

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

25 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. 02/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. While CHF 120,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), only a portion of this will be needed and the remainder returned. Unearmarked funds are needed to repay the portion of DREF used. As the situation evolves, further information will be provided.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Pristina: Mr. Matti Finnila, Head of Office, Kosovo office, ifrckv06@ifrc.org, +381 38 224 283
- In Belgrade: Mr Paul Emes, Head of Delegation for Serbia and Montenegro, ifrcyu04@ifrc.org, +381 63 378 754
- In Geneva: Zsolt Dudas, Regional Officer, Europe Department, email: zsolt.dudas@ifrc.org; phone: + 41 22 730 4319; fax: + 41 22 733 0395

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

Background

Over 80,000 IDPs have been present on the territory of Kosovo since 1999 with assistance provided through the Red Cross.

Ethnic tension in Kosovo suddenly escalated into violence on 17 March, 2004, resulting in protests in Mitrovica which turned into violence, affecting several cities in Kosovo with Serbian populations or Serbian enclaves.

Update

Latest reports indicate a death toll of 28, with over 851 injured of whom 98 are UN or local police, and 55 are KFOR soldiers (NATO peacekeeping force). Two Red Cross branches in Novo Brdo and Kosovo Polje were destroyed. With KFOR having quickly reinforced its presence in key areas, tensions have eased considerably, and the situation is considered to be under control. The immediate concern continues to be the humanitarian impact on those directly affected, including (according to latest reports on Monday 22 March) some 389 IDPs located in KFOR compounds, including 130 ethnic Serbs and



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259 Ashkalis (Albanian speaking Romas) who had returned to Vushtrri/Vucitrn about six months ago and moved to new houses built for them. The Ashkalis have been moved from a KFOR camp in Vushtrri/Vucitrn to another in Novo Selo. Additionally, some 400 IDPs are under United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) protection.

The latest information on figures of IDPs in Kosovo affected by these events ranges from 2,722 (according to RCS reports) to 3,064 (according to Serbian Government sources), to 3,600 (according to Kosovo authorities). Additionally, 200 new IDPs have been registered on the territory of Serbia and Montenegro and are being assisted by municipal branches near the administrative border.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Red Cross continues to provide assistance to persons injured or affected by the unrest. Immediate goods procured locally for 500 children for a one week period include baby supplies (diapers, baby food, and other items). No other organization is covering these needs at this moment. The Vushtrri/Vucitrn Red Cross branch has distributed 100 blankets, 50 mattresses, and milk for children. Part of the CHF 120,000 allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is being used to support a flexible response as operational needs require.

The German Red Cross is preparing a shipment of the following goods to be sent to Kosovo:

- 20 mt ready-to-eat meals.
- 20 mt baby parcels.
- 20 mt hygiene parcels.
- 20 mt wheat flour (1kg packs).
- 20 mt canned vegetables.
- 20 mt canned fish.

Also, medicines valued at EUR 11,000 are being delivered for a mobile clinic, along with medicines, one fully equipped field hospital, and other items for the north Mitrovica hospital.

The public response in Serbia to the humanitarian needs in Kosovo has been overwhelmingly positive, with over 350 tons of relief items donated to the Red Cross and prepared for transport. The government of Serbia has also provided just under EUR 300,000 in relief supplies to the Red Cross.

Needs assessments continue, and existing contingency plans for further humanitarian action are being updated. Further information will be provided as the situation evolves. The ICRC also carried out food distributions on Monday, 22 March.

Effective coordination continues between the Federation, the UN, the ICRC, and other operational organizations in Kosovo.

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