

PROGRAMME UPDATE



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 لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY

4 June 2003

This Programme Update is intended for reporting on Annual Appeals.

Appeal No. 01.90/2003; Appeal Target CHF 4,066,446 (USD 3.10m/ EUR 2.64m)

Programme Update No. 1; Period covered: January - May 2003

“In Brief”

Appeal coverage: 43.2%

Outstanding needs: CHF 2,310,994

Update: The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), with support from its Red Cross and Red Crescent partners and through its network of branches and health facilities, such as Primary Health Care (PHC) centres, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) stations and hospitals is serving the Palestinian people in and around the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Society has also provided urgently needed assistance to Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, Syria, Cairo, and in Iraq through the PRCS health centre in Baghdad.

Since December, the political and security situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip continues to be fraught with tension. Although international media attention, during the first half of 2003, focused on the crisis in Iraq, the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian Autonomous and Occupied Territories remained extremely difficult.

Operational Developments

With the crisis escalating over the past 32 months between Israel and the Palestinian Autonomous and Occupied Territories (Palestine A/OT) comprising the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the focus of the leadership has shifted towards a new initiative, directed by the “Road Map” which envisages the end to the conflict and the creation of a new independent Palestinian State. As a first step, the Palestinian Prime Minister is attempting to facilitate improved negotiations with the Israelis. There are, however, huge challenges to overcome before attaining stability.

For the Palestinian people, the physical, psychological, social and economic effects of 32 months of conflict are becoming increasingly severe. There is frequent military activity resulting in a large number of casualties, and the demolition of homes. At the same time, suicide actions or armed attacks by militants against Israelis are regular events, severely disrupting life in Israel. Restrictions on movement around the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been difficult for all Palestinians, including members of the Palestinian Authority and humanitarian aid organisations. Even international organisations have been constrained from delivering vital humanitarian aid, such as urgently needed medicine, medical equipment, health care, food and other relief items. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has faced numerous obstacles with providing humanitarian assistance and services within this context, while at the same time looking for available human and financial resources.

In early May, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) began closing the Gaza Strip to all international staff except accredited diplomats, thus limiting the ability of delegates already inside the area to go out. A new system, however, was introduced by the IDF which permits humanitarian workers to move outside the area.

Disaster Management

During the first half of 2003, the crisis in Israel and Palestine A/OT continued with varying degrees of intensity. Curfews imposed on villages and cities and IDF operations, generally made movement and daily life difficult for the Palestinian people.

The PRCS Disaster Management & Coordination Unit (DMCU) carried out many activities including establishing and maintaining a directory of staff & volunteers, developing inventories of stock levels and position, preparing distribution maps showing the position of medical/backpacks kits, EMS stations, PHC clinics, hospitals, sub-warehouses, establishing a rapid damage assessment system and relief request format. Additionally, work was done to further develop the Emergency Operational Plan.

The establishment and construction of a medical ERU field hospital continued. PRCS personnel were involved in an international training enabling them to become part of an International Medical ERU. PRCS envisage both a regional and national future role by initially supporting ERU deployments by experienced National Societies, with a long-term vision of setting up a regional referral ERU with smaller advanced medical mobile posts.

The PRCS DMCU has conducted several simulation drills to improve the understanding of disaster services concepts among volunteers, with training in erecting tents, relief operations etc. In connection with the start of the war in Iraq, PRCS conducted a simulation drill activating the EOC in the PRCS headquarters. Over 50 employees and volunteers, staff from the Federation, ICRC, PNS, UNRWA and other organisations attended the drill.

PRCS regards volunteer training as their highest priority. A strong volunteer base is essential for efficient mobilization and deployment of human resources when responding to emergency situations. Over 200 volunteers were trained by PRCS in over ten community based introductory training courses during the reporting period. These volunteers form a core group who will receive further training in the specialised fields that make up PRCS disaster services.

The expansion of the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) programme has continued. The number of ambulances in the programme increased from 86 to 97, and the number of Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) rose from 240 to 260. Emergency Focal Points were established in 19 areas and are operated by trained volunteers in co-operation with CARE International. Several Emergency stations were renovated to accommodate more staff, a larger stock of supplies, and to improve the overall quality of the facilities. Oxygen concentrators were introduced to the PHC centres to reduce dependency on Oxygen Cylinders which required continuous refilling which became very difficult due to limited mobility.

Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA): In June/July 2002, PRCS Disaster Services completed the pilot of the Rapid Damage Assessment surveillance tool. The system is now active and tracks key health services, health status and environmental indicators. It is designed to trigger a response within 24 to 48 hours providing urgently needed medical care (both trauma and/or clinical care) to isolated villages and towns. Information from the centres and the Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA) survey is transmitted to the Disaster Management & Coordination Unit (DMCU).

Depending on the severity of the crisis, the PRCS Disaster Management Group (DMG) is convened to set priorities, allocate resources, and monitor the response. The DMG is composed of senior managers /representatives from the following PRCS departments or units: PHC, EMS, Administration, DMCU, Social Services, Volunteers, Engineering, MIS and other technical input as needed. If the DMG is unable to convene in person the group can consult with each other over the phone.

An emergency operations room was recently established in Nablus, which will further enhance the efficiency of operational response in the northern part of the West Bank. A similar room will be established in Hebron over the next two to three months.

Expansion of Mental Health Care programme with an integrated approach: With the growing needs and increased demand for services due to the continued conflict in the region, PRCS has recognised the need to co-operate and integrate all psycho-social services. The following projects were expanded/developed during the reporting period:

- The nationwide project providing support services to the PRCS EMS, volunteers and families began in 2001 and has continued since. This project is carried out in cooperation with German Red Cross, the ICRC and funded by ECHO.
- The Psycho-social Project for Children in the Hebron area has brought messages of children's well being to children, parents and teachers. 'Manafez', the PRCS youth violence prevention programme has continued its services and programs in Bethlehem and Khan Younis, reaching out to youth discussing violence issues, offering skills building opportunities as well as counseling support. This programme is conducted in cooperation with Map Canada.
- A Child Well-being Programme has been established in the Gaza Strip and is operating out of the PRCS branches in Khan Younis and Gaza City. Its activities include children's theatre, clubs and cinema.
- The cooperation between PRCS and the Danish Red Cross (DanCross) on a three and a half year project based on the Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CABAC) was started in early 2003. The model is offering after-school workshops and summer camps for children in two schools in the area of Tubas village. This project with technical support from DanCross will gradually be handed over to PRCS, and will hopefully be expanded to other villages based on experiences from Tubas.

Water & Sanitation: PRCS has built up stock to enable rapid response to water shortages for hospitals, limited numbers of isolated households, and for displaced populations (capacity up to 5,000 individuals). The supplies include water testing equipment, bladders, pumps, tap stands, jerry cans, chlorinating tablets, and various fittings. Recently ground water reservoirs were established in some PRCS health facilities in coordination with Oxfam GB, as a back up system to maintain the continuity of services and to improve water storage level. Moreover, the Medical ERU was equipped with water bladders, electrical pumps, fittings and gasoline pumps

Humanitarian Values

The fairly new International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Unit in PRCS headquarters is intended to promote awareness to IHL principles, and document IHL violations related to PRCS core functions. A number of reports on violations of the law have been presented. IHL workshops were organised internally and for representatives from the community, and lectures were presented on the subject by the PRCS.

Decades of conflict surrounding the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and over two and one half years of open conflict, has caused the number of impoverished families to increase, negatively affecting the mental health of the population. As with other groups within the Palestinian communities, children and youth have been suffering from traumatic experiences and the pressures of daily threats and restrictions. Children have been prevented from going to school and continuing their studies. Some of the children and youth have been drawn into the conflict. For many people frustration followed by violence is a part of daily life, often reflected in families where parents and/or the children sometimes behave harshly towards each other.

For several years, the PRCS, with financial support from the Federation, has operated a number of summer camps for the younger generation with the objective of providing youth and children with a positive alternative. This year winter camps were added to the programme. The purpose of the winter camps is to develop the skills and capacity of the Youth and Volunteer leaders to be able to provide valuable and highly needed alternatives to the younger generation.

PRCS branches in Bethlehem and Hebron have, in addition to running summer camps, also been working on reducing domestic violence and street violence through their mental health programmes. The two branches are also running a programme for families and family members with traumatic experiences. Various PRCS

branches and centres around the West Bank and Gaza Strip are running psychological support programme for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and to some extent for family members of the EMTs.

