

**Emergency & Recovery:
On the front lines of
crises worldwide**

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There were 27 deployments of the Rapid Response Corps to 14 countries, including Sudan, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Somalia.

It is estimated that in 2008, 235,000 people were killed by natural disasters, the most severe being Cyclone Nargis in Burma and the earthquake in the Sichuan province of China. The economic impact of natural disasters in the year was estimated at \$190 billion. Protracted humanitarian crises arising from conflict and political instability affected millions of people in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia, amongst others.

Ireland provided over €135 million towards efforts to save lives, alleviate suffering, and rebuild in the aftermath of these crises in 2008. This money was directly channelled to crises in 35 countries. Much of this was pre-positioned with Irish Aid's partners to ensure that it could be rapidly distributed when and where it was needed. The Central Emergency Response Fund operated by the United Nations, received €22.6 million in funding from Irish Aid. Since its establishment in 2006, this fund has greatly enhanced the ability of the UN to respond to emergencies. One third of its funding is allocated to so-called 'forgotten emergencies', crises which have been relatively neglected by the international media and donors.

Irish Aid contributed a further €11.5 million to the United Nations run Common Humanitarian Funds in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. These funds pool money from a number of donors and then allocate it to United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations on the basis of need.

In addition, the lead United Nations agencies working in emergency relief, such as the World Food Programme, the Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Children's Fund (UNICEF), received just under €30 million in direct funding from Irish Aid's emergency and recovery budget lines. The Red Cross movement (comprising the International Committee of the Red Cross and the global network of national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies) received €15.5 million and €24.5 million was allocated to non-governmental organisations from the same budget lines.

2008 also saw the emergence of Irish Aid's Rapid Response Initiative as an increasingly effective tool in Ireland's international humanitarian response. There were twenty-seven deployments of the Rapid Response Corps to 14 countries, including Sudan, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Somalia. Emergency relief supplies were dispatched in ten separate consignments from Ireland's pre-positioned stockpiles in Brindisi, Italy and the Curragh Camp to countries including Mozambique, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo and Zimbabwe.



Minister of State Peter Power with Rapid Response Corps members, from left to right: Fred Tottenham, Donal McGrath and Marion Roche, credit Maxwells

Ireland's Rapid Response Corps was at the forefront of Irish Aid's emergency response in 2008.