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RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT INFORMATION

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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 and www.icrc.org

LATEST EVENTS

On Thursday 3 June, President Slobodon Milosevic and the Serbian Parliament agreed to accept the peace plan proposed by Russian mediator Mr. Victor Chernomyrdin and E.U. envoy Mr. Martii Ahtisaari. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement continues to remain fully focused on what it is doing in Yugoslavia and will continue to respond to evolving humanitarian needs.

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

(Kosovo Report) The ICRC team of seven expatriates in Pristina has focused on re-establishing contacts with local authorities. The first relief convoy of 80 MT of food, hygienic parcels, plastic sheeting, and baby kits was delivered to the local Red Cross.

Following the introductory meetings with Directors of Pristina and Prizren hospitals in Kosovo (where Red Cross donations of five boxes of dressing material and one box of minor surgery sets were made to each of the hospitals), two surgical material sets (from Norwegian Red Cross) have been prepared in Belgrade and will be dispatched shortly.

Relief distribution: In Serbia, the Red Cross regional center in Kraljevo received 46,080 m² of transparent sheeting on 2 June, for distribution in Novi Pazar and Varvarin. The Nis RC has distributed 6,000 m² of plastic sheeting and 820 hygienic parcels to Surdulica.

Health: Four dressing sets were sent to Varvarin (Serbia), and a medical assessment has been made in Uzice (Serbia). An ICRC team has visited humanitarian pharmacies in Belgrade to assess ways of providing assistance to them. From the inception of the current crisis, a total of 11 hospitals in Serbia have been visited by Red Cross medical teams and followed up with deliveries of medical assistance.

A water and sanitation assessment has been carried out in Nis and Kraljevo (Serbia). Two ICRC tankers continue to distribute water six times daily from Beocin to Petrovaradin and Sremska Kamenica.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

According to UNHCR, 802 refugees crossed the border during the middle of the week, about half at unofficial border crossing areas. This brings the total number of refugees in camps to 109,800. In the same period 2,243 refugees departed to third countries. The Macedonian Red Cross has registered 149,696 refugees in host families. The total number of refugees in FYRO Macedonia is estimated by UNHCR to be 260,200.

Relief Distribution: Macedonian Red Cross reports that 149,696 refugees are now registered in 25,936 host families. The May distributions for Skopje and Tetevo branches are near completion. The new planning figure for June is 168,200. The largest increases in the planning figures were in Tetevo, Skopje and Kumanovo branches. The net increase of 29,900 was calculated after a review of closing balances in each branch and estimates of unregistered refugees by local police.

Health: The community assessments by the Federation's Water & Sanitation co-ordinator are near completion, and a local counterpart has been identified and trained. Several communities have been identified to have demonstrated a need for improvements in water supply. Field assessments have been conducted in the Kicevo, Ohrid, Struga, Debar and Gostivar areas. Three potential locations for future water work have been identified and the technical details and budgets have been requested from the Ministry of Urbanism in Skopje. Additional site assessments are planned for Tetevo area this week.

Logistics: Dispatches from the International Federation's central warehouse on Monday-Tuesday included: 3,900 mattresses, 360 blankets, 1,635 hygiene parcels (donated by Swiss Red Cross) and 400 sheets (donated by Swiss Red Cross) given to local medical centres.

Tracing: (Special Report): The ICRC tracing programme in Macedonia has expanded both locally and globally and the impact is evident. Along with the Tracing and Protection Co-ordinator, there are now seven delegates dedicated to tracing and three more are expected this week. The new tracing office in Tetevo has expanded the outreach to Kosovan refugees living in host families. Two Macedonian radio stations now carry announcements of names of missing family members.

There is a significant proportion of Kosovan refugees who have family members living in countries outside of the Balkan region and there are many families who were split apart between Macedonia and Albania. Modern telecommunications and the internet have had a big impact on how the tracing is done.

