

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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

IRAQ: HUMANITARIAN CRISIS – POST WAR REHABILITATION

13 February 2006

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 180 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal No. 08/03; Operations Update no. 18; Period covered: 5 August to 31 December 2005.

Appeal History:

- Appeal launched on 20 March 2003 for CHF 111,039,000 (USD 88,116,615 or EUR 71,228,675) for 305,000 beneficiaries for nine months.
- On 5 September 2003, the appeal was revised with budgets reduced to CHF 30,937,000 (USD 24,551,080 or EUR 19,844,625)
- This Emergency Appeal was extended to 31 December 2005 (with no change to the existing budgets)
- With this update, the 08/03 Emergency Appeal is being extended to 31 March 2006 (with no change to the appealed budgets), due to incompleteness of some of the activities before the end of December 2005.
- A New Emergency Appeal – Iraq: Humanitarian Emergency (Appeal no.05EA/026) - has been launched on 10 November 2005 and seeks CHF 16,500,000 (USD 12,000,000 or EUR 10,000,000) to assist 60,000 families or 350,000 beneficiaries for 12 months. For details, please go to the website at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA026.pdf

Appeal coverage: 109.1%. *Please click here to go directly to the Contributions List available on the Federation's website.*

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:

Iraq and Neighbouring Countries: Humanitarian Crisis Emergency Appeal. (Appeal no.08/03) For details, please go to the website at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?03/0803.pdf

Iraq and Neighbouring Countries: Humanitarian Crisis Revised Emergency Appeal. (Appeal no.08/03) For details, please go to the website at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?03/0803revised.pdf

Operational Summary

Iraq Emergency Appeal no. 03/08 "Humanitarian Crisis – Post War Rehabilitation" was planned to be completed by the end of 2005. The humanitarian assistance programme implemented since May 2003 played an extremely important role in mobilizing and delivering the essential help to the most vulnerable in Iraq. The Federation partners have been regularly informed about the progress and major achievements of the programme through 17 operations updates and numerous special reports.

The realities of the extremely difficult operational environment have not allowed the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and the Federation to complete a number of projects (mainly in construction and distribution of certain relief supplies) by the end of December 2005. Therefore, exclusively for technical reasons (to ensure proper accounting and reporting) it has been decided to extend the emergency appeal no. 03/08 for another three months, until the end of March 2006. This option will allow technical completion of all ongoing projects, without turning to a complex procedure of reallocation of the available balances to the new emergency appeal no. 05EA026 launched on 10 November 2005.

In this connection it is to be stressed that the International Federation is not looking for any new funds in response to the Emergency Appeal no. 03/08. At the same time, it is urging participating national societies and other donors to accelerate the support to the Iraq Emergency Appeal no. 05EA026, which was launched on 10 November 2006.

For further information please contact:

- *National Society: Mazin al Salloum, Secretary-General, phone: 00964-7901-389-742; e-mail: ircs_int_dep@yahoo.com*
- *Federation delegation: Gurgen Boshyan, Head of Delegation, phone: 00962-79-504-2922; fax: 00962-6569-4556; email: gurgen.boshyan@ifrc.org*
- *Federation regional department: Evgeni Parfenov, senior regional officer, phone: 0041-22-730-4325; fax: 0041-22-733-0395; email: evgeni.parfenov@ifrc.org*

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 (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

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

Operational developments

General parliamentary elections in Iraq took place between 13-15 December. Since then, the security situation in Iraq has not improved and has continued hampering basic humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts. Only in the past four months, more than 1,500 people were killed - almost forty civilians every single day. There was no reduction in this death toll compared to the previous quarter when this level reached 34 human lives per day.

The general political, economic and security situation in Iraq continued to be of an extreme concern for the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS). The National Society warned the International Federation not only on the deteriorating situation in the traditional areas of responsibilities, but also on the new, emerging vulnerabilities.

At the humanitarian front, the IRCS continued to be at service to the most vulnerable people. There were three relief operations conducted for some 35, 000 families.

