

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

BANGLADESH

9 December 2002

Eid-ul-Fitr bomb blasts

Information Bulletin N° 1

This Information Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

On the evening of 7 December, four bomb explosions went off within 30 minutes of each other in four cinemas in Mymensingh town, 110 km north of capital Dhaka. According to the local authorities, at least 17 people, including two women, were killed and 200 others injured. Some bodies were so mutilated it was difficult to identify them. More than 15 of the victims are still in critical condition, hurt by falling bricks and steel. According to the local health sources in Mymensingh, the death toll is expected to rise.

The cinemas were packed with about 2,000 people who had gone to see Bengali films following the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays. Immediately after the explosions, local people shut their shops and joined rescue operations with the fire brigade and army personnel. The injured were transported to the local hospital for emergency treatment. Local residents are still traumatised and cannot believe such an incident could take place in their town.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

As the news of the tragedy reached the Bangladesh Red Crescent (BDRCS) national headquarters in Dhaka, the BDRCS blood bank service went into immediate action. Two ambulances were despatched immediately to the scene. Local health authorities put out an emergency request for blood supplies. Fifty units of blood were immediately despatched from the BDRCS Dhaka blood bank. The BDRCS blood collection team was also sent to the scene in case of a need for additional blood supplies.

The BDRCS run five national blood banks in Bangladesh. These are supported by the Italian Red Cross. Only a few weeks ago a new Memorandum of Understanding for continuous support in 2003, was signed between the Italian Red Cross, BDRCS and the Federation. The BDRCS blood banks are the only public blood banks in Bangladesh providing safe blood.

On 8 December, the BDRCS Chairman and Red Crescent Youth (RCY) and volunteers visited injured victims of the blasts in the Mymensingh hospital. The Chairman conducted several interviews on national radio and TV.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

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