

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

WESTERN UKRAINE MIGRANTS

21 October 2003

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 30,000

This Information Bulletin is being issued as an update on activities conducted based on the needs outlined in Information Bulletin no.1/2003 <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=1> While an appeal is not being considered at this time, unearmarked funds to reimburse the DREF allocation of CHF 30,000 are needed.

The Situation

Detention centres for undocumented migrants in the border towns of Mukachevo, Pavshino and Chop (Zakarpattya Oblast, Western Ukraine) have been facing an ongoing influx of people. Ukraine is a transit region for those from the East en route to Central and Western Europe in search of a better life, increased earnings or asylum from armed conflicts. Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs statistics indicate that there are currently approximately 50,000 migrants from more than 45 countries living in Ukraine. In particular, Zakarpattya Oblast is considered a staging post for undocumented migrants. Many of these people are very vulnerable and at risk of poor health.

The total number of migrants detained in the camps in Zakarpattya region between June-August 2003 was 905 migrants, an increase of 45% since 2002. State frontier authorities report that since the beginning of 2003 the number of undocumented migrants detained by frontier guards is 70% higher than the previous year.

Due to lack of funds, there is no established response mechanism to cope with the increasing numbers of migrants arriving. Border troops near detention centres are not in a position to provide even basic assistance in the form of food, hygiene items and bedding. The Red Cross is considered to be one of the only organizations capable of offering assistance to the migrants who face detention for two to three months in the poorly equipped centres. With the number of irregular migrants growing daily, the detention centres need medical supplies, disinfectants, hygienic kits, food and bed sheets. The Ukrainian Red Cross Society (URCS) has implemented a programme with DREF funds to improve living conditions and health standards in detention centres. The Red Cross has distributed relief items through a doctor and social worker.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Ukrainian Red Cross Society, (URCS) with financial support from International Federation and other donors, has been providing assistance to detention camps since 1999. Camps in Zakarpattya region have been in operation since the early 1990s. They were substantially reorganised and increased in size, from 1996 onwards, when the flow of undocumented migrants became more noticeable. Chop and Mukachevo detention camps were formally established in 1999-200, and Pavshino in 2002.

The Zakarpattya regional Red Cross branch visits migrants in detention centres, defines needs and collects and delivers to migrants local donations of food, clothing and hygiene. Within the current programme, Ukrainian Red Cross has purchased and distributed relief items to selected beneficiaries and covered salaries of all project staff. Zakarpattya branch itself covered the costs of warehouse rental and purchase of necessary stationery/ office equipment. In June, contracts with programme staff were signed (project manager; finance coordinator; project coordinators; consultants – a doctor and a social worker). Red Cross staff carried out standard procedures of tender and procurement among local suppliers within Zakarpattya region and selected the most suitable offer (based on price, quality assurance, possibility of discount and free delivery, favourable terms of goods delivery).

Relief items were delivered by suppliers and distributed among beneficiaries by volunteers as indicated in the table below. Beneficiaries were detainees in the three camps in Mukachevo, Pavshino and Chop. Distributions were conducted according to the needs of detainees in each of the three camps (e.g. all detainees at Mukachevo camp are women and children, therefore they received relief items specific to needs). A number of relief items were stored in warehouses at the detention centres for distribution at a later date.

Table 1. Distribution of relief items purchased

Relief items	Quantity purchased	Quantity distributed in Pavshino and Mukachevo	Quantity distributed in Chop	Quantity left at the storehouse
Blankets	100 units	80 units	20 units	
Sheets	750 units	650 units	100 units	
Food Parcels	16.5 tonnes	16.5 tonnes	0	
Medical Supplies, Drugs, & Consumables	12 sets	7 sets	2 sets	3 sets
Crockery & Cutlery	155 units	155 units	0	
Hygiene Supplies				
Toilet paper	1500 units	1160 units	160 units	180 units
Tooth-paste	1500 units	1100 units	100 units	300 units
Tooth-brush	1500 units	1112 units	100 units	288 units
Toilet soap	1000 units	684 units	100 units	216 units
Household soap	1000 units	720 units	100 units	180 units
Shampoo	100 units	65 units	10 units	25 units
Hygiene pads	300 units	194 units	42 units	64 units
Disinfectants				
Disactine	124 kg	60 kg	24 kg	40 kg
Sterilium	5 bottles	2 bottles	1 bottles	2 bottles

Medical and social assistance

The doctor and social worker working on the programme are URCS staff and have relevant operational experience. They have been working on the programme since June, when URCS received DREF funds. They visit each of the camps once a week.