Intensive consultations between the IRCS and the Federation Secretariat, as well as an assessment of the emergency humanitarian requirements, culminated in the decision to launch a new emergency appeal, which was made public on 10 November 2005. The major aim of this appeal was to mobilize the international support to the humanitarian activities of the IRCS in its own country. Therefore, in many aspects, this new appeal looked for the continuous support to the already established programmes. At the same time, it has addressed the newly emerging vulnerabilities and the new priorities, like the urgent need to ensure country wide training of volunteers in the provision of First Aid.

In the midst of tense security situation, the Iraqi Red Crescent Society has managed to sustain the quality of its services, benefiting dozens of thousands of people. It is the main, if not the only, indigenous organisation currently implementing relief distributions and other humanitarian activities in the country. This support has been essential for the population living in highly volatile areas such as Fallujah, Al-Qaim, Tal Aafar and Baquba, as well as for the vulnerable populations in many other parts of the country. Furthermore, capacity building is an integral part of every joint activity run together with the Iraq Red Crescent –from relief to development.

Disaster Response

The IRCS, in consultation with the Federation, has established selection criteria to identify the most in need in a country where 70% of its 27 million inhabitants are subject to harsh socio-economic difficulties - due to the 3 year war and conflict situation. Socio-economic structures are destroyed during the war. To date, there is an ongoing fighting between the armed insurgents and the allied forces. The fighting and tense security situation has hindered rehabilitation and development programs and the delivery of humanitarian services. Roadside, car and suicide bombs are claiming hundreds of lives every week. The IRCS and the Federation are jointly running modest operations to alleviate the suffering of those civilians most in-need – socially vulnerable families with more than 5 family members or more that included widows, returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Non-food relief distribution for 17,000 socially vulnerable families:

The purpose of this operation was to reduce the suffering of the most socially vulnerable families, which found themselves totally socially unprotected as a direct consequence of the ongoing conflict.

Eid gift for 16,500 families:

The programme objective was to support the vulnerable families in Iraq by providing them with non-food items prior to Eid Al-Fitr that comes at the end of the traditional Holy month of Ramadan. Items included three meters of textiles for men, three meters of textile for women, one track-suit for girls, and one-track suit for boys. It covered the vulnerable families in the 18 governorates of Iraq. The distribution took place between 8 October and 04 November 2005.

The program had impact on the relation between the vulnerable population and the IRCS branches. Besides, the data from the Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) collected earlier was used in the identification of those most in need of this particular assistance in addition to the criteria set to select the beneficiaries.

Targeted beneficiaries by governorates:

No.	Governorate	No. of Beneficiaries	No.	Governorate	No. of Beneficiaries
1	Kerkuk	1,000	10	Basra	1,000
2	Dyala	750	11	Duhok	500
3	Anbar	1,000	12	Baghdad	3,000
4	Erbil	1,000	13	Kerbala	1,000
5	Sulamaniah	750	14	Babil	500
6	Salah Aldeen	750	15	Wasit	500
7	Najaf	1,000	16	Qaidisia	500
8	Nnarva	1,000	17	Muthamma	500
9	Maison	1,000	18	Thi Qar	750

The selection criteria were provided to all the branches and the local authorities who were as well briefed on it to ensure use of the established criteria and proper selection of the beneficiaries. Below is partial view of beneficiaries.



Vulnerable families were provided with non-food items



The assistance covered 16,500 families

Bridge Stampede disaster Operation:

This stampede disaster took place in the area of the Shrine of Musa Al-Kadhun on the 31st of August, where some 2 million people had gathered for annual pilgrimage. The disaster was triggered by a rumour that spread of a suspected "suicide bomber". The news created panic amongst pilgrim makers passing the Al-Imma bridge (north Baghdad) and that led to several deaths (over 650) and injuries (350). Amongst the victims were elderly people, women and children, and the actual death toll was over 1,000.



People were forced to jump into the river



People on the bridge

In response to this tragic event, the IRCS, with support from the Federation, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and government agencies, launched an emergency operation to victims or family members of the victims with some essential relief items.

Preparation and procurement process for the distribution of non-food items to the 25,000 socially vulnerable families in 2006 (is in good progress):

The beneficiary selection criteria has been established; beneficiaries from each governorate identified for this winter program; tender advertised; offer from local suppliers collected, and comparative bid analysis done as per Federation guidelines (approval from Geneva is received and contract with suppliers has been signed). However, the actual distribution has taken place in January/February 2006.