There are six tracing specialists and a team leader from the American Red Cross (ARC) who have been assigned to the ICRC tracing tents in all the camps. Their work begins by helping refugees who volunteer to fill in the forms to be input into the family links website. The forms contain names, current addresses and some family information. The forms are taken to the ICRC Tracing Centre in Skopje at the end of the day and the specialists search the website for names of family members. When a match is made on the web-based database, a specialist will go visit the refugee family in their tent and ask if they would like to send a Red Cross message. If the family member lives outside FYRO Macedonia, the message will be sent to the appropriate National Society. The ARC team is putting together a training manual of procedures for the new system. Another ARC team will be going into Albania in about two weeks.

For the week of 26 May to 2 June, 335 registrations were made in the camps and there were 56 follow-up field contacts made with refugees to confirm the match with potential family members. In the past week 590 refugees have listed their names on the website; 63 have received messages from family members and two official Red Cross messages were sent out through the website process. As soon as the special laptops arrive and the equipment is set up, there will be direct satellite link from the tracing centre tents in the refugee camps to the world wide web.

The ICRC Tracing Agency has registered 1,545 vulnerable people (the majority of which are unaccompanied children, but also include elderly, physically and mentally disabled persons). Cumulative through Thursday (3 June): 514 families have been reunited; 256 names were given for broadcast. For the week ending 3 June, the ICRC tracing offices (Skopje, Tetevo and seven camps) have received 4,677 visitors and 536 phone calls.

External Relations, information and publicity: More than twenty representatives of the local media attended a joint press conference by the Federation, ICRC and the Macedonian Red Cross. Both of the Heads of Delegation gave interviews, which were aired on a local Macedonian TV news programme 'TV-Telma'. Three of the major Macedonian newspapers (*Vecer*, *Dnevnik*, *Makedonija Denes*) covered points highlighted in the press releases, along with *Makedonsko Sonce*, a weekly magazine, and an Albanian language newspaper, *Flaka*.

Albania

Movements of refugees into Albania remain minor; as of 2 June there were 464,254 refugees in the country, which is 329 more than the previous figure.

Relief distributions: On Wednesday 2 June, 8,960 Swedish Red Cross food parcels and 45 MT of wheat flour were delivered to Tirana and 16,416 French Red Cross food parcels and 42.2 MT of wheat flour to Durres.

Health: As mentioned in a previous report, tuberculosis is becoming more prevalent in Albania with the continued flow of refugees from the FR Yugoslavia. However, the WHO maintains that there is not an epidemic taking place, nor is one expected. The control of the possible spread of the disease is deemed to be the most pressing medical need by the WHO.

The medical warehouse is quickly becoming better organised as a result of the presence of the medical logistician. An inventory is being finalised, as are preparations for a permanent site for the medical warehouse.

Assessments of local hospitals have been finished and priorities have been identified. The follow-up at the Tirana university hospital focused on the institution's intravenous fluids and a "check-up" of the pharmacy stocks.

Shelter: All organisations are being encouraged by the UNHCR to start planning for winterisation. The organisation has produced a booklet on the topic and has distributed it to agencies involved with the accommodation of refugees. The winterisation process is especially important in the Kukes and Korce areas, where the temperatures often remain at the sub-zero level and sometimes reach -30 C.

The Emergency Management Group announced that camp security continued to deteriorate across the country.

Social welfare: A social welfare delegate arrived to take on the responsibilities associated with the Red Cross Red Crescent's psycho-social assistance programmes.

Logistics: The supply ship the Sancho Panza has been replaced by the new EuroCarrier in the Red Cross ferry fleet. Plans are to have a daily "sailing" where a Red Cross ferry will leave Italy and arrive at the Durres port on a daily basis. Warehouses in Tirana and Durres are close to full capacity. A second warehouse in Durres will be used to hold preparedness stock.

Telecommunications: Preparations for an internal network are ongoing. Additionally, CC:Mail Mobile installations and computer "trouble-shooting" have been on the telecommunications team's agenda over the last couple of days. Radio installations in the vehicle fleet also continued.

Tracing: More than 4,700 visits have been made by refugees to the tracing office. A total of 21,830 telephone calls have been made, 18,631 radio messages have been prepared, 200 cases of unaccompanied vulnerable have been recorded, there have been 135 cases of parents having lost children, and 370 family reunion cases have been opened and 35 closed.

