

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

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGION

10 March 2003

OPERATIONAL COOPERATION WITH MAGEN DAVID ADOM (MDA)

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 180 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

IN BRIEF

Summary: The Federation established its office in Israel in December 2000. The main focus of the Federation Representative in Israel is to strengthen ties between MDA and the Movement.

In the last two years, links between MDA and the Movement have increased. In the lead up to the 2003 International Red Cross and Red Crescent Conference, MDA and the Federation wish to foster and develop operational co-operation between MDA and other National Societies. It is expected that increased operational co-operation will contribute to greater mutual understanding of MDA and the Movement. It is also expected that increased contacts between MDA and the Movement will enhance MDA's capacity to develop as a "well-functioning National Society" and to review its activities and strategic planning process.

MDA has traditionally been most active in emergency medical services, ambulance and blood services and first aid training. MDA and the Federation are working together to look at areas in which MDA could expand programme and service delivery. There is also interest in Federation tools, and experience, for strengthening National Societies' capacity and functioning in accordance with Strategy 2010.

The Federation Representative in Israel works in close co-operation with the ICRC, lead Movement agency in Israel. The ICRC – in particular through the work of its two co-operation delegates – is assisting MDA to develop its international and tracing departments, in dissemination of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the fundamental principles, and with support for its emergency medical services. The ICRC has also made funds available from its operational budget to contribute to strengthening relationships between MDA and the Movement.

Background

The decision to open the Federation's Representation office in Tel Aviv was taken in the summer of 2000 in the context of work on the Draft Third Protocol to the Geneva Conventions and recognition of the need to work more closely with Magen David Adom in Israel (MDA).

Focus of Federation activities in Israel

The Federation's activities in Israel focused in the first instance on strengthening links between MDA and the Movement through enhanced communications, increased MDA participation in Movement fora and activities, and development of greater operational co-operation with other components of the Movement. MDA and the Federation are now also working together to look at areas in which MDA could expand programme and service delivery taking into account strategic directions and priorities of Strategy 2010.

In addition, the Federation is able to assist by sharing Movement expertise and experience in strategic planning and institutional development, emergency preparedness and response, health and care, volunteerism and fund-raising; and with advice on Federation and National Society policies and practice.

External relations and communications: Support participation in working groups, committees and expert meetings of the Federation and the ICRC in areas such as first aid, blood, volunteers, tracing, legal advisers, and youth. Assist in preparations for the 28th International Conference.

Institutional communications: Liaise between MDA and Geneva on the emblem and membership issues, keeping MDA abreast of developments and discussions and sharing MDA views and expectations with Geneva. Inform MDA about Federation and National Society policies, practices and development tools.

MDA delegates and staff-on-loan: Encourage MDA professionals to attend basic training course (BTC), emergency response unit (ERU) and field assessment and coordination team (FACT) training to create a pool of personnel qualified to fill ICRC or Federation delegate positions, or for deployment in National Society operations. Inform MDA about possibilities for MDA staff to fill delegate and staff-on-loan positions.

Bilateral co-operation: Strengthen contacts between MDA and other National Societies and, where possible, develop bilateral co-operation to foster exchange of know-how, expertise, and understanding – in technical areas and in Movement strategy and principles.

Disaster preparedness and response: Work closely with MDA to develop its role in emergency/disaster response in Israel, and its capacity to participate in relief operations abroad, including through the deployment of appropriately trained and qualified MDA personnel in disaster response operations of the Federation and in ICRC operations.

Fund-raising and strategic planning: Support MDA in developing its domestic fund-raising capacity and in examining the scope for expanding MDA activities at the local, national and international level.

MDA International Department: Support MDA in its preparations for meetings, contacts and correspondence. Provide background information and resources on the Movement. Inform MDA of developments in policy and strategic direction within the Movement. Work with MDA as it develops and strengthens its relationships with other National Societies.

Dissemination of Red Cross and Red Crescent principles and humanitarian values: Assist MDA in developing dissemination activities for volunteers and staff, in close cooperation with ICRC's International Humanitarian Law activities.

Achievements and developments

Significant achievements and developments include expansion of MDA's tracing and dissemination activities, active participation in the Movement's statutory meetings in 2001 and preparation for the 2003 International Conference, co-location of the Federation Representative, the International Department and MDA staff with a role in external relations in new offices (financed by the ICRC), participation of MDA staff in BTC, ERU and FACT training courses with a view to future deployment in aid operations abroad, and increased contacts with other National Societies (including discussions on co-operation programs and arrangements).

In the medical sphere, where MDA has considerable expertise, the links between MDA and the Movement are growing. In November 2001, Dr Melloul, President, MDA, was appointed in an expert capacity, as a member of the Health and Community Services Commission. MDA is preparing to participate in overseas deployments of ERUs. For example, in 2002, 11 MDA staff attended an ERU training course run by Norwegian Red Cross for personnel from MDA, Palestine Red Crescent, Jordan Red Crescent and Egypt Red Crescent.

Outstanding needs

The role of the Federation Representative in Israel will remain important in the next few years as MDA moves closer to the Movement, develops operational ties and co-operation projects with other National Societies, and sends MDA personnel on overseas aid operations. In recognition of the importance of the position, and in response to the Federation's special request for support, the ICRC and National Societies have generously provided financial and other assistance for the Federation's office in Tel Aviv – totaling 235,500 CHF. The National Societies that have contributed to the position to date are American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and Swedish Red Cross.

MDA has also contributed to the Federation office in Israel – providing office facilities and secretarial support. In order to continue the Federation's work in Israel, financial support will be necessary to cover salary and operating costs of the Federation Representative in Israel, particularly as co-operation activities are developed and implemented. The total budget for the 2003 financial year is estimated at 210,000 CHF, of which 28% is covered to date.

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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>.

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