The Red Cross doctor stipulated type and quantity of medicines required (quoting comparatively inexpensive essential drugs and medical items used in most out-patient departments) and oversaw procurement and

distribution from the warehouse. In addition, the doctor continues to monitor records of all medicines distributed to beneficiaries, holds consultations during which needs and health complaints of detainees are discussed, and gives general recommendations. Detainees' medical complaints diagnosed by the Red Cross doctor include intestinal diseases, neurotic disorders, fungal skin infections, pyodermitis, pediculosis, and hypertension. Approximately 20 patients are seen during every camp visit.

The social worker provides psychological support to detainees. Shortly before the programme was implemented this year, there were disturbances in the camps. The social worker talks with detainees to address problems and hopefully prevent future aggressive behaviour. In addition, the social worker conducts explanatory talks with migrants stressing the importance of hygiene. During the meetings the social worker assesses whether needs have been met in accordance with the programme plan. The social worker also assisted the doctor and project coordinator to make up hygienic kits and supervise distribution.

The most frequent request from migrants was for assistance in contacting family relatives. In Mukachevo camp a long-distance telephone network was recently established. At present, phone cards are not provided but URCS plans to purchase cards for appropriate use by detainees. Introduction of a telephone communication system is planned for the camp in Pavshino. Furthermore, the URCS Tracing Service has suggested including a project "Assistance to migrants in keeping correspondence with relatives" in next year's programme activities, as outlined in the Appeal 2004 (to be launched by the International Federation in November 2003). This planned programme remains unfunded at present.

Activities conducted outside DREF funding

URCS Zakarpattia branch continues to organize collection and distribution in the camps of second-hand clothes donated by the local population. It has also contributed some furniture (bedside-tables, folding beds) from the local Red Cross warehouse. Many migrants do not have warm clothes and there is no heating system in the camps. URCS is expecting to receive a timely humanitarian cargo of second-hand clothes and footwear from Finnish Red Cross, which will soon be delivered to and distributed throughout the three detention camps.

Cooperation and coordination

URCS Zakarpattia branch is cooperating with local NGOs and charitable organizations. A cooperation agreement was signed in 2001 between URCS and their main partner in this sphere of work, the International Fund on Health and Environment Protection "Region of Carpathians - NIKA". The International Fund provides refugees and asylum seekers with second-hand clothes and has information centres in Mukachevo and Uzhgorod. It works in partnership with UNCHR who run a project on assistance to women and children residing in detention camps.

Impact analysis

In September 2003 the representative of the International Federation delegation office in Minsk visited detention camps in Pavshino and Mukachevo, and assessed living conditions and nutrition levels of the migrants.

The total number of programme beneficiaries (undocumented migrants in the three camps) from July-September 2003 was 905. Comparison of results of pre- and post- programme monitoring provides positive indicators of improvement in the camps. Following regular distribution of social assistance funded by DREF contribution (food is provided to beneficiaries on a daily basis; medicines are distributed according to the Red Cross doctor's prescriptions; one distribution of hygienic items such as shampoo and soap was made from the camp warehouse - further distributions will be made as and when required), and psychological support provided by the doctor and social worker, the general and mental health of the target group has improved. Due to the procurement of drugs, the morbidity rate and possibility of infectious disease outbreaks has been reduced, and the hazardous epidemiological situation in detention camps has been stabilized.

The Ukrainian Red Cross has included a programme on migration in the annual International Federation Appeal 2004, due to be launched in November 2003. The project envisages increasing the versatility of activities implemented to assist migrants - in particular, to organize receiving and sending of correspondence through the URCS Tracing Service, to organize language courses and lectures on health (prevention of

HIV/AIDS; TB; respiratory, infectious and other diseases), legal regulations (Ukrainian legislation, the rules of refugee status receiving), human trafficking and humanitarian values. For more information please refer to the contact details listed at the end of this information bulletin.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see **www.ifrc.org**

For further details please contact:

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at **<http://www.ifrc.org>**.*

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.