effects of the emergency. Procurement will also replenish HRC, GRC and BRCS relief stocks (see table below), therefore strengthening and re-establishing their response capacity for future relief operations.	
Expected results	Activities planned
6,400 families will receive essential relief items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with public institutions.</li> <li>• Verification and census of the most affected population.</li> <li>• Purchase of food items according to Federation standard procedures.</li> <li>• Purchase of non-food items by the Regional Logistics Unit (RLU).</li> <li>• Transport and dispatch of items arranged by RLU.</li> <li>• Distribution of food and non-food items.</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>

Belize has been incorporated to this operation with an additional 400 families. A total of **6,400 families** will therefore be benefited with food and non-food items.

#### Progress:

##### Belize

The Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) mobilized and dispatched the following items within 48 hours:

- Light blankets 810
- Hygiene kits 400
- Jerry cans 900
- Mosquito nets 1,490

Each of the 400 families will receive a food parcel and will also receive a cash food voucher. The items for the food parcel will be procured locally.

##### Honduras

The Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) mobilized and dispatched 1,000 hygiene and kitchen kits for 1,000 families within 72 hours (1 kit for each family) by truck. The Honduran Red Cross has begun the procedures for the procurement of 500 complimentary food parcels. In the upcoming days 2,500 families in other areas will be assisted thanks to bilateral activities with the German Red Cross (Comayagua) and Swiss Red Cross (Olancho).

##### Guatemala

Each of the 2,000 families in Guatemala will receive a food parcel, hygiene kit, kitchen kit, two mosquito nets and jerry cans. To date, 1,500 non-food items have been distributed by the Guatemalan Red Cross

### Nicaragua

Each of the 1,000 families in Nicaragua will receive a food parcel (contents including rice, beans, cooking oil, corn, salt), two mosquito nets, three blankets and two plastic buckets. The Nicaraguan Red Cross has begun the procedures for the procurement of 500 complimentary food parcels.

#### Water and Sanitation

**Objective:** The water and sanitation needs of the target population identified in the assessments are met with an appropriate planned programme. This plan may include an initial provision of clean drinking water to address emergency needs (e.g. ensure safe water supply by cleaning wells in Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras) and support for hygiene promotion and improved sanitation. This will be finalised following the findings of the current assessment.

Expected results	Activities planned
250 families will benefit from increased hygiene promotion and improved sanitation.  250 families will benefit from the supply of safe water, through well-cleaning activities in all three countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.</li> <li>• Clean and rehabilitate 250 family wells, conducted by a team that consists of people specialized in water and sanitation, using special equipment and chemical products.</li> <li>• Deliver potable water to the affected families using cisterns.</li> <li>• Distribute relief supplies (jerry cans and mosquito nets) and control supply movements</li> <li>• Conduct information sessions on best hygiene practices to beneficiary families.</li> <li>• Conduct a workshop for Red Cross volunteers in Honduras, focusing on the training of water well restoration after a flood emergency and dealing with safe water.</li> </ul>

**Progress:** To date, no activities have been carried out to reach these objectives. They are scheduled to start within the next two weeks.

#### Shelter

**Objective:** The shelter needs of the target population (in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) identified in the assessments are met with an appropriate planned programme. This plan may include an initial distribution of shelter kits to address emergency needs and a more tailored response to address medium and longer-term needs. Pre-positioning of shelter kits for HRC relief stocks may be considered to increase their response capacity for future shelter operations

Expected results	Activities planned
400 families (Belize) will have adequate shelter which will assist them to return to their daily lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.</li> <li>• Identification of communities and specific beneficiaries coordinating with local government authorities.</li> <li>• Procurement of materials (tarpaulins) for repairing damaged houses and setting up of temporary shelters.</li> <li>• Distribute supplies and control supply movements.</li> </ul>

**Progress:** Pending assessment activities in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have not yet been carried out. They are scheduled to start within the next month.

#### Early Recovery

**Objective:** Early recovery needs will be assessed, planned and implemented together with the affected communities and key local, national and international stakeholders.

The majority of affected families suffered damaging impacts on their livelihoods. These include damage to home gardens, family livestock and small-scale family businesses. This leads to increased needs, especially on the short and medium-term. A detailed joint assessment between the National Society, the International Federation's Zone/Regional Representation Office and PADRU will be carried out in the next weeks.

In Honduras, a group of experts including a RIT member, a food security expert, a psychosocial support expert, a Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) expert (with experience in shelter), a water and sanitation expert

and experienced volunteers will evaluate the communities during the relief phase to further define needs and planned programming in these areas. A video will be made on the evacuation mission.

**Progress:** The group of experts is scheduled to start their work in the next week.

<b>National Society Capacity Building</b>	
<b>Objective:</b> The capacity of the National Society Red Cross and their local branches will be strengthened.	
<b>Expected results</b>	<b>Activities planned</b>
The National Society Red Cross and their local branches will be better prepared for future disaster response.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive visibility and relief equipment for volunteers according to established standards.</li> <li>• Procurement of office equipment for the disaster response office</li> <li>• Procurement of spare parts for repairing of damaged vehicle.</li> <li>• Procurement of motor boat for relief activities</li> <li>• Conduct workshops for Red Cross volunteers in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua focusing on the training of disaster preparedness, food security, livelihoods and risk reduction.</li> </ul>

Progress: To date, procurement activities have been carried out to reach these objectives. They are scheduled to start within the next two weeks.

## Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Maintaining a steady flow of timely and accurate information between the field and other major stakeholders is vital for advocacy, maintaining the profile of the emergency operation and for fundraising. During an operation, communications between affected populations and the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as with the media and donors, is an essential mechanism for effective disaster response and the cornerstone to promoting greater quality, accountability, and transparency. The communications activities covered by this appeal are aimed at supporting the National Societies to improve their communications capacities and develop appropriate communications tools and products to support effective operations. These activities will include training, capacity building, as well as material support and are closely coordinated with the Communications Department of the International Federation's Secretariat in Geneva. To date, there have already been over 15 publications in several different kinds of media, including television, radio and newspaper and the National Societies will work to maintain a media focus on this emergency response. The Honduran Red Cross conducted a nationwide press conference jointly with the International Federation. The RIT specialized in Communication will develop a course for information management for the Honduran Red Cross volunteers.

## How we work

***All International Federation 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 is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.***

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

### **Global Agenda Goals:**

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

## Contact information

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

- **In Panama:** Michele Detomaso, Programme Liaison Coordinator, Pan American Disaster Response Unit; email: [michele.detomaso@ifrc.org](mailto:michele.detomaso@ifrc.org); phone: (506) 316-1001; fax: (506) 316-1082
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- **In Panama:** Ilir Caushaj, Logistics Coordinator, Regional Logistics Unit; email: [ilir.caushaj@ifrc.org](mailto:ilir.caushaj@ifrc.org); phone: (507) 316 1001, mobile: (507) 6679 5355; fax: (507) 316 1082.
- **In Trinidad and Tobago:** Tanya Wood, Representative of the Regional Representation Office; email [tanya.wood@ifrc.org](mailto:tanya.wood@ifrc.org); phone: (868) 624 1557; fax: (868) 627 9627
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- **In Geneva:** Pablo Medina, Operations Coordinator for the Americas; email: [pablo.medina@ifrc.org](mailto:pablo.medina@ifrc.org); phone: (41) 22 730 4300.

**[<Revised budget attached below; click here to return to the title page>](#)**

**APPEAL BUDGET SUMMARY**

Annex 1

Central America Floods 2008

MDR43004

	ORIGINAL	REVISED	VARIANCE
<b><u>RELIEF NEEDS</u></b>			
Shelter	0	6,000	6,000
Construction Materials	0	0	0
Clothing & Textiles	76,500	103,860	27,360
Food	399,682	423,682	24,000
Seeds & Plants	0	0	0
Water & Sanitation	16,500	16,500	0
Medical & First Aid	0	0	0
Teaching Materials	0	0	0
Utensils & Tools	185,800	240,550	54,750
Other Supplies & Services	110,000	188,700	78,700
<b>Total Relief Needs</b>	<b>788,482</b>	<b>979,292</b>	<b>190,810</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>			
Land & Buildings	0	0	0
Vehicles Purchase	0	0	0
Computers & Telecom Equipment	2,200	6,600	4,400
Office/Household Furniture & Equip.	0	0	0
Medical Equipment	0	0	0
Other Machinery & Equipment	0	24,000	24,000
<b><u>TRANSPORT, STORAGE &amp; VEHICLES</u></b>			
Storage - Warehouse	0	1,500	1,500
Distribution & Monitoring	18,000	36,000	18,000
Transport & Vehicles Costs	43,000	55,000	12,000
Service fee & Recovery	24,000	19,500	-4,500
<b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>			
International Staff	0	27,000	27,000
Regionally Deployed Staff	16,500	19,800	3,300
National Staff	0	0	0
National Society Staff	47,400	59,400	12,000
Consultants	12,000	12,000	0
<b><u>WORKSHOPS &amp; TRAINING</u></b>			
Workshops & Training	0	65,000	65,000
<b><u>GENERAL EXPENSES</u></b>			
Travel	27,000	36,500	9,500
Information & Public Relations	6,000	13,000	7,000
Office running costs	13,500	15,300	1,800
Communication Costs	25,200	27,900	2,700
Professional Fees	0	0	0
Financial Charges	15,420	17,730	2,310
Other General Expenses		0	0
<b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>			
Programme Support - PSR	72,209	98,405	26,196
<b>Total Operational Needs</b>	<b>322,429</b>	<b>534,635</b>	<b>212,206</b>
<b>Total Appeal Budget (Cash &amp; Kind)</b>	<b>1,110,911</b>	<b>1,513,927</b>	<b>403,016</b>
<b>Available Resources</b>		<b>303,000</b>	
<b>Net Request</b>	<b>1,110,911</b>	<b>1,210,927</b>	