Monitoring /Reporting:

The monitoring/reporting mechanism will follow the same as was for the other three joint operations already run in the country in 2005.

Disaster Preparedness***VCA training and preparation for field level implementation:***

Training in Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) was given to the IRCS staff/volunteers in late 2005 in Syria. The participants have been collecting and analyzing data from the at-risk communities in three branch areas: Al-Rasheed, Al-Maamel and Al-Huseiniya. The final data analysis will be carried out together with the Regional delegation in Amman in early 2006. Based on the results of data analysis, an action plan will soon be developed together with the respective branches and selected community members.

Refresher workshops were carried in three of the IRCS branches of Baghdad, Basra, and Erbil prior to collection of VCA data. In total, sixty-three volunteers were selected from each of the three branches, which consisted of 50% males and 50% females in order to maintain gender balance. In each governorate, three specific localities were selected for the planned vulnerability and capacity assessment. The interview included, besides local community members, informal leaders and the local authorities.

RDA training conducted for 18 participants:

A Rapid Damage Assessment (RDA) training was held in Amman on 24 September 2005 and was attended by IRCS staff members/volunteers from the headquarters and six branches.

Sphere ToT training program:

The planned Sphere training of trainers (ToT) program has been postponed for early 2006 for several reasons, of which security was the priority. The society has the desire to expand the Sphere training program to its staff and volunteers throughout Iraq. This is one of the important tools used in the planning and management of disaster response operations.

Rehabilitation /Reconstruction:

In spite of the tense security situation, the Federation/IRCS capacity building /service delivery has continued with relative progress during this period. These activities included the rehabilitation of the IRCS Surgical Hospital, Maternity Hospitals, Salhadin Warehouse and one branch building. All of these projects are the continuation of the ongoing programs (for details, please refer to the operations update no.17 at http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?03/080317.pdf). With the completion of these projects, the service delivery of the IRCS will greatly improve its efforts to serve the vulnerable.

Rehab of IRCS Surgical hospital in Baghdad:

The completion of the project and its handover is planned by 15 April 2006. During the reporting period, work activities included the removal of the existing drainage system and laying the new one in the first and second floors. Removal of existing PVC, floor tiles and ceramic tiles, rewiring of electrical system and extending new lines, removal of the floor of the surgical operation theatres, installation of the new concrete floor with required finishing, and masonry work on hospital store have been completed.



The look of the hospital during rehabilitation



The look of the hospital after rehabilitation

The works on the rehabilitation of the first floor of the hospital have been completed and the hand over of these facilities took place on 4 December, 2005. In addition, the newly built surgical operation center was completed on 15 December 2005 and works on the modernisation of the laboratory sector was completed on 15 December 2005.

Construction of IRCS Salhadin Warehouse:

This project is aimed at expanding the IRCS warehouse capacity in the country, including pre-positioning of adequate relief stock to ensure timely response in times of crisis.

The new Salhadin warehouse will have a storage capacity of 900 square metres and will serve the governorate - one of the hot beds of the armed conflict areas - and operations in the neighbouring regions.

The works included building the warehouse surrounding walls with cement blocks, execution of the steel truss columns, floor concrete casting, and walkways construction works. The expected date for completion will be 15 March 2006.

Rehabilitation of IRCS Kut Maternity Hospital:

So far, 65% of the project work is completed. The activities included the removal of the old finishing of the building, casting of the concrete ceiling for the ground floor, masonry work of the first floor, electrical wiring and concrete framework for the elevator. Expected date of project completion is 24 March 2006.

Rehabilitation of IRCS Baghdad Branch building:

The branch building rehabilitation project agreement with the contractor was signed 16 November and work commenced on 21 November 2005. So far, it has made a 20% progress and the completion date, if no disruption occurs, will be 25 February 2006. The activities included placing steel reinforcement for the first floor, concrete casting for the exterior fence foundation and excavation of the foundation strip footing for the reception room.

Rehabilitation of Orphanages:

The progress rate of the rehabilitation work of orphanages is 85% and the expected completion date will be during February

There have been some delays in starting the rehabilitation of the orphanages, due to long consultation with the ministry of Labour and Societal Affair. Nevertheless, the maintenance works of the seven orphanages is making good progress. The primary focus of maintenance is now limited to three of the seven orphanages, because of the high cost vis-à-vis the allocated budget for the rehabilitation work.

