

Annual report

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Belarus

MAABY002

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This report covers the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009.



In 2009, the Belarus Red Cross launched the innovative project *HIV prevention at workplace*, targeting managers and staffs of the country's biggest plant BELAZ and other factories. Photo: Belarus Red Cross.

In brief

Programme purpose: The Federation supported programmes in Belarus aim to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters; to reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies; to increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability; and to promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Programme(s) summary: The Belarus Red Cross innovative project *HIV prevention at workplace* was launched at the end of 2009 with financial support from GTZ¹. The project targets 130,000 workers of the country's biggest plants. Starting from October, the Belarus Red Cross is actively involved in human pandemic preparedness activities throughout the country. The country representation assisted the Belarus Red Cross in the production of a number of documents regarding community-based preparedness (communication campaign '*Your Best Defence is You*', HIV and AIDS workplace policies).

Organizational development and capacity building issues were mainly addressed through volunteer and branch development projects, providing Red Cross staff and volunteers with the opportunity to be properly equipped with the necessary tools and skills, which allow them to perform better in the implementation of their activities. On 3-5 December the Belarus Red Cross held a youth volunteer forum organized with Danish Red Cross and IFRC support. More than 70 delegates arrived in Minsk to take part in the forum, to share experiences and best practices, and to discuss challenges in the development of volunteer movement and ways to overcome them.

Financial situation: The initial budget of CHF 961,174 for 2009 was revised to CHF 1,301,079 (USD 1,236,205 or EUR 895,788) due to an increase in the budget for the health and care and

¹ German international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development

organizational development programmes. Out of the total budget, 82 per cent is covered. Expenditure overall was 66 per cent of received funding.

[Click here to go directly to the financial report.](#)

No. of people we help: More than 97,700 people and 10,000 disadvantaged families in Belarus benefited directly from the Federation secretariat supported programme interventions. More than 2,000,000 people were reached indirectly through mass information campaigns.

Our partners: The Belarus Red Cross cooperates with partner National Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), UN agencies operating in the region, GTZ, Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GBC), different NGOs, the national centre for blood donation, National AIDS Centre, Phthysiology and Pulmonology Research Institute, various ministries and governmental organizations at federal and local levels, universities and other educational institutions, mass media, as well as international and local enterprises.

Context

Belarus was ranked 68th in the annual UN Human Development Report 2009 published in October 2009. Despite the high UN ranking, the financial crunch persisting in the world economy generated detrimental economic conditions for the development of Belarus, and pressures continued to build up on the dynamics and major indicators of the country's socio-economic performance. Factories in Belarus worked part time in 2009 and up to 200,000 workers have been put on unpaid leave or are working part time. Salaries have dropped by 25 to 50 per cent. A minimal wage in Belarus is 57 euros, three times less than in Romania, the poorest country of the European Union. Belarus had the second highest rise in consumer prices among the post-Soviet countries in the first 11 months of 2009².

As in other Eastern European countries, trafficking in persons, especially women, to Russia, the Middle East, and EU countries is another major challenge for Belarus. The government of Belarus has demonstrated its commitment and made visible efforts to counteract irregular migration, trafficking in human beings and related crime. IOM however observes that the country's capacity to respond to existing migration challenges is limited and additional efforts and support to deal with these issues is needed. In this context, efforts to cultivate non-tolerance of the society towards exploitation, violence, and forced labour at the national level and by NGOs play an important role.

Inflation, devaluation of the local currency and the reduction of social benefits has had a negative impact on the most vulnerable groups of the population such as older people living alone, people with disabilities, single-parent and multi-child families, orphans, unemployed people, ex-prisoners and people with low income. These groups of people suffer from poverty and a lack of adequate health and social care; some depend entirely on humanitarian aid. The Red Cross is receiving an increasing number of requests for used clothes, money and food support, for the first time in several years.

Progress towards outcomes

Health and Care

Outcomes:

- Vulnerability to HIV and its impact reduced through preventing further infection and reducing stigma and discrimination.

² Source: BelaPAN survey of the countries' official data.

