

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 جمعيات الصليب الأحمر والقمر الأحمر

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO: TRAIN CRASH

25 January 2006

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 1/2006) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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The Situation

On 23 January 2006, at approximately 4.30 pm, a train accident occurred near the town of Bioca (approximately 15 kilometres from Podgorica, towards Bijelo Polje). Four cars of a local train (Podgorica-Bijelo Polje) slipped from the tracks and fell down a steep cliff to a canyon averaging 30-50 metres depth, dragging more than two hundred passengers with them. According to the latest official reports, 45 people were killed in the accident with over 200 injured (about fifty percent seriously injured), 75 of them children of up to 15 years of age.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action



Emergency Response at the scene of the crash

Actions taken by Red Cross

The 25-member strong Montenegro Red Cross Disaster Response unit has taken part in rescuing the injured passengers and has also provided other technical assistance. This assistance includes the use of Red Cross equipment, such as the power generator with spot lights (necessary due to the difficult nature of the terrain), as well as the vehicles for transportation of the injured passengers.

In order to assist on the spot, the Red Cross has also provided 250 blankets, 30 stretchers and tents for 50 persons. In addition, to assist the local health institutions to accept the large number of injured people, the Red

Cross made available 50 beds, 100 blankets and 250 sets of bed linen. At the same time, an urgent call was sent to voluntary blood donors (VBD), members of the VBD club that is part of the Red Cross organisation, and they are awaiting further instructions.



Red Cross emergency response teams worked through the night

The Red Cross tents are being used to identify the bodies of the victims. The Red Cross also mobilised its psycho-social support teams who are currently working with the families of the injured and killed passengers, assisting them with the psychological trauma.

During 2005, as part of the Municipal Disaster Preparedness Programme activities lead by the International Federation, the municipality of Podgorica had a disaster simulation, involving the local Red Cross and all relevant institutions and services (fire brigade, civil protection, paramedics etc.). The simulated scenario was very similar to the actual accident that is now being dealt with (a bus instead of a train) and the aim was to improve coordination within and between the involved

parties. The response to the tragic accident of last night demonstrated what the Montenegro Prime Minister Djukanovic called 'a record-setting response time' of all the relevant institutions and services.

Depending on the needs, the Red Cross of Montenegro and its branches will be involved in providing material and other assistance to the families of victims. If necessary, the Red Cross will also help collect and distribute humanitarian aid from citizens and organisations, aimed at helping the families of victims.

The secretary of the Montenegro Red Cross has been present on the spot and has been interviewed by the Montenegro television, talking about the Red Cross involvement in the response to the accident.

Actions taken by others

At the time of writing this report, the identification of bodies is still taking place, using the tents set up by the Red Cross. The response to the accident has been very quick, involving police, fire brigade, emergency health units and volunteers.

Assistance and help has been offered by Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society, Red Cross of Serbia, Red Cross of Vojvodina, Red Cross of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatian Red Cross, the Federation country delegation in Belgrade, as well as the government of Serbia and the consular office of the Republic of Macedonia.

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