**THE danish emergency relief fund**

**Alert note**

**Section A: Basic information**

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| Organisation: | Aktion Amazonas |
| Title of alert: | 1. an Alert Note (this document) must be attached. |
| Type of crisis: | * ***X*** *rapid onset humanitarian crisis (please fill out section B)* * *slow onset humanitarian crisis (please fill out section C)* * *spike in protracted humanitarian crisis (please fill out section D)* |

**Section B: Rapid onset humanitarian crisis:**

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| *b.1 Where is the crisis?* *Describe the areas affected*  On July 22, 2024, the Bolivian department of Santa Cruz declared a state of emergency through the end of this year due to extreme weather exacerbated by wildfires, further worsening the situation and polluting drinking water and the air, causing significant harm and inconvenience to the local population. In recent years, Bolivia has suffered from prolonged droughts and a lack of rain, and the current drought and missing rainfall are hitting the local population even harder, as they are already struggling with water shortages and drastically reduced crop yields. In Bolivia as in the department of Santa Cruz, most of the rural population depend on livestock and commercial and subsistence agriculture. The current drought is classified as severe to very severe according to the definition by the National State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS), while the droughts have generated a significant increase in the number of fire and forest fires in the last month, reaching a situation that is now out of control[[1]](#footnote-1).  *b.2 What is the nature of the crisis?*  The current crisis is a natural disaster caused by extreme weather, droughts, strong winds, and extreme temperatures, exacerbated by wildfires that, due to the dry conditions and strong winds, are out of control. The situation is further complicated by fuel shortages, preventing firefighters from reaching some areas to extinguish the fires. The magnitude of the forest fires is extreme - even for the hard-hit Santa Cruz region, which is accustomed to wildfires. Some fires reach up to 40 kilometers in length and 8-10 kilometers in width, with speeds exceeding 40-50 km/hour. As of July 30, 445,000 ha of forest have gone up in flames according to Julieta Valverde, the government's natural resources director for Santa Cruz. ‘  *b.3 What information do you have about the situation? What is the source of that information?*  Santa Cruz is Bolivia's largest and most eastern department, located on the border with Brazil, and is home to approx. three million people (*the total population in Bolivia is 13 million divided in nine departments*). The department is predominantly forest and savanna, offering valuable ecosystem services to local communities but is highly susceptible to fires. The region's lack of roads, telecommunications, and other essential services in rural areas complicates aid distribution and leaves the rural population underserved by authorities. The rural families primarily depend on forest resources and agroforestry to sustain their livelihoods and are therefore particularly vulnerable to climate change and wildfires. Our partner, FCBC, estimates that about 50 thousand people are directly affected by the combination of extreme drought and wildfires in the department of Santa Cruz, facing losses in crops, livestock, and access to forest resources. Additionally, they are suffering from a shortage of drinking water. Further pollution from the forest fires not only causes respiratory infections but also contaminates the scarce natural water sources with ash further worsening the situation. FCBC, estimates that approx.100 thousand people are currently estimated to suffer form smoke inhalation, burns, and other wildfire-related conditions.  All this combined means that the local population is currently facing an exceptionally difficult situation. The loss of forest biodiversity further disrupts not only the ecological balance but also has severe social consequences, as the decline in pollinators can negatively impact crop yields and food security for local communities, exacerbating their struggles with already limited resources. Information about wildfires come from the Bolivian government[[2]](#footnote-2), but also national and international media are aware of the disaster (e.g. reuters and dr.dk in Denmark)[[3]](#footnote-3).  *b.3.1. Describe as specific as possible when the crisis has started. Mention specific dates if possible. Provide documentation for this.* On July 22, 2024, the Bolivian department of Santa Cruz declared a state of emergency through the end of this year due to extreme weather exacerbated by wildfire. Link to declaration [HERE](https://gacetaoficial.santacruz.gob.bo/verpdf/decreto-departamental-no-458).  *b.3.2. How could DERF grants make a difference for the crisis affected population?*  A DERF grant could make a huge difference by rapidly provide: i) Basic firefight and security equipment to voluntary community fire brigades to manage wildfires and protect their crops and livestock. Community fire brigades have been organized throughout the department in recent years as a bottom-up, civil society response to the lack of government support for preventing and controlling wildfires. ii) Basic food (food packages with rice, corn, beans, flour, salt, noodles, sugar, oil). iii) Seed for replanting damaged crops. iiii) Drinking water. iiiii) Medications for respiratory treatments (like albuterol to open airways and ease breathing) and burn care. Aid to be distributed to primarily remote communities affected by drought and wildfires. Especially children and the elderly, who are faced with the loss of their small crops and chronic water shortages, are extremely vulnerable, with no real possibility of migrating to larger urban centers (which are also affected by water scarcity). However, these urban areas are better equipped to meet the urgent needs of the local population, as government aid can reach the larger cities that have access to infrastructure. This is not the case for the many thousands of primarily indigenous communities living scattered across the 370,621 square km Santa Cruz Department. The response is considered to be a ‘short intervention’ due to the severity of the situation. |

1. <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/bolivias-santa-cruz-department-declares-emergency-due-extreme-weather-2024-07-25/> + <https://correodelsur.com/sociedad/20231025_bolivia-ocupa-el-2do-lugar-entre-paises-con-mas-focos-de-calor-en-el-mundo.html> + <https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/declarada-en-%22emergencia%22-por-incendios-forestales-regi%C3%B3n-oriental-de-bolivia/84977322> + https://reliefweb.int/report/bolivia-plurinational-state/bolivia-incendios-forestales-flash-update-no1-al-29-de-julio-2024 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://gacetaoficial.santacruz.gob.bo/verpdf/decreto-departamental-no-458> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/bolivias-santa-cruz-department-declares-emergency-due-extreme-weather-2024-07-25/> + <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/seneste/bolivia-indfoerer-undtagelsestilstand-paa-grund-af-klimaforandringer> +

   <https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1192098786291208&id=100064732924861&mibextid=qi2Omg&rdid=BcinbxqiOo66jx0S> + <https://www.infobae.com/america/agencias/2024/07/25/se-incrementan-los-incendios-forestales-en-bolivia-y-el-municipio-de-robore-este-es-el-mas-afectado/> + <https://www.revistanomadas.com/la-guerra-contra-el-fuego-mas-oscura-del-mundo/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)