- The capacity of communities and households to prevent and cope with individual and small-scale emergencies (e.g. household and road accidents) has increased.
- The capacity of communities and households to prevent and cope with avian and human influenza pandemic has increased.

Achievements: Being a member of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Global Alliance on HIV and TB, the Belarus Red Cross is scaling up both its activities and capacities to better tackle HIV. The HIV programme coordinator has been consolidating all information on HIV activities within the Belarus Red Cross, taking advice and assistance on methodology from the Global Alliance approach.

Under the *Youth against HIV* project the Belarus Red Cross has involved 27,677 people in its 569 HIV prevention activities of peer education and film-group sessions, youth actions and seminars (lectures, meetings with studying and working youth, parents, teachers and other educational specialists). Some 3,063 young people have received information they can trust through peer education sessions. The total number of volunteers actively working in the project at the moment is 430 with 68 people newly involved in the project in 2009; and 185 are active peer educators. In total 92 educational institutions and 9 enterprises were reached by the project.

Major activities to introduce the six-week peer-to-peer model were carried out at the beginning of 2009. However, the implementation of the model entered into a new phase in September-October 2009. Vitebsk, Baranovichi, Mogilev and Minsk are at the front line of the process. 28 educational institutions and one military unit in these cities hosted the full cycle of events envisaged by the model. Eight best HIV prevention voluntary initiatives selected on a competitive basis for granting were successfully implemented. The *Youth against HIV* activities are traditionally supported by the Danish Red Cross.

Within the *Youth Leadership School* for the Belarus Red Cross, volunteers hosted a master class *“Best Practices in Promoting Positive Attitude towards People Living with HIV (PLHIV)”*. The class was facilitated by activists of national public association Belarusian Community of PLHIV. Facilitators living with HIV worked with their status disclosed. Information about stigma, discrimination, tolerance and living with HIV was supplemented with real life stories and documentaries about PLHIV in Belarus.

On 23-29 September the Belarus Red Cross delegation participated in the 13th meeting of the European Red Cross Red Crescent Network on HIV/AIDS (ERNA) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, *“Inclusion, Communication and Respect”* and on 29 October in the III International Conference on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. At this conference, the Belarus Red Cross presented the master class *“Best Belarus Red Cross practices in HIV prevention among youth and forming tolerant attitude towards PLHIV”* and the art-project *“A City Where People Live”*. The art-project *“A City Where People Live”* (presented jointly with the Belarusian community of PLHIV) took the second place at the Projects Fair competition.

In December, the Belarus Red Cross held a round-table meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Health, enterprises management, Global Business Coalition (GBC, a Moscow-based NGO), GTZ, community of PLHIV and IFRC to officially introduce the project *HIV prevention at workplace* to the public. The biggest national enterprises are partners in the project – Belarusian Auto Works (BELAZ), Belarus Steel Works and Belarus Railways. The Belarus Red Cross plans to engage about 130,000 workers in its HIV preventive activities and healthy lifestyle promotion. The campaign started with trainings of trainers from the participating enterprises. GBC participated in the project development, adaptation and training of trainers. People living with HIV have been involved in the project from the very beginning. They will play an important role in overcoming stigma, misunderstanding and discrimination associated with the infection. In 2009 HIV prevention and anti-discrimination activities targeted directly 9,284 workers and indirectly 27,813 family members.

With funds from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria the Belarus Red Cross runs harm reduction, HIV and AIDS palliative care activities, TB information campaign and work with vulnerable groups. In 2009 through 27 syringe exchange centres and a team of outreach workers the Belarus Red Cross provided a range of services to 2,134 regular clients (injecting drug users). In total 135 female sex workers received consultations, information and means of protection, and 88 PLHIV benefited from palliative home-based care. The TB awareness-raising campaign reached an estimated number of 2,000,000 people, including 197,500 people provided with information materials. Some 2,500 people had X-ray examination during public events and 19 TB cases were detected. The target group also included 1,000 homeless people who were supplied with food and hygiene parcels as incentives for X-ray examination.

