

LEBANON: DISPLACED PERSONS

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Latest events

The military actions undertaken by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) which began on Wednesday 10 April continued unabated into April 16 — the sixth day of hostilities. The Jamhour power station in Beirut and another main transformer station in Jal El Dibwas were hit, resulting in a rationing of electricity in the capital. In the Southern suburbs, 12 civilians were wounded by rocket attacks. On 16 April, the Ain Helwi Palestinian refugee camp in Saida was attacked. The population of the southern city of Tyre was also warned to leave the area before 10:00 Tuesday morning. Hizbollah continues to launch Katyusha rocket attacks into northern Israel, wounding civilians and hitting a power station.

As a result of this military activity, it has been reported that as many as 400,000 persons have been displaced as of 15 April. The major flow of displaced people is from the confrontation area in South Lebanon, principally Tyre and Nabatiyet, towards the Saida area. Another stream of displaced was reported further north in the Bekaa valley. Displaced people from the southern suburbs of Beirut are moving northwards along the coastline to Jbeil, Batroun and as far as Tripoli where two schools are being used to house 1,000 displaced persons. It is officially reported that 31 persons have been killed and 140 wounded in Lebanon since the beginning of hostilities.

Red Cross Action

Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) •

It is very difficult at this stage to consolidate information on the LRC activities, which are being undertaken throughout the country to cope with the massive movement of displaced persons. A total of 800 LRC first aid workers are now on stand-by 24-hours a day, of which some 700 are located in the confrontation area of South Lebanon, where the Society also has 32 ambulances deployed. Two additional ambulances are transporting medicines to Tyre on behalf of the Ministry of Health. Fifty-six emergency cases, including wounded and eight dead bodies have been transported.

A total of 25 LRC mobile clinics are now active, each including medical doctor(s), a nurse/midwife and a social worker, serving the displaced persons throughout the country. Five mobile clinics are operating in Beirut and were able to visit 15 schools on 15 April, where some 4,000 displaced are accommodated. In Rachaiya and Zahle in the Bekaa valley, mobile clinics are in action assisting displaced persons.

Currently, LRC youths and another 700 first aiders are collecting information on the location of the displaced persons and their needs throughout the country. The LRC Youth organisation, comprising 24 clubs, is now heavily engaged in caring for the displaced by organising relief activities. On the 15 April, 175 LRC youths visited 23 schools and 10 buildings in Beirut to

distribute food parcels. In Saida, LRC youths are collecting used clothing and distributing them to displaced people in 25 schools.

During the last three days a total of 480 blood units have been collected at the eight LRC blood banks and at the mobile collection unit.

A LRC VHF radio station has been established in the emergency room of the Ministry of Health for direct contact and co-ordination with the Operation Room at LRC headquarters. An additional 10 VHF radio stations were installed for security and control of the LRC transport convoys. The LRC transport fleet has temporarily been expanded with hired trucks provided with the Red Cross emblem.

Federation Support to LRC and Co-ordination with the ICRC •

On 15 April the President of the LRC and the Heads of the Federation and ICRC Delegations met in Beirut to co-ordinate actions in order to cope with the current situation. Discussions have been taking place in Geneva between the Federation and the ICRC regarding an appeal for the operation and a joint decision will be forthcoming, taking into account the evolution of the situation.

The Federation has released a total of CHF 100,000 from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund to support LRC activities. The LRC will require additional financial support in order to step up its relief activities, including the distribution of relief commodities such as food, blankets and cooking utensils and to continue providing medical aid through mobile clinics.

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