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## **RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT INFORMATION**

*Report No. 27*

*This report is published thrice-weekly as a general update on Red Cross Red Crescent activities during the Balkans crisis, targeting primarily the Movement's components and supporters. Today's text can also be found on the internet: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org) and [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)*

### **LATEST EVENTS**

#### ***Federal Republic of Yugoslavia***

Vojvodina: At a meeting in Vojvodina of secretaries from nine Red Cross branches from the Stem region, the following points emerged:

- Regular distribution of assistance to refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia branches is ongoing;
- Stocks of humanitarian aid and emergency stocks in the branches are insufficient to meet the needs of an increasing number of vulnerable people, primarily milk powder, baby food, canned meat/fish;
- The communal kitchen programme needs to be strengthened to deal with an increased number of beneficiaries;
- All branches are carrying out first aid courses for the general population and have available professional staff for possible tracing duties.

The Red Cross organized five truckloads of relief supplies (wheat flour, pasta, food and hygiene parcels, blankets, jerry cans, mattresses, plastic sheeting and candles) to the Vojvodina Red Cross, as well as a surgical kit to the clinical centre in Novi Sad. Another Red Cross team visited a water institute to discuss long term solutions for the water supply problems in Novi Sad. Discussions on the opening of a joint field office were held between the

Vojvodina Red Cross regional secretary, the International Federation field representative and ICRC.

Kragujevac: The Red Cross branch in Kragujevac city reports that from 24 March through 28 April, 2,127 vulnerable people (1,195 families) received assistance with 44,450 MT of various aid items. In addition the Red Cross humanitarian pharmacy has delivered 7,902 packs of various medicines to categories of beneficiaries entitled to this type of assistance (refugees, social cases, invalids etc).

The Red Cross branch in Kragujevac is planning to expand its soup/school kitchen and hygiene programmes - which currently assist some 12,000 people - to cover a further 25,000 beneficiaries, including children under 15, adolescents, the handicapped, homeless and elderly, refugees from Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia and internally displaced. Among other relief items needed are blankets and bedlinen sets, clothes, shoes, and medicines.

Kraljevo: In the Kraljevo region, voluntary blood donations and first aid courses are being carried out at all levels within the municipality. A new first aid team has been trained and 3,000 first aid booklets distributed within the local community, to schools and collective centres.

Montenegro: According to the local branch in Rozaje, about 150 persons crossed from Kosovo during two last days. The relief distribution for April has been completed in almost all municipalities. In Budva, figures for internally displaced have increased to 305 while the number of refugees remains unchanged at 1,430. Distributions to refugees are ongoing with additional needs for all food items, hygiene articles, milk powder and cleaning detergents. In Mojkovac, the registered number of displaced has increased from 40 (two weeks ago) to 237 and 490 refugees. Emergency needs include sleeping bags, mattresses and blankets.

Tracing: On 5 May, three telephone lines were put at the disposal of displaced people in Ulcinj to contact their families; there were 89 calls on the first day, mainly to Macedonia, Albania and Germany. In Rozaje, telephone facilities for tracing purposes should be operational from next week.

### ***Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia***

According to UNHCR, the border is open today, but no refugees entered through official border crossings yesterday. There are reports that the FYROM government is preparing to restrict the refugee inflow to match the outflow to third countries and that 60,000 refugees will be moved to Albania to a camp being constructed at Korce.

Relief Distributions: Latest data from the Macedonian Red Cross shows 112,300 registered refugees living with host families; with the possibility of further influxes, the beneficiary planning figure for May is 143,285. In response to an urgent request, the relief department has forwarded over 500 tents donated by Red Cross Red Crescent Societies in Germany, America and Iran. The relief supplies dispatched on Wednesday to Tetevo were distributed to a total of 3,973 beneficiaries who are not yet registered, but have taken refuge in the town.

Health: The airlift of hospital equipment for the new Norwegian Red Cross field hospital in the Cegrane camp is delayed and cannot arrive until Saturday. According to the health coordinator, the sanitation situation in this camp is becoming increasingly difficult, with sewage being stored in bladder tanks as an interim solution.

Logistics: Dispatches from the International Federation's central warehouse through Thursday (6 May) included: 6,500 blankets and 1,800 hygiene parcels to the Skopje branch; 1,400 mattresses, 1,500 blankets, 200 hygiene parcels, 500 pieces of soap, 100 packets of diapers, 1,000 high protein biscuits to Tetovo; 537 tents to Cegrane camp; and one 20 sq m tent to ICRC at Stenkovec. Incoming goods included: 1,450 mattresses from the American Red Cross and 300 (50-kg.) bags of rice from the Iranian Red Crescent.

