

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

LEBANON

30 June 2004

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

In Brief

Appeal No. 01.85/2004; Programme Update no. 1, Period covered: January-June 2004; Appeal coverage: 62.8%; ([Click here to go directly to the contributions list](#))

Appeal target: CHF 555,000 (USD 442,740 or EUR 364,175);

Related Annual Appeal: Lebanon Annual Appeal 2004. For details please go to the website at:
http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/018504.pdf

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This Programme Update reflects activities to be implemented over a one-year period. This forms part of, and is based on, longer-term, multi-year planning. All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Operational developments

The low intensity conflict along the Lebanese – Israeli border continued with intermittent exchanges of fire and air strikes on suspected Hezbollah and Palestinian training camps in Lebanon. The United Nations (UN) has warned both sides to exercise caution to avoid an escalation. The main issue remains the disputed territory of the Chebaa Farms, which Hezbollah claims is Israeli occupied Lebanese territory and vows to continue attacking Israeli positions in the area. The UN has declared that the area part of Israeli occupied Golan belongs to Syria. The Lebanese Red Cross Society (LRCS) has evacuated casualties from villages near the Chebaa Farms on three occasions.

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As a new development, Israeli fighters attacked a suspected training camp for the Palestinian group PFLP (Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine) just in the south of Beirut on 21 May. This was the first Israeli air strike in the Beirut since 1999. There were no reported casualties; only material damages.

A demonstration against rising fuel prices and high unemployment rates in the Hay el Selome suburb of Beirut left 6 dead and more than 60 wounded, when the Lebanese Army opened fire in an attempt to end the demonstration. The Lebanese Red Cross had 4 ambulances and 46 first aid workers stand by at the scene of the demonstrations and assisted the wounded. Due to the assistance, they received a lot of praise from local media, government and the local community leaders for their courage and professionalism.

Elections for local municipal councils were held over three weekends, starting from 2 May. The elections were seen as a test for the stability and development of democracy in Lebanon. There were no reports of disruptions or violence, largely accredited to the presence of more than 30,000 security forces. Hezbollah emerged as the single largest party in the Bekaa valley and South Lebanon. On the other hand, parties loyal to Prime Minister Rafik Hariri won the majority in the rest of Lebanon.

The privatisation of the mobile telephone sector, a requirement by Lebanon's largest donors, has not yet been completed jeopardizing the much needed injection of cash into the economy. In a compromise between the Prime Minister and the President it was agreed that the two mobile telephone operators would be operated by private companies under a licence by the government.

Soaring fuel prices, lack of foreign direct investments and lack of progress in the privatisation of state owned companies put further pressure on the Lebanese economy already under pressure due to a USD 34 billion foreign debt. Several strikes in the transport sector forced the government to reduce its fuel tax and other labour disputes in the public sector led to an increase in salaries not covered in the state budget. The euro-dollar exchange rate has widened the foreign trade deficit thus strengthening speculations that the inflation may pick up as pressure on the Lebanese Pound increases. The government has withheld funds owed to the Lebanese Red Cross for services provided in the last quarter of 2003, forcing the Lebanese Red Cross to reduce activities.

Health and care

Overall Goal: To provide improved community based health services by strengthening preventive health and care programmes and capacities with a focus on disease prevention and health promotion.

Programme Objective:

Objective 1: Based on an assessment of patient satisfaction, clinical outcomes and administrative & management systems of the LRCS health services in terms of quality, outreach, structure and training of staff and volunteers, LRCS reshaped its health and care programme aligning it to the development plan, the actual needs of the vulnerable segments of the population and plans and activities of the authorities and international organisations.

Expected results :

- The quality of care in clinical and user services has improved;
- The activities have been prioritised and carried out on the basis of assessed needs among the most vulnerable population;
- Improved coordination and cooperation with governmental and non-governmental health service providers has been achieved in line with LRCS's goals.

Achievements:

The actual health assessment will start in July. A thorough tender process led to three proposals being submitted to the Federation/LRCS. The proposals were reviewed and analysed by the Federation Representative in Lebanon, the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) Regional Health delegate in Amman and the LRCS. The Regional Health delegate held phone interviews with the three companies before the final conclusions were drawn. The preferred proposal was unanimously supported by the involved staff.

