

# 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

## KOSOVO: CIVIL VIOLENCE

19 March 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.

### In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. CHF 120,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are appreciated. As the situation evolves, further information will be provided on a regular basis.

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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>

### The Situation

Ethnic tension in Kosovo suddenly escalated into violence on 17 March, 2004, resulting in protests in Mitrovica which turned into violent demonstrations, affecting several cities in Kosovo with Serbian populations or Serbian enclaves. The violence resulted in over thirty (30) dead, hundreds of wounded, and several thousand people displaced. Dozens of UN police and KFOR troops (NATO peacekeeping force) were also injured during the incidents. In Belgrade, Nis, Novi Sad and other cities, violent protests took place, two mosques and a community centre were burnt down, and widespread destruction of vehicles and property took place.

Many houses, orthodox churches and UN vehicles were burned and destroyed in Kosovo. KFOR in Pristina and the police in Belgrade and other cities in Serbia have largely taken the situation under control; however, the tension in Mitrovica, Pristina, and several other towns remains extremely high, and burning and destruction were part of continued protests. A curfew was imposed in two major cities of Kosovo. Kosovo has been administrated since 1999 by the United Nations. Since then, Mitrovica remains divided into an Albanian part (south) and a Serbian part (north).



## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

CHF 120,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the delivery of immediate assistance. A number of partner national societies are also operational, and are ready to provide assistance as needed. The Red Cross of Kosova (RCK) assisted persons wounded during the demonstrations through First Aid personnel and volunteers in the south of Mitrovica. The RCK branch in Mitrovica transported wounded persons from the conflict site to the local clinic. Branch personnel and volunteers were present at the clinic. First Aid volunteers are also available in Pristina hospital in case the situation escalates. In addition, the RCK, in co-operation with the centre for blood transfusion at Pristina hospital, took the lead in blood donation activities. Hundreds of people donated blood the same day.

The Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija (RCKM) also assisted wounded people through its mobile clinic and First Aid teams. First aid was immediately provided, and the injured were then transported to the hospital in the north of the city. RCKM branches are also sheltering several hundred people displaced from elsewhere in Kosovo. From Belgrade, the Red Cross of Serbia (RCS) and the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society (SMRCS) have actively responded to the possibility of large-scale population movements out of Kosovo. This has not yet occurred, though several dozen people have fled Kosovo and been received and assisted by RCS branches, which have been put on 24-hour alert in the border area. RCS soup kitchens stand ready to feed several thousand IDPs if need be, and branches are ready to establish three tented camps to house up to 600 people. First Aid and Disaster Response teams have been mobilized, several truck loads of emergency supplies have already been despatched from the central Red Cross warehouses to the border branches, and assistance is being channelled to those displaced by the violence. Food parcels and other assistance are being made available for any who may leave Kosovo.

The ICRC and the Federation are assessing the situation to define support to both Red Cross entities in Kosovo (the Red Cross of Kosova or RCK, and the Red Cross of Kosovo and Metohija or RCKM), as well as to the Red Cross of Serbia and the Serbia and Montenegro Red Cross Society. The RCS has requested emergency assistance with food and non-food items. A needs assessment will take place, and initial assistance is being provided by the ICRC and the Federation to respond to the immediate needs of the affected population.

Further information will be provided on a regular basis as the situation evolves.

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