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**BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

## *Israel – Wildfires*

Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2011

December 5, 2010

*Note: The last fact sheet was dated December 4, 2010.*

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- As of 1800 hours local time on December 5, a total of 35 aircraft had performed 409 flights in support of fire suppression efforts in Israel. Approximately 17,000 people evacuated from fire-affected areas resided with family and friends the night of December 4, while others stayed in community shelters in nearby towns.
- On December 5, the Government of Israel (GoI) announced full containment of wildfires and allowed nearly all evacuated populations to return to their homes, with the exception of populations from Beit Oren.
- According to Israeli Police, the Carmel fires appear to have been caused by negligence. Between the evenings of December 3 and 5, some 20 arson attempts occurred in other forests; these were quickly contained by firefighters.
- All ten members of USAID’s Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART), including National Incident Management Organization (NIMO) staff, have arrived in Israel and travelled to the GoI firefighting Operation Command Center, located on the campus of Haifa University. USAID/DART staff reported observing a robust air- and ground-based firefighting operation, including a privately-contracted Evergreen 747 out of Arizona, capable of carrying 80,000 liters of water and performing nocturnal flights.
- To date, a total of three U.S. C-130 aircraft from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) have arrived in Israel from U.S. European Command (EUCOM) at Ramstein Air Base in Germany carrying a total of 20 short tons<sup>1</sup> of fire retardant and 3,800 gallons of fire retardant concentrate.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
<b>Population Evacuated</b>	17,000	GoI
<b>Confirmed Fatalities</b>	41	GoI
<b>Total Acreage Affected</b>	12,355	International Media

### FY 2011 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED TO DATE

<b>USAID/OFDA Assistance<sup>2</sup> for Wildfires.....</b>	<b>\$501,820</b>
<b>DoD Assistance for Wildfires.....</b>	<b>Forthcoming</b>
<b>Total USG<sup>3</sup> Humanitarian Assistance for Wildfires .....</b>	<b>\$501,820</b>

### CONTEXT

- On December 2, a wildfire began in Israel’s Carmel Forest near Usfiya village. Rapidly spreading over the next four days due to adverse 2010 weather conditions, including unseasonably high temperatures and drought, the wildfire affected nearly 12,355 acres and burned more than 4 million trees.
- On December 3, U.S. Ambassador James B. Cunningham declared a disaster due to the effects of the wildfire. On December 4, USAID deployed a DART to respond to the wildfires. A Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team (RMT), activated on December 3, continues to provide support to the USAID/DART. USAID staff based in Budapest, Hungary, and Washington, D.C. continue to monitor the situation in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv, USAID/West Bank/Gaza, DoD, and other interagency partners.

### *Areas Affected*

- According to the GoI, areas most affected by the fires were Ein Hod, Nir Ezion, Beit Oren, and Yemin Orde.
- Preliminary GoI damage assessments indicate that fires damaged approximately 250 houses, the majority of which were located in Ein Hod and Beit Oren. In addition, the GoI estimates that wildfires have caused property, roadway, and forest damages of up to 270 million New Israel Shekels (ILS), the equivalent of \$74.3 million.

<sup>1</sup> One short ton is equal to 2,000 pounds

<sup>2</sup> Figure reflects estimated costs as of December 5, 2010

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Government

- As of 2100 hours local time on December 5, firefighters had contained the vast majority of wildfires. Local weather forecasts predict rain in northern Israel during the next 24 to 48 hours, which authorities believe may help extinguish any remaining blazes.

### **GoI Response**

- On December 5, the GoI Cabinet Secretary announced the creation of an inter-ministerial team, composed of four sub-teams, to work on post-wildfire rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. The teams will focus on rebuilding damaged infrastructure, providing humanitarian assistance to affected populations, rehabilitating the Carmel Forest, mapping out damages, and investigating insurance coverage issues.
- The GoI has allocated \$16.8 million in an initial response to provide support for affected populations. The GoI Housing Authority also plans to station short-term mobile housing units in affected communities. The GoI will continue to assess the current humanitarian situation and will provide additional financial support as necessary.

### **USG Response**

- On December 5, the USAID/DART Team Leader and Military Liaison Officer and U.S. Embassy personnel met with representatives from Israeli National Police and IDF, including the Israeli Air Force, at the firefighting Operation Command Center near Haifa, to discuss the firefighting response and additional needs. USG personnel also met with the Jewish National Fund, which manages the forests in Israel, to discuss post-fire recovery plans.
- On December 5, USAID/OFDA-procured firefighting supplies, including 27 metric tons (MT) of Fire-Trol retardant and 22 MT of Fire-Trol firefighting foam, departed from Rome, Italy to Ben Gurion Airport in Israel. The aircraft was also transporting 20 MT of donated firefighting foam. The chartered aircraft arrived on December 5 at 2140 hours local time. Commodities were consigned to the Israeli Ministry of Defense, which is transporting the commodities to affected areas.
- On December 6, USAID, in conjunction with National Security Staff and the White House Office of Public Engagement, is organizing an interagency conference call with Jewish community leaders, led by the USAID/DCHA Assistant Administrator. In addition, USAID will coordinate an interagency call with interested members of Congress through USAID's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs.

### **International Response**

- The international response to date has included 24 foreign firefighting aircraft from Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Britain, Turkey, Russia, France, Spain, Azerbaijan, and a private company in the U.S. In addition, at least 150 foreign firefighters worked alongside Israeli forces to extinguish the flames.

### **USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR ISRAELI WILDFIRES IN FY 2011**

<b>Implementing Partner</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
GoI	26.6 MT of Fire-Trol Fire Retardant	Northern Israel	\$42,954
GoI	22 MT (21,902 Liters) of Firefoam Structural Protection Foam	Northern Israel	\$65,706
	Transportation Costs		\$343,160
	Administration Costs		\$50,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$501,820</b>
<b>DOD ASSISTANCE<sup>2</sup></b>			
	Air Support and 20 Short Tons of Fire Retardant	Northern Israel	Forthcoming
<b>TOTAL DOD</b>			<b>Forthcoming</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID AND DOD HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ISRAEL IN FY 2011</b>			<b>\$501,820</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of December 5, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> This figure represents estimated transportation costs as of December 5, 2010; subject to change.

### **PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION**

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in Israel may be available at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

- More information can be found at:
  - USAID: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) – Keyword: Donations
  - The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or (703) 276-1914
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)