Impact:

- As the assessment is yet to be completed, the impact will not be measurable until the end of 2004.

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Constraints:

- The selection of a suitable assessment solution was time consuming.

Objective 2:

Primary health care and social services throughout the country are consolidated and expanded with a shift in emphasis from curative intervention to community based health education and prevention involving increased number of youth volunteers into health and social services.

Expected results:

- New community based preventive health initiatives have been launched in the health centres;
- An HIV/AIDS coordination group has been established at national level;
- HIV/AIDS trainers were educated for raising awareness in the communities;
- Integrated awareness campaigns for sexually transmitted diseases (STD), HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases have been organized;
- Successful mobilisation, training and retention of volunteers to support health awareness programmes have been addressed.

Achievements

The community based health initiatives will be launched in the health centres as soon as the health assessment is completed. The activities are expected to be launched in September or October. The only new public health initiative to be implemented is a women's clinic in Beirut aimed at screening women with a low income for osteoporosis and breast cancer. These services are neither part of the national health system, nor covered by insurances.

An HIV/AIDS coordination group is yet to be formed, although the teaching department has taken the lead in coordinating the LRCS activities with the NAP (National AIDS Programme) of the Ministry of Health in Lebanon. A workshop for 35 nurses from the Lebanese Red Cross, with invited participants from the Palestinian Red Crescent, was held between 11 – 14 March in counselling techniques for HIV/AIDS victims, their families as well as general prevention work through dissemination. The workshop was prepared in collaboration with the NAP/Ministry of Health. Main topics addressed during the training were:

- Psychological support
- Reintegration of HIV/AIDS positive patients into society
- Access to medical treatment in Lebanon
- Social assistance and rights for families
- Dissemination

It was suggested that the Lebanese Red Cross and the NAP assess the feasibility of opening a national HIV/AIDS hot line open 24 hours for people with questions or counselling needs on HIV/AIDS. The youth volunteers continued their STD and HIV/AIDS peer education programme throughout Lebanon, with new activities planned on road safety.

Impact

- Access to screening of osteoporosis and breast cancer for women with low income in Beirut, with capacity for up to 2,000 patients a year.
- Improvement in life quality for 800 HIV/AIDS patients and their families through access to counselling and anti-stigma activities.
- Continued close cooperation between the Lebanese Red Cross and the government's National AIDS Programme (NAP).
- The extensive training on STD and HIV/AIDS among high school and university students throughout Lebanon.
- The number of STD and HIV/AIDS infected people remains stable, while an increase is recorded in neighbouring Syria.

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Constraints

- Delay in government funds will negatively impact services provided.
- Lack of LRCS coordinating mechanisms for HIV/AIDS response, still a departmental prerogative.
- Heavy dependency on government funds.

Disaster management

Overall Goal: The LRCS is capable of providing effective disaster response and preparedness through a functional internal and external cooperation and well established coordination mechanisms.

Programme Objective: Disaster management is reinforced through effective disaster response, preparedness and mitigation aimed at preventing and alleviating the suffering of vulnerable communities.

Expected results :

- A thorough review of the current ambulance services has been launched resulting in improved management practices and effectiveness – eventually phasing out Federation support;
- The number of trained first aid volunteers gradually increased through continued recruitment and training in 2004;
- New ambulances have been procured with Federation support as part of ongoing fleet upgrade. The Federation funds will have a 30 percent match by the selected branches;
- A disaster management unit has been established by mid 2004;
- Upgraded logistical services and systems have been introduced;
- A National Intervention Team has been established, its members trained and coordinated by the disaster management unit with activation mechanisms in place allowing the team to respond quickly;
- The scope and need for a Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment has been defined by mid 2004 and, pending agreement with the governance, the VCA has been launched by the end of 2004;
- An Emergency Plan setting out areas requiring Federation assistance has been completed.

Achievements:

A review of the ambulance services is planned for the second half of 2004. A Terms of Reference (ToR) is being drafted and discussed with the Lebanese Red Cross. A fund established by former Norwegian UN peace keepers posted in South Lebanon from 1978 to 1998 has established a link with the Lebanese Red Cross with the aim to donate 30 ambulances decommissioned by the Norwegian Army for use in South Lebanon.