Tracing: The Red Cross tracing service has registered 483 vulnerable cases (the majority of which are unaccompanied children, but also include elderly, physically and mentally disabled persons) as well as 1,120 tracing requests through Thursday (6 May). The number of cases closed, with families reunited, has increased to 207.

External Relations, Information and Publicity: Among news organization in contact with Red Cross Red Crescent yesterday were: USA Today; Swiss TV; two TV crews from Iceland, France-Soir and Canadian Broadcasting Corp.

### ***Albania***

Reports of Macedonian border closures are troubling, particularly since it is likely that the refugees will be routed towards Albania which is already having difficulty handling the present humanitarian catastrophe, with some 415,000 refugees already in country.

With an early return of refugees to Kosovo seeming unlikely, the Albanian government has announced it is considering medium/long-term solutions to the problem of refugee accommodation. The government and the UNHCR have indicated that over the rest of the month, the refugees living in Kukes will move further south to camps.

The European Union Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs is in Albania at present and met with the Head of Delegation to discuss the Red Cross Red Crescent operation and, in particular, its funding.

Health: A delegation official is visiting Elbasan shortly to view the current situation in the hospital and the Turkish Red Crescent camp, where health conditions are reported to be very poor. At the cigarette factory in Shkodra, a sanitation assessment is being performed, with the assistance of the Austrian Red Cross.

Shelter: Construction of camps is proceeding far too slowly, according to government sources; most NGOs have not been able to maintain the established deadlines for camp development. In those camps that are fully constructed, the government contends that sanitation remains a clear problem and that improvement of living conditions is a priority.

Logistics: Another two ferries are scheduled to arrive in Durres today with trailers- but no trucks - on board. Albanian trucking companies will be used for immediate dispatch to the regional offices.

Participating National Societies: At a Red Cross Red Crescent coordination meeting attended by all components of the Movement, a draft Memorandum of Understanding was distributed with was positively received. The arrival of representatives from the South Korean Red Cross representatives is expected today, while the British Red Cross officials are in Shkodra and a team from Swedish Red Cross in Kukes.

External Relations, Information and Publicity: Interviews were held yesterday with Danish and Norwegian radio and Reuters.

Outstanding needs: For the Red Cross Red Crescent to meet the needs of refugees living with host families, more food assistance is required. With the numbers growing, and with the present intention to add host families to the beneficiary list, the delegation is constantly in a 'catch up' position. PNSs are asked to consider food - particularly food parcels - as the priority.

### ***Kukes Report***

The general situation in Kukes and Has districts remains calm, however the outlook for Tropoje district is less stable. Yesterday's movement of refugees was as follows: 1,269 into the area, and 5,040 transferred out.

Relief distributions: A Red Cross Red Crescent survey has been carried out in Krume town (Has district) to examine the different options for implementing the new relief programme and preparing the first distribution, which is intended for 9,415 beneficiaries. Contacts were taken up with the local branch of the Albanian Red Cross.

Health: Staff at the Finnish Red Cross health ERU are currently handing over their work to the second rotation team, which is arriving this week. Discussions are also taking place with staff at the Kukes public hospital to further the collaborative process.

Logistics: Yesterday, the Kukes warehouse received 8.5 MT of food parcels airlifted by the helicopter from Tirana. The Red Cross Red Crescent distributed 60 MT of food parcels and 34 MT of wheat flour to host families in Kukes town. However, there is currently a shortage of 10 MT of wheat flour. In addition, there is now only one day's worth of food in the warehouse for distribution, and the next delivery is not due until Tuesday (11 May).

Tracing: Today the Red Cross protection team went on a field trip to Krume and Fajza. Team members also covered the following cases: seven people requested for interview by the Canadian Embassy, were located by a special radio message through Radio Kukes and TV Kukes; one case of an unaccompanied child sent from Tirana was handled and is near closure; and one new case of an unaccompanied child was registered. In addition, a briefing was held with MSF regarding tracing/protection activities, which resulted in a new information centre being established in the camp. A coordination meeting was also held with the UNHCR Protection Delegate, in which the Kukes sub delegation discovered that the UNHCR in Kukes have, to date, registered three cases of unaccompanied children. A need for psychological counseling for Kosovan staff dealing with the telephone and radio calls from the Kukes sub delegation has been identified and will be examined. Telephone calls and radio messages from the Red Cross tracing office, the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent camp and the MSF camp on 5 May were as follows: 319 radio messages and 442 telephone calls.

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