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Information bulletin

Sri Lanka: Explosions



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Glide n° OT-2019-000037-LKA	Date of issue: 24 April 2019
Date of disaster: 21 April 2019	Point of contact (name and title): Dr. Mahesh Gunasekara, Director General
Host National Society: Sri Lanka Red Cross Society	
N° of National Societies currently involved in the operation: Danish Red Cross	
N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation: Government authorities; Colombo Judicial Medical Office	

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS), with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), is considering a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) request.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The situation

On 21 April 2019, explosions at eight sites killed at least 359 people and wounded over 500 people¹. The blasts occurred at three churches, including: St. Anthony's Church in Kochchikade, Colombo; St. Sebastian's in Katuwapitiya - Negombo, north of Colombo; and Protestant Zion Church in Batticaloa in Eastern province. The blasts targeted worshippers as they attended Easter Sunday services during the Christian holy week. Blasts also occurred at three hotels in Colombo, including Shangri La, Cinnamon Grand, and Kingsbury Hotel, all in the capital. Two more blasts occurred later as authorities were investigating. At least 45 foreign nationals are reported to be among the dead. Further, several other explosives were found and safely defused in Andiambalama and Kochchikade.



A view of St. Sebastian's Church damaged in blast in Negombo, north of Colombo, Sri Lanka, April 21, 2019. (Source: abcnews)

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

On hearing of the explosions and mass casualties, SLRCS immediately went into action to provide life-saving care. First aid instructors offered first aid and relief to survivors at explosion sites, such as St. Sebastian's Church in Negombo, north of the capital, Colombo. SLRCS Gampaha Branch opened a first aid centre on its premises, where first aiders treated minor injuries and drove two people to hospital (one with a head injury, the other a fracture). First aiders also provided psychological first aid to people in distress. To help hospitals cope with a sudden influx of seriously ill people, the SLRCS helped transfer patients from Negombo Hospital to Gampaha Hospital. SLRCS asked its network of blood donors to donate, and as of early on Sunday afternoon, supplies were believed to be enough to meet the demand.

¹ <http://www.adaderana.lk/news/54599/easter-day-attacks-death-toll-reaches-359>

SLRCS has also activated its Restoring Family Links (RFL) tracing services to relay information about patients to their families to ease the anguish of relatives and relieve pressure on medical staff. Staff of the National Headquarters and trained RFL volunteers from SLRCS, Colombo Branch, have visited the wounded at the National Hospital in Colombo to verify their needs and also reconnect them to their families, including 163 patients receiving treatment in 15 wards, and 73 patients in the intensive care unit.

Since 23 April, some 15 volunteers have been supporting the national hospital in the morgue, with dead body management.

From 24 April onwards, trained SLRCS volunteers will be in place to provide first aid at the funerals for victims of the explosions. In addition, an expert colleague from the Danish Red Cross' Centre for Psychosocial Support, attached to the Danish Consulate, has arrived in Sri Lanka to help survivors.

In the coming week, Colombo and Gampaha Branches of SLRCS will be conducting needs assessments of the families affected by the explosions. After analysing the outcomes of the assessment report, SLRCS expects to hold discussions with movement partners, relevant government authorities, and the public and private sectors regarding medium to longer-term recovery initiatives for the affected people and their families.

SLRCS is coordinating with authorities, and branches are on standby to offer more support. SLRCS has an extensive network of volunteers and a branch in each of the 25 districts of the country.