The Belarus Red Cross is also developing its capacity to provide quality first-aid messages to the public at large. In November with support from the French Red Cross and the European Reference Centre for First Aid Education, the Belarus Red Cross conducted three first-aid refreshment trainings for 42 first-aid instructors.³

Human pandemic preparedness activities were initially planned to reach 64 communities in 8 districts of Belarus. However, due to the wide spread of the H1N1 virus it was decided to expand the geography of the project as much as possible and to include all regions of the country into the programme.

In 2009, project activities included adaptation and translation of IFRC/WHO materials on influenza prevention and response and conduction of training of trainers, trainings for volunteers (45 trainers and 540 volunteers were trained), and dissemination of information and educational materials (150,000 *Your Best Defense is You* posters and 1,000 copies of instructor guidelines were adopted and disseminated to the trained volunteers). Starting in January 2010 these volunteers organize information sessions for local communities and disseminate the information materials in 56 districts of Belarus.

Disaster Management

Outcomes:

- Improved ability to predict and plan for disasters to mitigate their impact on vulnerable communities, and to respond to and effectively cope with their consequences.
- Improved capacity of the Belarus Red Cross in skilled human resources, and financial and material capacity for effective disaster management.
- Improved disaster response assistance to meet the needs of people affected by disasters and socio-economic transition.

Achievements: With financial support from the Swiss Red Cross, 9,635 food parcels were distributed to 3,590 individuals, including older people living alone and people with disabilities, homeless people, people with low incomes, people released from prisons and 1,793 disadvantaged multi-child families in all regions of Belarus. In addition, the Belarus Red Cross procured locally 1,373 food parcels with the virtual money collected by the Swiss Red Cross and transmitted to the Belarus Red Cross account. The tender and distribution procedures were organized alongside the project *Humanitarian Assistance to the Vulnerable* carried out through the IFRC. These food parcels were distributed additionally in 10 districts of Minsk for about 900 people.

Further within the *Twice Christmas* operation the Swiss Red Cross bilaterally donated five truckloads of food, hygiene items, toys, second-hand clothes and shoes. The number of

³ Basic first-aid course and first-aid manual for instructors were revised to correspond to the EFAC (European First Aid Certificate) quality requirements of the European Red Cross Societies.

beneficiaries for the *Twice Christmas* operation in Minsk City and the regions of Mogilev, Vitebsk, Grodno and Gomel totaled 2,135 individuals and 7,437 families.⁴ In addition, seven trucks of second-hand clothes and shoes were received from the Swedish Red Cross and distributed in Minsk City and all regions of Belarus. 8,221 multi-child and low income families and 4,908 individuals⁵ throughout the country received this humanitarian assistance.

Although no funds were received for the first and second outcome, certain progress has been made towards improving the National Society's capacity for effective disaster management through cooperation between the Vitebsk branch of the Belarus Red Cross and the Visaginas branch of the Lithuanian Red Cross. The Vitebsk volunteer team of 12 persons learnt some first-aid and psychological support skills, as well as a methodology for tracing people who get lost in the forest from their Lithuanian colleagues. By the end of 2009 the Belarus Red Cross had supplied the team with the necessary equipment, uniforms and first-aid kits. The emergency response team is thus ready for action. The initiative received support from the Vitebsk regional department of the Ministry of Emergencies.

Organisational Development

Outcomes:

- Revised statutes in compliance with the Federation guidelines.
- Continuous training of National Society governance and management at all levels.
- Effective and transparent human resource management.
- Proper and effective financial procedures and guidelines.
- Proper and effective accounting and reporting systems.
- Well-functioning internal communication and effective external communication.
- Development of a nation-wide service run by volunteers organized by branches/ units at grass-roots level.
- Support of branches/ units at grass-roots level with a suitable volunteer policy and simple volunteer management procedures.

Achievements: A grant from the Norwegian Red Cross supported the activities under the project *Strengthened role for the Belarus Red Cross in civil society*. The main focus was on involving citizens in voluntary service delivery and support to social inclusion and empowerment approaches towards older people. The project was implemented in Mogilev and Gomel region and the Railway Red Cross branch, with its capacity-building elements benefiting the National Society as a whole. This was in addition to the youth volunteer activities run in Vitebsk region, supported by the Capacity Building Fund (CBF), and in Grodno, Brest and Mogilev regions, funded bilaterally by the Danish Red Cross.