Participating National Societies: A PNS meeting was held to discuss the issue of winterisation of all PNS camps. Representatives from one PNS camp reported that the cost of "winterising" would fall between 10-15 million dollars (U.S.) at their camp. The UNHCR's recently-released Winterisation booklet was also discussed.

External relations, publicity and information: Interviews have been made with *Dagbladet* (Norwegian daily), 'ARD' (German radio), *DTA* (German news agency) and 'SPEAR' (Albanian radio programme for refugees). Family separations and reunions continue to attract the most media attention. The tracing needs of the men released from Smerkovica in Kosovo were discussed on the local radio station. Briefings were also provided for CNN, Reuters, BBC World Service (Albania Section) and APTN.

Kukes Report

@The official figures concerning the movement of refugees was as follows: 2 June, 513 into Kukes and 1,143 leaving Kukes; 3 June, 165 into Kukes and 1,239 leaving Kukes. The majority of new arrivals were male. The number of refugees moving south still remains far below the objectives set-up by the UNHCR and the Albanian government of 5,000 per day.

The security situation has improved within the area of responsibility for the Kukes Sub-delegation, as such Red Cross Red Crescent operational activities have been conducted as normal, encountering no security problems in the middle of the week.

Relief distribution: The second round of relief distributions on 3 June were completed in two Communes of Kukes district (Zapod and Shistavec). Distributions took place at three village locations, as follows: Bele, Novosej and Kolovosh. A total of 325 refugees and 32 host families received relief items. A one month food ration, consisting of a Swedish Red Cross food parcel, and 8 kgs of wheat flour, were delivered to each refugee living in a host family and the host families. Due to a recent needs assessment, each refugee family also received two hygiene parcels. As such, a total of 2,856 Swedish Red Cross food parcels, 22.8 MT of wheat flour and 714 Hygiene parcels were distributed.

All three villages were remote, running along the mountain ridge near the border, and distributions to beneficiaries in Bele village had to be conducted by light vehicle, as the road was inaccessible for trucks. Many of the beneficiaries from this village had to walk several hours from their mountain based houses, to collect their food and non food items from the village.

Logistics: On 2 and 3 June, the Kukes Sub-delegation received 2,712 French Red Cross food parcels, 2,040 Swedish Red Cross food parcels and 107 MT of wheat flour. Secondary deliveries were made to distribution points in Kukes Town and Communes, as follows: 11,008 Swedish Red Cross food parcels, 714 hygiene parcels and 69.4 MT of wheat flour.

Tracing(Special Report): The Protection team opened the following new cases in the middle of last week: three Red Cross messages received, one distributed; eight family reunification requests; five special tracing request; two tracing requests for unaccompanied minors, three for elderly abandoned people, one woman alone with a child and sixteen special radio messages. Over the same period, 1,106 satellite telephone calls and 559 radio messages were transmitted from the Kukes Office, Kukes Main Square, United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Camp, and Fajza Camp.

Personnel: The Red Cross Red Crescent Kukes Sub-delegation Protection Team currently consists of 12 local employees and two ICRC delegates.

Operations: The Protection Team, works from three offices. The Satellite Telephone Office, situated on the Kukes Main Square, is available for refugees to make international telephone calls to their relatives overseas. Between 350 and 450 satellite calls are made every day. The Information Office was opened on 15 May to ease enquires within the actual Sub-delegation, and is located just off the Kukes Main Square. This office deals with tracing, family reunions and visa procedures. The Radio Message service is also conducted from the Information Office, as are the refugee lists published in the newspapers. Finally, the two delegates also work out of the Kukes Sub-delegation Office, where they deal with the majority of the cases involving vulnerable people (unaccompanied minors, elderly, disabled/handicapped, etc.)

Mobile Satellite Telephone Team: In addition to the Satellite Telephone Office based in Kukes Town, the Protection Team has a Mobile Satellite Telephone Team, which focuses on the refugee camps in the Kukes and Has area. There are also many refugees living in villages and the Team visits villages hosting refugees, thus enabling those refugees who do not have the possibility to travel to Kukes Town to make contact with their relatives abroad.