SLRCS trained volunteers from the Gampaha branch arrive at St Sebastian's church in Katuwapitiya in Negombo to offer first aid and relief services to people caught up in explosions, 21 April 2019, (Photo: SLRCS)



At Colombo National Hospital, SLRCS RFL (Restoring Family Links) teams help connect survivors with their loved ones, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 21 April 2019. (Photo: SLRCS)



[Click here](#)

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Contact information

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



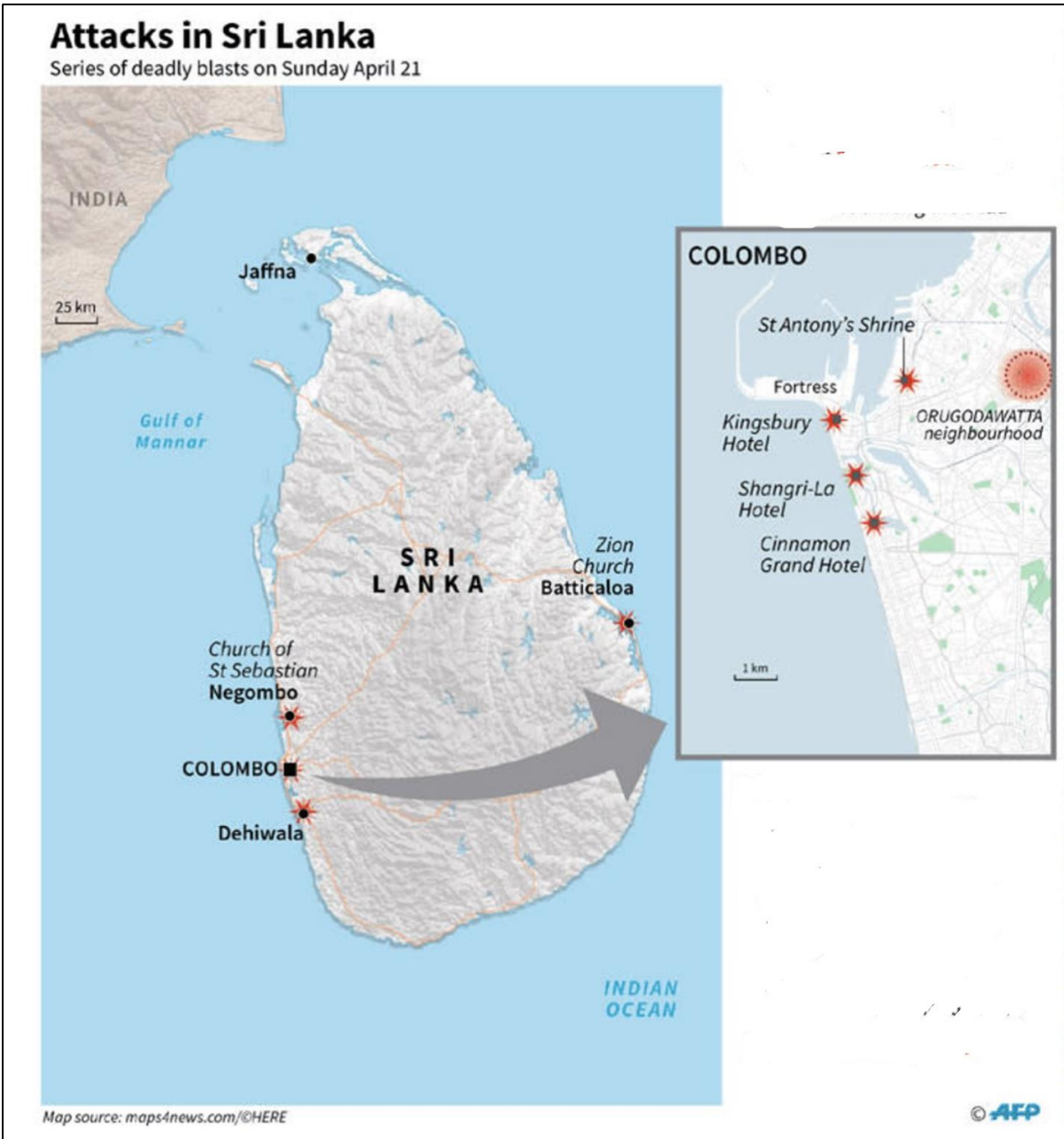
Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace**.



Locations of explosions (Source: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; CBC)