PRCS with support from the Danish Red Cross (DRC) has now started a psychosocial programme (CABAC) in two schools in the village of Tubas (WB). Since early April, children from the two schools have taken part in different activities, with the main objective to provide alternatives in a situation of violence and tension. This pilot programme has proven to be a great success, and the long-term plan is to expand the programme to other villages.

Health and Care

The PRCS Primary Health Care (PHC) programme has continued operating 25 Primary Health Care centres in the West Bank (20) and Gaza (5). The programme encompasses several projects supported by different donors from inside as well as outside the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. While the German Red Cross was providing financial support to the community based component from April 2000 - March 2003, and at the same time intends to continue its support starting January 2004, there was a gap in the funding to be filled. The Swedish and Norwegian Red Cross Societies provided funding during the nine months gap making it possible for the PRCS to continue the programme without interruption. The project aims at improving the health of the population through community health education and health awareness campaigns. The target groups are the elderly, children, women, disabled or otherwise needy persons. An important part of the project is promoting a sense of responsibility for public and individual health.

The logistics aspect of the programme, which has posed a huge challenge for the Society over the past two years, has become easier. Most of the time PRCS PHC team from the Society's headquarters has been able to pass checkpoints without being escorted by a Red Cross/Crescent car and an expatriate. This is due to the PRCS staff and volunteers' commitment to develop the highest possible degree of independence.

The PRCS is continuing its health care services and interventions with preventive health and community involvement as the basic principles underlying the programmes. A new and highly needed addition to the programme was included earlier this year. With funding from ECHO through the Finnish Red Cross, the Federation is supporting two mobile health teams covering ten isolated villages around Hebron city. The project initially planned for nine months, will be extended if need be and if sufficient funding is available. The project also covers the upgrading of Tarqumiya and Der Abu Mishal health centres, with the first one now providing 24 hour services including the capacity to carry out deliveries. This service is essential as the roads to Hebron city often are closed. The project relies on the assistance of a Federation health delegate, who adds important value to the project as well as the whole PHC programme of the National Society.

Activities:

Despite all types of obstacles, the PRCS has been able to continue operating its vital PHC programme from its 25 centres, with medicines and medical supplies replaced and distributed according to need. The Home Based Care as well as the Safe Motherhood programmes continued more or less according to plans. Emergency kits for the physicians in the centres have been positioned at strategic locations throughout the country. The establishment of two sub-warehouses, one in the northern part of the West Bank (Nablus) and one in the south (Hebron), has strengthened the response capacity of the PRCS.

A Medical Hotline project, drawing on 300 staff and volunteers around the territories has provided vital health services to people prevented from access to the established health care system. These volunteers are supplied with emergency physicians' kits, which are used in case of curfews isolating their local communities. The French Red Cross funded by ECHO has been the donor for this project.

The Home based care programme including providing essential equipment and supplies to carry out home care activities, is run from all the health centres, with support from the Spanish Red Cross.

Qatanya PHC centre runs a project intended to detect disabilities in children at the earliest possible stage and prevent disabled children from becoming isolated in their homes. Those who through this screening project are

identified are included in the rehabilitation programme of the PRCS. Funding for the initial start-up was obtained from Empress Shoken Fund, with the continuation being seen as an integrated part of the health services. The hope is to start similar projects in other PHC centres.

Health education is carried out on a daily basis at all the PHC centres, with material regularly being updated and printed. Health information and education is also covered in the monthly PRCS magazine Balsam.

Community Based Special Education

The Community Based Special Education project aims at empowering the families of disabled children, the communities, and the children themselves. For three years, with support from the Norwegian Red Cross, this project implemented in six localities has been part of the PRCS Rehabilitation Programme. Programme activities cover the following areas: self care, gross motor muscles, fine motor muscles, expressive language, receptive language, social interaction, and sensation.

The main objectives of the project are:

- To enhance community involvement of people with special needs.
- To enhance rehabilitation workers' and families' skills for working with disabled children.
- To change attitudes in regard to the role of disabled people in society.

Meeting these objectives is an ongoing process, which takes time. PRCS is presently in the final stage of printing a special book on the project.

Organisational Development

The planning unit has become the focal point for preparing new applications to donors, both from within and outside the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. A draft Strategy for PRCS have been prepared, which was supposed to be discussed and adopted by the Society through a number of regional meetings planned to take place during the first part of 2003. However, due to the war in Iraq and the impact on the Palestinian people, everything had to be postponed and will be implemented as soon as the situation allows.

