

LEBANON: DISPLACED PERSONS

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General situation

The most recent upsurge in hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel, which erupted on 11 April, has resulted in more than 150 deaths, 300 wounded and the displacement of some 400,000 people in Lebanon and some 10,000 displaced in northern Israel. Despite intensive diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the crisis, the fighting continues. While Hezbollah rockets are landing daily in northern Israel, and the Israel Defence Force maintains its air, land and sea bombardment of south Lebanon and the southern suburbs of Beirut, US Secretary of State Warren Christopher is in Damascus attempting to negotiate an elusive cease-fire. At present, due to sporadic shelling from Israeli ships, the road between Beirut and Saida is blocked, delaying urgently needed relief supplies.

On 19 April the United Nations launched a USD 8.5 million flash appeal for 100,000 internally displaced persons for three months. The UN intends to launch another appeal at a later stage for rehabilitation of the affected population.

ICRC appeal and co-ordination in the field

The ICRC launched an appeal for Lebanon on 18 April which included financial support for Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and Federation relief activities for displaced people. It was agreed that while ICRC will directly support LRC first aid activities in the conflict areas and replenish medicines for dispensaries, it will also support, through the Federation, LRC relief activities for displaced persons who fled the conflict areas. In addition, support will be forthcoming for rehabilitation activities. The Federation will assist LRC in carrying out its relief activities for the displaced.

Lebanese Red Cross activities and co-operation with the Federation

The LRC has been very active since the outbreak of hostilities. It has mobilised first aid workers and sent ambulances to the southern conflict areas. In co-operation with the ICRC, LRC has evacuated wounded and dead from the conflict areas. First aid workers in 37 first aid centres throughout the country are transporting sick persons among the displaced population.

Some 25 mobile clinics, many of which are improvised, are providing health services to displaced persons in Beirut, Nabatiyeh, Tyre, Saida, Iklim Kharoub, Jebail, Rachiya, Zahle and Tripoli. In Bint Jbeil a mobile clinic just deployed six weeks ago with the assistance of the Netherlands Red Cross is serving those who remained in the conflict area. Relief material received from sister Societies is being delivered to LRC local branches for further distribution. LRC youth volunteers

are actively engaged in relief activities, registering displaced persons, helping mobile clinics, handling relief materials and taking care of displaced persons.

In addition to its ongoing relief activities, the LRC, in co-operation with the Federation, has formulated a further plan of action to assist 28,000 displaced persons in the areas of Beirut, Saida, Iklm, Kharoub, Chouf, Jbeil, Batroun, Tripoli, Rachiya Zahle and Baalbeck. The plan took the following principles into consideration:

- avoid duplication with Government/relief agencies
- give priority to the most vulnerable
- give priority to the most needed relief items
- match activities to LRC capacity.

The assistance foreseen will include the distribution of kitchen utensils, water purification tablets and jerry cans, infant powder milk, whole powder milk, sanitary napkins, hygienic/cleaning material (soap, detergents) and medicines for mobile clinics.

A CHF 100,000 advance to LRC from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) has financed medicines (USD 50,000), VHF radios (USD 5,630) and operational costs (USD 25,605).

With local cash donations received from the General Secretariat of Arab Red Crescent & Red Cross Societies and the German embassy, LRC is purchasing water purification tablets, kitchen utensils and milk products and will start distributing them tomorrow, 24 April. In addition, the Secretariat has received a contribution from the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian government to assist the LRC in its emergency and rehabilitation work. A more comprehensive report on all of these contributions will be issued shortly.

In-Kind Contributions

The following in-kind contributions have been made directly to the LRC:

United Arab Emirates Red Crescent: 10 tons of dates, 16 tons of wheat flour, 6,000 blankets, 9 tons of milk powder, 5 tons of infant milk, 21 tons of tins of food (tuna, cheese, jam) arrived on 21 April and are being distributed.

Jordan National Red Crescent: 500 blankets, 750 units of cooking/kitchen items, 88 units of first aid material and boxes of sanitary napkins have arrived.

Syrian Red Crescent: 96 boxes infant milk, 42 boxes of paediatric medicines, 298 blankets, 2 boxes of gauze, 8 mattresses and 300 cotton bed sheets have arrived.

Kuwait Red Crescent: 3 ambulances and 5 trucks of relief material will arrive shortly.

French Red Cross: 2,000 blankets, 2,000 sheets, 50 stretchers, 3 tons of powdered milk and medicines are on the way.

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