A total of 25 volunteer initiatives were selected for funding through a small-grant competition supported by the project *Strengthened role for the Belarus Red Cross in civil society*. In total 673 young and older volunteers were involved in regular voluntary service (implementation of community-based initiatives) in 18 local communities supported by Mogilev and Gomel regional and Railway organizations. Around 3,470 people benefited directly from the volunteers' activities. About 67.4 per cent of the budgets of these community-based initiatives are the Belarus Red Cross' own funds or locally attracted resources.

The *Volunteer promotion and development* project (supported by CBF grant) reached directly 1,926 beneficiaries of micro-projects and 2,370 beneficiaries of youth actions. In addition, 7,000 people were informed about Red Cross activities, 155 volunteers were involved in the

⁴ Every multi-child family consists of minimum three kids and two parents.

⁵ The data do not include figures for Vitebsk region where the shipment of clothes arrived in December and will be distributed in the beginning of 2010.

implementation of 10 initiatives and 650 volunteers participated in the implementation of 12 actions during the year.

19 volunteers and Belarus Red Cross staff improved their knowledge and skills in identifying social problems in their communities, developing project documents, implementing, evaluating and reporting on their micro-projects and are committed to developing more initiatives in their communities. Local resources mobilized for the initiatives equalled 73 per cent of the total budget of community-based micro-projects, local resources mobilized during volunteer actions totaled 4,710 Swiss francs.

Regional volunteer councils are established and function in Vitebsk, Mogilev, Gomel, Minsk oblast and Minsk City. Sharing of experiences is ensured throughout the whole country, not only in pilot regions. It is done at every level, both for volunteers and staff. Moreover, the Belarus Red Cross provides opportunities for international experience exchange.

A summer camp *Youth Leadership School* for young volunteers was held in July. Volunteers from the Norwegian, Danish, and Ukrainian Red Cross Societies and the Turkmenistan Red Crescent participated in camp activities, as well as 48 volunteers from all regions of Belarus. They gained knowledge on humanitarian law, leadership, project planning, volunteer management and policy, methods of working with people living with HIV, victims of human trafficking and refugees; and participated in the role play *On the Run* promoting tolerance, respect and diversity based on real challenges which refugees may face in a foreign country. A national training on role play *On the Run* was held in Minsk in November 2009. The participation of 16 volunteers will enable the Belarus Red Cross to organize and implement this role play in 2010.

The Belarus Red Cross actively participated in the IFRC's global "*Our World. Your Move*" campaign. T-shirts and flyers with the campaign logo were distributed to the stakeholders and volunteers in the regions.

A total of 82 staff and 409 volunteers are equipped with new skills and newly developed training materials. In 2009 the Belarus Red Cross received support for the development and production of printed materials for older people, such as manual on advocacy and practical recommendations, first-aid manual for first-aid instructors, manual for chairpersons of district Red Cross branches and others. The developed materials are also disseminated among district Belarus Red Cross organizations, volunteer and self-support groups. In addition to trainings, 23 staff and 230 volunteers acquired knowledge and skills through participation in forums and summer camp activities.

In April, the Belarus Red Cross established a working group to develop a human resource policy, regulations on the remuneration of labour and a system of evaluation and motivation for staff and volunteers. The group developed draft regulations on bonuses and encouragement for the staff based on participatory approach. Belarus Red Cross headquarters staff discussed the proposed draft during a one-day workshop organized in the frame of the project *Strengthening Belarus Red Cross Visiting Nurses Service*, supported by the Consortium of German and Swiss Red Cross Societies. The workshop resulted in the elaboration of a further work plan for the development of the Belarus Red Cross internal regulations on the stimulation system for Belarus Red Cross staff.

At the end of 2009, the Belarus Red Cross, one of the first among the former soviet states, developed and adopted a new policy on human resources. This significant step forward in their organizational development can become a case study for many National Societies.

In terms of improving the legal base of the Belarus Red Cross, the revised statutes were adopted during the congress in April and officially registered by the Ministry of Justice.