A total of 2441 people passed the Lebanese Red Cross First Aid course from January to May, with an additional 3420 Army recruits taking the same training. This is slightly less than last year, but it is predicted that the target of a 10% increase from 2003 to 2004 will be exceeded. The number of First Aid volunteers remains stable and is not likely to increase, as lack of government funds affect the operations.

The Federation handed over three new ambulances at the beginning of the year. The ambulances went into service in Beirut, Tripoli and Rachaya (West Bekaa valley). The local committees (i.e. branches) contributed to 30% of the total costs.

The Lebanese Red Cross has chosen not to establish a separate Disaster Management unit, but rather work through a committee led by the director of First Aid/Ambulance services with staff from all the departments participating. Preparatory training for a National Intervention Team was held between 6-9 March with 56 participants representing all local committees and departments of the Lebanese Red Cross. A preparation for the coming Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) has begun following the training and will start just after the summer.

Impact:

- More than 70,000 missions by the First Aid/Ambulance services, an increase compared with the same period in 2003.
- On target increase in the number of trained people on First Aid.
- VCA preparations underway.

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Constraints:

- Delay in government funds will negatively impact services provided.
- Ageing ambulance park, with few options for ambulance renewal outside Federation assistance.
- There has had to be a change in the purchase of ambulances from VWs to Mercedes because of the Euro exchange rate and the new Mercedes are more costly to maintain.

Organisational development

Overall Goal: To support structural and operational changes to the LRCS which will form a platform for improved effectiveness of its governance resulting ultimately in improved service delivery and advocacy capacity.

Programme Objective: The LRCS's service delivery is increased and improved through a strengthening of its foundation and capacity.

Expected results :

- The LRCS has been providing quality services based on a comprehensive development plan encompassing short, medium and long term priorities;
- The national society's institutional performance has considerably improved with its statutes amended to ensure adequate participation of the constituencies;
- A well functioning governance has been revitalized through an election process that attracts qualified and committed members of the leadership at the headquarters and in the branches;
- The quality of human resources has improved based on effective recruitment procedures, training and development schemes for volunteers and staff;
- The local branches with decentralised management responsibilities in their respective communities have better capacity to provide services;
- A strategic work plan has been launched following a broad consultation process which was the basis of a development and resource mobilisation strategy.

Achievements:

A development plan has yet to be formulated and agreed, awaiting the outcome of the ongoing election process. Discussions are continuously held between the LRCS (both governance and management) and the Federation Representative. There is now an agreement on the process forward, with a presentation being made to the executive committee planned for late July.

The statutes have been amended to incorporate the youth and First Aid volunteers with 6 and 8 representatives elected respectively to participate in the General Assembly. The approval of the suggested amendments will be presented to a General Assembly scheduled for September. All local committees have completed the election of representatives to the General Assembly. A second General Assembly will be held at the end of the year with the youth and First Aid volunteers being represented. New elections to the Central Committee will then be held, which in turn will appoint the new executive committee and President.

Volunteer recruitment has been slow over the past months, prompting a new recruitment drive with new courses being added for interested volunteers. A volunteer leader in the LRCS has just started a study, as part of her university thesis, on volunteering in the Lebanese Red Cross. Issues being studied are recruitment, training, retention and management of volunteers. The methodology is both quantitative and qualitative with the Federation Representative supporting her efforts.

Impact:

- Agreement on process to formulate a development plan.
- Election process initiated with clear agreement on representation for all constituencies.
- Proposed amendments to the statutes received endorsements from executive committee.
- Potential for new governance members revitalizing the society and opening up for much needed reforms.
- Study on volunteerism will give impetus to formulate a concrete strategy for improved recruitment, training, retention and management of volunteers in the Lebanese Red Cross.

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Constraints:

- Slow election process, due to reluctance in the local committees.
- Difficulties getting agreement on development plan, due to uncertainty over economic situation.
- No centralised planning function in the Lebanese Red Cross.
- Severe funding shortage from government contracts, with less funding for administration overhead costs.
- No resource development plan or centralised function responsible for fundraising.

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