The three selected orphanages are Dar Al Dawla/Wazeriya; Dar Al Najat/Adhamiya; and Dar Al tifil/Masbah. The progress rate of the rehabilitation work is 85% and the expected completion date will be during February 2006.

Meanwhile, the basic items mentioned in the project proposal/BoQ are provided and installed in the other orphanages: Dar Al-Tifil/Masbah; Al-Bat al-Ammin/Durah; Bat al-Tefel 2/Aadamya; and Dar al-Dawla/Al Elwia. The basic supply items included wooden tables, cabinet, book shelves, beds, stationeries, white boards, oven, food mixer, water cooler, oil radiator heater, laundry machine, water

tanks, installed sink basin of aluminium, etc.

The joint monitoring operations resumed in order to diagnose any unexpected deviations through all implementation stages. Field visits were conducted to all orphanages to follow up the maintenance, and provide necessary feedback to the concerned contractors in order to be dealt with properly.

After the rehabilitation, the Federation staff, in cooperation with the IRCS, will visit all orphanages to take the final written statement from administration of the orphanages.

Monitoring /Reporting:

Project monitoring is carried out jointly by the staff from the engineering department of the IRCS and the Federation field managers.

Challenges & problems:

- The security situation in the country is the main challenge for the implementation of humanitarian services and rehabilitation/reconstruction programs.
- Fast increasing commodity prices, on month-by-month basis, negatively affect the budget estimates of the projects made at the planning stage.
- Risk of traveling to governorates (to monitor and implement projects) continue to be on increase.

Health and Care

Community Based Health Intervention (CBHI):

The national society has a long history of working in the health field in coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH). Over 1,700 primary health care (PHC) centres are run by the MoH primary health care system since the middle of the 1980s.

The IRCS branches and volunteers have had close collaboration in the dissemination and delivery of public health services in the country – a program that has continued to date.



Youth members are enthusiastic volunteers of the CBFA program

Community Based First Aid (CBFA):

This has been one of the popular programs of the society since 1997. It was a program that helped the society to retain the enthusiastic volunteers – mainly the youth members. The volunteers were attached to a number of the society's activities such as PHC, health & IRCS awareness, disaster response activities, etc. that promoted further the good image of the society in the minds of the public.

Immunisation/dissemination on health & IRCS/awareness to school children:

The IRCS was one of the main players in the Polio & Measles countrywide immunization campaigns since 2001 - IRCS was monitoring the MoH & United Nations (UN) agencies immunization campaign. It was chosen for its countrywide structure, proficiency/skill to do the job, public acceptance and integrity.

In the process, it has proven to be reliable partner. The functions included household survey to determine the success and coverage of immunization and to check on challenges and problems as perceived by the community members. The info collected by the IRCS monitors was discussed with the program managers to rectify hindrances to plan.

Psychological Support

Staff/volunteers training

A workshop was held to 10 staff/volunteers of the IRCS in September from Baghdad, Basra, Sulaimenya and Anbar branches who would serve as psychosocial support programme (PSP) focal persons in the respective regions/branches. The participants have received certificate at the end of the workshop as they have in total covered a 140 working hours training.

Materials preparation, printing & distribution

500 copies of the "Between Heaven and Earth" training aid film have been prepared and distributed to the 18 IRCS branches to enhance the volunteers training and PSP dissemination in the schools. This film narrates on expectations & perception of volunteers and what they could, in reality, face out in the field – experiences from similar situations or operations.

The volunteers have as well collected stories from the youth and community members in regard to traditional coping mechanisms-folk stories. Few of the pertinent and timely stories will be selected and printed for distribution to youth and community members.

Preparation of action plans

Action plan has been developed as a pilot for two Branches: Basra and Baghdad. Implementation has started in January 2006.

Development and Capacity Building

The IRCS has continued systematic work on the improvement of its management practices, especially in the areas of youth and volunteers capacity development.

A strategy planning meeting was convened in Amman in October 2005, with participation of the IRCS governance, management and volunteers which represented both the headquarters and the branches. The meeting culminated in the production of the concrete action plan which, in certain aspects, has served as a basis for the Federation's new Emergency Appeal which was launched on 10 November 2005.