Support was also provided to the Belarus Red Cross through sharing existing laws on volunteering and sponsorship in order to back up the secretary general's efforts to lobby for improvements in the legal environment of Belarus, as well as advice was given in drafting a new Red Cross law.

Principles and Values

Outcomes:

- Enhanced knowledge, understanding and application of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values (including non-discrimination, non-violence, tolerance and respect for diversity) within the National Society and the society in general.
- The target population is sensitized to humanitarian values and changing behaviour.
- Vulnerable communities are empowered with enhanced ability to combat discrimination, intolerance and violence.

Achievements: Due to the lack of funding no programmes were implemented to achieve outcomes one and two. Nevertheless, components of the dissemination of humanitarian values and reduction of stigma and discrimination were incorporated into other programme activities such as volunteer actions.

With the support of the Danish Red Cross and IOM, the Belarus Red Cross continued its efforts to run prevention activities, to provide reintegration assistance to the victims of trafficking and to take an active part in the anti-trafficking network with other European National Societies. However due to funding constraints, the activities were scaled down compared to previous years. At present, the Belarus Red Cross runs five consultation centres "Hands of Help" and two branches of the centres (Novopolotsk, Mozyr), offering psychological support to victims of trafficking and providing information to prevent trafficking. By mobilizing its own resources and building new partnerships, the Belarus Red Cross strives to sustain the efficient work of the centres "Hands of Help". In August 2009 within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers' programme Brest and Grodno regions joined a cross-border knowledge and capacity-building project *Network against trafficking in human beings* aiming at addressing the challenges of trafficking by establishing a knowledge-building network between the Polish, Danish and Belarus Red Cross Societies, by strengthening and expanding the means of assistance to victims of trafficking, and by prevention activities among youth who are at risk of being trafficked. An example of an impressive development of prevention activities of Red Cross youth in 2009 was the forum theatre on trafficking among youth which is now spreading through the region of Brest, and which will be disseminated to Red Cross groups all over Belarus and Poland.

One of the Red Cross priorities in Belarus is to support older people, to involve them in social activities and to provide information about their legal rights and social allowances granted by the state. Having received an impetus from the Norwegian Red Cross grant, 31 self-support groups comprising more than 630 older people function based on social inclusion and empowerment approaches. The self-support groups are running community-based initiatives, which have components of active social life, experience exchange with younger generation, advocating for rights and raising legal awareness.

Working in partnership

To achieve better results and generate high quality programmes, the Belarus Red Cross is cooperating with key stakeholders in the field of health and care, disaster management, organizational development and humanitarian values. Traditional partners are the ministries of health, social welfare, emergency, justice, internal affairs and education.

The main international partners within the Movement are ICRC's Moscow delegation, the Danish, Swiss, Austrian, German, Norwegian, Swedish, French and Italian Red Cross Societies, as well as the Consortium of German and Swiss Red Cross Societies.

The partnership meeting held in Kiev in September 2009 aimed to encourage and initiate new or stronger partnerships and cross-border cooperation between National Societies in the region and to enable increased funding possibilities for Red Cross programmes in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine as well as for their neighbouring National Societies. The meeting welcomed representatives of the Minsk-based Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the regional European Union and USAID delegations. This meeting was the first of its kind, and expectations were high. The National Societies of Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Romania participated as societies from experienced EU member states. It showed their level of engagement and experience and willingness to learn and impart the knowledge of their contexts, and most importantly their transitions and their evolving relations with their governments.

The long-term impact of this meeting will be seen over time, but some immediate initiatives include financial support from the Japanese and Austrian Red Cross Societies; more dialogue with the CIS secretariat in Minsk; enhanced donor intelligence (USAID) from American Red Cross; and preparations for a cross-border application to EU call for Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus. As a follow-up to the partnership meeting, the Belarus Red Cross had an opportunity to share views and experiences during a meeting hosted by Latvian Red Cross with the participation of colleagues from the Lithuanian, Estonian and Norwegian Red Cross Societies within a peer support project, initiated by Europe zone office.