A number of workshops were carried out involving staff and volunteers from different units/departments of PRCS headquarters. Workshops covered topics such as IHL, Youth & Volunteers, Disaster Management, and Primary Health Care. The EMS schools in the PRCS headquarters and in Gaza continued. Additionally some PRCS staff and volunteers participated in EMT and ERU courses in Norway.

The PRCS has proven to be the most efficient and effective provider of emergency services in the occupied territories, resulting in an increase in terms of expectations of the National Societies. Even though the PRCS is aware of the increasing pressure placed on the Society by such a trend it is difficult to avoid it in the current crises, where needs are everywhere and at all times. The strength of the Society due to its own experience, capacity and sincerity, but also a result of the daily support from its Red Cross/Red Crescent partners, the Federation, ICRC and PNS.

A new database of volunteers has been established and is a good tool for the Society to administer the growing and diversified group of volunteers and youth. To improve their knowledge, many PRCS volunteers have followed basic First Aid and dissemination courses.

With the shift of Federation support to the PRCS branch in Lebanon, from the Lebanon Delegation to the Palestine Delegation, a shift in policy took place, with two visits in three months to the PRCS Lebanon branch and a further visit planned for June. With the new system, the Lebanese PRCS branch, is now receiving a lot more attention from headquarters, and presently a plan is being developed to strengthen PRCS Lebanon to include a broader range of Red Cross/Red Crescent services and activities into its programmes. New staff with skills and experience in administration, management and programme coordination will be employed and PRCS headquarters will provide all material and expertise possible to the branch. However due to complications with traveling between Lebanon and Israel assistance from the Federation remains critical.

Coordination and Management

Despite difficulties with movement and logistical problems the PRCS has been able to successfully carry out its humanitarian work. The Society is developing an effective and efficient logistics system, which makes it less dependent on its partners for daily co-ordination and support. However due to the difficult situation and curfews imposed, the continued support from the Federation, ICRC and its partners will still be needed. The different components of the Movement, have demonstrated exceptionally good co-operation and co-ordination over the reporting period. While ICRC is the Lead Agency the Federation follows up with co-ordinating interventions from PNS within the framework of Strategy 2010.

The Federation representative in Palestine works in close co-operation with the PRCS. PRCS contact with potential donors and partners is encouraged and facilitated. The PRCS web site on the Internet, which annually receives millions of hits, is an important tool for facilitating contact with the Society. The capacity and proficiency of the Society as a reliable source of information and facilitator of programmes over the past years has attracted the interest of international organisations to support the PRCS.

Regional Cooperation

As part of the MENA team the Federation Representative in Palestine has attended the HoD meetings in Amman. Support to the Palestine Office from the Amman based Delegate for ECHO projects was very much appreciated and facilitated the implementation of the ECHO/FinnCross project. The articles in Al-Ittihad and on the Federation's website about PRCS activities, as well as the support from the Regional Finance Unit have also been appreciated.

For further details please contact: Evgeni Parfenov, Phone: 41 22 730 4325; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: evgeni.parfenov@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

Palestine Red Crescent Society

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 01.90/2003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

02.07.2003

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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Palestine Red Crescent Society

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 01.90/2003

PLEDGES RECEIVED

02.07.2003

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->	4'066'447	TOTAL COVERAGE 43.2%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD	50'701	
CANADIAN - GOVT	17'000 USD	23'112 05.05.03
CHINA - PRIVATE DONORS	100'000 CNY	16'419 07.04.03
ECHO/FINNISH -RC (20014)	300'000 EUR	439'050 24.03.03 PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
ICELANDIC - RC	6'244'985 ISK	112'547 14.05.03 FEDERATION REPRESENTATIVE, 2 YRS
JAPANESE - RC	41'590 USD	53'547 18.06.03 HEALTH & CARE
NEW ZEALAND - RC	3'090 NZD	2'330 30.04.03
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC	3'959'054 NOK	740'343 03.04.03 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PRIMARY HEALTH CARE
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC	1'000'000 NOK	188'750 28.05.03 CB SPECIAL EDUCATION
SWISS - PRIVATE DONOR	16'903 EUR	25'000 14.01.2003
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH	1'651'799	CHF 40.6%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
FINLAND	DELEGATE(S)			40'246		
ICELAND	DELEGATE(S)			38'603		
NORWAY	DELEGATE(S)			24'805		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				103'654	CHF	2.5%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	