

# 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

## ALBANIA: SNOWFALLS

28 February 2005

*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 Bulletin (no. 01/2005) gives an update on the response of the Albanian Red Cross (ARC) to the suffering caused by the recent severe weather. The Federation has released CHF 63,315 from its disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) to assist the national society's work.**

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### The Situation

Severe winter with unusual snowfall (1.5- 2 m) and ice has engulfed the north, north-east and south-east of Albania. Snow, which has been falling regularly since 23 January 2005, has blocked regional and rural roads. Up to 400,000 people have been isolated or affected. The population of these areas is used to winter weather, but this year's cold snap has hit hard because ongoing economic difficulties have made communities even more vulnerable. Food reserves have also been low.

Four prefectures (Kukes, Dibra, Shkodra and Lezha) were initially affected. A week later, snowfalls also affected Korca, Elbasan, Berat, Gjirokastra and Vlora prefectures.

Two people died in an avalanche in Debra. Twenty-five homes were seriously damaged and 250 livestock died. Many communes, rarely blocked by snow during winter, are now cut off.

The Albanian Government did not declare the state of emergency but it requested different actors to respond. The central government itself made 400 000 USD available for road clearing and damage repairs. At the same time, with an additional fund of 400 000 USD, it purchased basic food items and is now distributing these to affected areas.

The Government set up the Emergency Commissions in affected prefectures and communes. Heavy machinery and tractors have been activated to clear roads in the northern part of Albania. Helicopters from the Ministry of Health and Police have evacuated sick people from blocked areas to Tirana hospital.

Transport of relief from Tirana has been affected by road conditions. Ministry of Defence helicopters and military trucks have helped supplies get through. Because of the widespread crisis, the government released a further 250 000 USD to clear roads and distribute relief items.

### **Red Cross activities**

In accordance with the National Plan of Civil Emergency Situation, the Albanian Red Cross responded aiming to meet the most urgent needs first. The national society made the following steps:

Initially, four Red Cross branches (Kukes, Shkodra, Lezha, Dibra) were affected. A week later, heavy snow started in the area of five other branches (Korce, Berat, Gjirokastra, Elbasan, and Vlora). The Red Cross branches in the affected area are members of Emergency Commissions, set up at the prefecture and commune levels, which regularly met to discuss the situation. A monitoring group has been set up at the ARC HQ.

Close cooperation has been established with the Directorate of Emergency Situations, in the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization and with Emergency Commissions in Prefecture and Commune levels for better coordination and avoidance of overlapping relief distribution. A preliminary needs assessment in all isolated areas was carried out. The Albanian Red Cross immediately began distributing parcels for 1,000 families. RC branches planned distributions to:

- Kukes - 300 families
- Dibra - 250 families
- Shkodra - 250 families
- Lezha - 200 families

The family parcel contains: four blankets, 50 kg of wheat flour, 5kg of white beans, 5 litres of oil, 5kg of sugar, 5 tins of canned meat, and 2 boxes of hygienic kits.

The disaster preparedness (DP) stock contained all needed items, except 30 metric tonnes (MT) of wheat flour and 5 MT of white beans. The ARC got approval from the Federation's regional delegation in Budapest to use around 16 000 USD of already received DREF in December 2004 (for floods in Shkodra - planned to be used for replenishment of DP stock items distributed during the floods) for purchasing of these items. [<Click here for floods bulletin>](#)

Poor road conditions prevented the Albanian RC from transporting these items. It was agreed with the Ministry of Local Government Emergency Commissions that they would transport the goods using their trucks and helicopters. So far the food has been distributed from Tirana to communes in four prefectures:

- 3 communes in Lezha (Mirdita) – 200 families (1,100 persons)
- 6 communes in Shkodra – 250 families (1,200 persons)
- Distribution is ongoing to 14 communes of Kukes and Dibra

The situation is still serious in 14 other communes in south-east Albania, which are still blocked. The ARC branch staff in cooperation with the local authorities in Korca, Gjirokastra, Berat and Elbasan assessed needs in the blocked communes. Many contain poor families with no food reserves. The number of families in need is as follows:

- 150 families in Korca
- 100 families in Berat
- 80 families in Elbasan
- 100 families in Gjirokastra
- 70 families in Vlora

In total, there are 500 families in need.

### Proposed Relief Operation

**Goal:** ARC to provide relief assistance to 500 families blocked by snow in South-East Albania.

The following activities will be undertaken:

- preparation of beneficiary list with the local authorities
- procurement of food and non-food items locally
- delivery of food and non-food items to 5 RC branches and afterwards to the communes
- organisation of distribution to beneficiaries
- preparation of data reporting and monitoring of distribution

The content of the parcel for one family (5-8 members) will be: 4 blankets, 50 kg of wheat flour, 5 kg of beans, 5 tins of canned meat, 5 lit of oil, 5 kg of sugar, 2 kg of washing powder and 2 hygienic kits.

The DREF will be used as financial support in purchasing needed items for distribution (except hygienic kits that are available in DP warehouse), transport, loading, unloading, staff, monitoring and administrative costs. Total amount needed is CHF 63,315.

### Budget

Blankets 2000 x 1000 lek	=	2 000 000 lek
W.flour 25 MT x 30 000 lek	=	750 000 lek
Beans 2.5 MT x 150 000 lek	=	375 000 lek
Oil 2 500 lit x 140 lek	=	350 000 lek
Sugar 2.5 MT x 60 000 lek	=	150 000 lek
Canned meat 2,500 x 300 lek	=	750 000 lek
Sub-total:		4 375 000 lek
Transport		200 000 lek
Loading and unloading		30 000 lek
Staff and monitoring		150 000 lek
Administrative costs		50 000 lek
<b>Total:</b>		<b>4 805 000 lek equal to 63,315 CHF</b>

### Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of relief distribution will be undertaken by DP and social programme coordinators in conjunction with branch secretaries. Weekly field visits to families will be undertaken to verify the receipt of parcels. Written situation reports and possible additional needs will be produced and submitted to the ARC HQ. Evaluation of activities will be done during daily meetings, based on reports from the field.