Level of project planning and reporting has been improved as a result of a series of training sessions for the selected management staff of the IRCS headquarters. They were devoted to the Project Planning Process (PPP) and project writing and reporting for the management staff in the IRCS headquarters. This work should be continued in 2006, with involvement of the rest of middle management staff in headquarters, as well as of the staff and volunteers from branches. On the other hand, the quality of financial reporting has been improved, although it could not be considered fully satisfactory.

At the same time, a number of important objectives have not yet been met. They will be addressed in the coming period and will be included among other priorities:

- Internal regulations and procedures in finance and administration
- Automation of accounting system in headquarters as well as in Branches
- Management system in administration, finance, human resources, communications

Youth and Volunteers

The IRCS has had more than 2500 volunteers who have regularly participated in various service programs.

The following has been accomplished during the recent months:

- Policy and procedures for youth and volunteers have been developed
- Development of check list for volunteers has been completed
- Job descriptions for youth and volunteer leaders in Headquarters/Branches have been prepared
- Development of checklist for volunteers has been completed
- Branches have been involved in different type of activities, such as summer camp for children (pilot project in Erbil Branch for 120 children), hygiene projects, blood campaign donations, care for elderly people in elderly houses, first aid training for children in the swimming pools and etc.
- In line with the strategic plan for the IRCS and based on priorities for 2006 and 2007, plan of action and the budget have been developed by youth participants during strategic planning training.
- Head of the IRCS Youth and Volunteer department has been elected as a member of MENA Youth Coordination Committee (YCC).
- The IRCS has started a program to improving the life of the orphans who are residents of the seven orphanages in Baghdad. Programs include rehabilitation phase as well as psychosocial phase with involvement of Baghdad Branch volunteers.

Federation Management and Cooperation/Overall Program Coordination

The *Memorandum of Understanding on the Management and Coordination* of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement response in Iraq has been signed between the International Federation, the Iraqi Red Crescent and ICRC.

Through signing this Memorandum, the parties have agreed to hold monthly meetings. They will regularly review the progress of implementing the Movement's coordination mechanism, the roles and responsibilities of each partner; provide operational information, including priorities and an overview of humanitarian needs; review security issues; brief on partner national societies (bilateral or multilateral) initiatives in Iraq; and strengthen efforts of Movement actions in Iraq.

The Federation's status agreement as an international organisation is still pending. All necessary documents have been submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Participation/info sharing with members of the Emergency Working Group (EWG) – UN agencies and NGOs

The delegation, as member of the working group, is contributing to the coordination process and sharing of information on developments and activities of the IRCS and the field level program managers on bi-monthly basis.

Conclusion

The security situation remains fluid, despite the adoption of the constitution and the recent parliamentary election, and the establishment of the rule of law appears to be taking time before it is realised. Furthermore, the recent increase on market prices of gas and oil, and essential commodities, has worsened the lives of the socially vulnerable people.

The recent developments in Iraq have been characterised by:

- Conflict relations in between political parties
- Kidnapping, political and arbitrary assassinations
- Lack of electricity, water, etc
- Increasing cost of gas/fuel and basic commodities, and
- Increases in mass migration

The situation in to-day's Iraq calls for urgent support to the people who belong to the low-income group in particular. As indicated in the United Nations/World Food Programme report, over 7 million people require some sort of external assistance (safety net).

In such difficult circumstances, the IRCS continues to work and remain the strongest local organisation that won confidence in the eyes of public and local authorities. Its integrity and neutrality as well as its operational capacity throughout the country have won the thrust of the UN and relevant government agencies. Most recently, the national society has been chosen as an official monitor to the national immunisation campaigns being carried out in the country.

The operational capacity of the national society has increased in the past three years. Its positive image is well recognised and accepted by the public, UN, international and governmental agencies. It has been a good continuation for the society to maintain the positive image.

The Movement components and the international community are expected to continue with their support to the society during 2006 as the country's social and economic infrastructures are left in ruins. The national society is expected both by the public and government to fill some of the essential social gaps during the rehabilitation process. Certainly, in a country devastated by two decades of war and conflict, the needs and gaps will be enormous and hence will be requiring the strong support of the international community in general.

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