Vulnerable persons: As a result of the influx of refugees from Smrekovnic, a special service has been established for this very vulnerable group. Additional satellite telephones have been made available at the Main Square, where the new arrivals are transported by UNHCR buses from the border every afternoon. On arrival, the team also registers the new arrivals, and deals with the radio messages. The information resulting from this work enables the relatives that have previously logged requests with the Red Cross Red Crescent concerning the whereabouts of the ex-detainees to receive up-to-date news concerning the ex-detainees' arrival in Kukes.

Details of Tracing requests concerning vulnerable people and medical cases (transmitted to the Red Cross Red Crescent Medical Department in Tirana), are administered at the Information Office and at the Red Cross Crescent Sub-delegation Office. In addition, the Protection Team works very proactively in this area of Tracing, by regularly conducting field trips to the different refugee camps and villages in Kukes and Has Districts. This service is aimed at vulnerable people, which includes all the elderly and disabled/handicapped, unaccompanied people, to include minors, who have systematically been registered at the MSF and UAE Red Crescent Camps and selected villages, which are known to host refugees. Special radio messages concerning these vulnerable cases are also broadcast by Radio Kukes.

When links have been made from the Tracing activities, the Team organises family reunifications. The majority of family reunification's occur in the southern and western regions of Albania, as people are usually transported by helicopter to Tirana and then by Red Cross Red Crescent vehicle to their final destination.

Dissemination: The Protection team distributes dissemination leaflets in Albanian to the refugee population. Dissemination concerning tracing and protection activities for other

humanitarian organisations working in the Kukes and Has districts is also conducted by the team. To date close co-operation has been developed especially with the UNHCR and MSF. The Team is also increasingly working with the Save the Children Fund.

Health: Earlier this week, the Italian Red Cross field hospital treated a total of 263 patients, of which 110 were under 10 years old. During the same period they also organised the medical evacuation of four patients. The Finnish Red Cross basic health clinic treated a total of 292, of which 75 were under six years old. They also inoculated 23 children against polio and measles. On 3 June, the second baby was born at the clinic.

Albanian Red Cross Society: On 3 June, the Albanian Red Cross received the Beneficiary List detailing host families and refugees in host families in Kukes Town and five Communes in Kukes District. As such, three teams, totalling nine volunteers, have been conducting a monitoring exercise, by visiting randomly selected host families on the list.

External Relations, information and publicity: Coverage was gained from Associated Press, featuring the tracing and family reunification work. The Head of Sub-delegation, the ICRC Team Leader and the ARCS were interviewed by Radio Tirana for their daily half-hour slot, featuring different aspects of life in Kukes during the current crisis. They were particularly interested in finding out about refugees in host families.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

According to the latest updates from UNHCR, the total number of refugees that fled to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) since the beginning of the current crisis in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is 104,600 people, 44,500 refugees have fled to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and 60,100 to Republika Srpska (RS).

Based on the latest UNHCR updates some 21,700 ethnic Albanians have fled to FBiH as well as 22,000 Moslems from Sandzak and 800 Serbs from FRY. More than 30,100 Serbs have fled to the Bosnian Serb entity - Republika Srpska. An additional 30,000 Croatian Serb who were refugees in FRY have also fled to RS.

Shelter: 7,938 refugees are accommodated in refugee camps, less than 10% of the total number of FRY refugees. There are 29 refugee camps in BiH, 17 in FBiH and 12 in RS, including 14 collective centres, 11 transit centres and 4 tented sites.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata arrived Wednesday in BiH for her four-day-visit. Mrs. Ogata will visit FRY refugee camps in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Banja Luka. She is also due to meet Bosnian officials in order to discuss issues regarding the situation with refugees in BiH.

Tracing (Special Report): Information about the Red Cross radio broadcasts was published through the Bosnian media. Leaflets and posters, providing the frequencies and broadcast time, were also printed. A list of missing persons and information about refugees' friends and relatives can be found on a web site created by the ICRC. Services will be made available in four ICRC offices in BiH - Sarajevo and Bihac in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Banja Luka and Bijeljina in Republika Srpska (RS).

This campaign is also being promoted in a leaflet, which has been printed in four languages - Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian, Serbian and English. The leaflet explains possibilities available from the family-links web site as well as other tracing services offered by the Red Cross in BiH.

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