An agreement has been concluded with the Lithuanian Red Cross on cooperation and joint activities in youth and volunteer development, disaster preparedness and response. A cooperation agreement has been signed between the Belarus and French Red Cross Societies concerning *A first step to a sustainable first-aid training system: to update Belarus Red Cross first-aid standard and to improve its training capacity*. A cooperation agreement has also been concluded with the Italian Red Cross in the field of harm reduction for drug users and with the Ukrainian Red Cross in the field of core activities.

With the support of the Austrian and Slovak Red Cross Societies community care support has been provided to families with children with disabilities in Grodno region. A mobile Red Cross team consisting of a physician-consultant, a medical nurse, a psychologist, a social worker and Red Cross volunteers started working in Grodno city in January 2009 attending 57 families, which have children with special needs at their homes. In July, a Red Cross day centre was opened where children with disabilities and their parents, with support of Red Cross workers, implement their own social and integration initiatives as well as get professional counseling and support.

The Belarusian Community of PLHIV announced the Belarus Red Cross a friendly organization in view of the fact that the Belarus Red Cross gives PLHIV an opportunity to influence and participate in HIV prevention. Moreover, at the conference to mark the 10th anniversary of the biggest HIV-service organization in Belarus "*Positive Movement*", the Belarus Red Cross secretary general was awarded a letter of gratitude for developing partnership and cooperation. The Belarus Red Cross is also a regular participant of working meetings of "Anti-AIDS" and Y-PEER networks of organizations (a network of youth organizations in Belarus working for HIV prevention according to the peer-to-peer principle).

Local authorities played an essential role in the development of volunteer service delivery (providing administrative support, expertise and access to resources) and in the establishment of new mechanisms for interaction and collaboration between local authorities and civil society organizations. At a lower administrative and geographical level, Belarus Red Cross local branches worked closely with local administrations and educational and social welfare authorities, to ensure access to the target groups and final beneficiaries, as well as to increase

the sustainability of the community-based initiatives and to ensure exchange of information about best practices between local stakeholders.

Contributing to longer-term impact

All the projects implemented by the Belarus Red Cross have been aligned with the IFRC's Global Agenda. The National Society follows the approach of gender equity and ensures equal participation of women and men through appropriate information and publicity materials in the design of key project activities and access to the opportunities it offers. An appropriate male/female balance is also sought in the project management structure and the activities themselves.

Competence-building has been a key element of all programmes, carried out by the Belarus Red Cross as it encouraged the development of knowledge, skills and experience throughout all programme objectives. The activities have built Belarus Red Cross competences and capacities both at the national and local levels, enabling the National Society to provide young and older people with opportunities to undertake social initiatives in assisting vulnerable people and advocating for their rights and needs in the local communities.

Looking ahead

It is anticipated that in 2010 Belarus Red Cross volunteers in Vitebsk region targeted by the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) grant will do more independent work and that more activities will be financed only by locally raised money. Moreover, new community-based initiatives/ micro-projects will be financed from own funds of Vitebsk oblast organization. This will contribute to project sustainability and further continuation of the activities after the end of CBF support in December 2011.

Further support for volunteer development activities is also being sought from the Norwegian Red Cross with the aim of securing the longer-term impact achieved so far through the project *Strengthened role for the Belarus Red Cross in civil society*.

A terms of reference has been signed between the Icelandic and Belarus Red Cross Societies for the shipment of 2,000 baby parcels, 600 blankets and 95 pairs of shoes. Distributions will be followed in February 2010 by the Icelandic Red Cross representative and film-maker.

The IFRC has applied for funding to provide home-based, direct observation of treatment for 70 most vulnerable MDR-TB patients. If the application is successful, the project will start in October 2010.

How we work	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. • Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. • Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. • Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this report, please contact:

- **In the Belarus Red Cross Society:** Viktor Kolbanov, Secretary General, Minsk; email: belarus.redcross@tut.by ; phone/fax: +375 (0) 17 227 14 17
- **In the Federation Representation for Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine :** Joe Lowry, Representative for Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine; Minsk; email: joe.lowry@ifrc.org; phone: +375 172 23 63 61; fax +375 172 23 90 60
- **In the Regional Representation for Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine:** Jaap Timer, Regional Representative, Moscow; email: jaap.timer@ifrc.org; hone +7 495 937 52 67; fax + 7 495 937 52 63