

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 AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES: HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

17 April 2003

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

Appeal No. 08/03

Launched on 20 March 2003 for CHF 111,039,000 for 9 months for 305,000 beneficiaries.

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 75,000 in the pre-positioning phase

Beneficiaries: 305,000

Operations Update No. 05;

Period covered: 10 - 17 April 2003;

Last Update: operations update 4, issued 14 April 2003;

Next Update 06 expected 23 April 2003

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 11.5%

Related Appeals: 01.54/2002; 01.55/2002; 01.88/2003; 01.93/2003

Outstanding needs: CHF 98,279,588

Summary: The situation in Iraq remains unstable. A comprehensive disaster preparedness strategy means neighbouring Red Crescent national societies and the Federation are still primed to respond to changing circumstances. Activities near the Iraqi border continue in case there any future population movements. Preparations, in coordination with the ICRC, are now underway to channel external support to Iraq as its Red Crescent national society addresses the extreme needs in-country.

Operational Developments w

In spite of the completion of major military operations, the last week has seen ongoing security problems throughout Iraq, with systematic looting of private property as well as crucial administrative and health institutions. In recent days, however, a gradual return of law and order in most parts of the country has been followed by an increase in humanitarian assessments and smaller-scale relief assistance.

Humanitarian organizations are preparing to return to Iraq as soon as the security situation allows. UN agencies and NGOs have re-negotiated with local authorities procedures for cross-border operations and clearance of goods destined for Iraq.

The Federation is also preparing for the second phase of its operation inside Iraq. The Iraq delegation - presently in Jordan - is preparing to return to Baghdad. The draft plan for assistance to vulnerable people and the Iraqi Red Crescent Society is being finalized with partner-National Societies, ICRC, as well as key external stakeholders.

At the same time, in neighbouring Jordan, Syria and Iran, an influx of refugees from Iraq is still a possibility, in view of unstable security. Preparedness efforts of humanitarian organisations in that respect continue.

According to IOM statistics, as of 14 April, the following number of third country nationals (TCN) have been registered in neighbouring countries:

Location	Camp population	Trend
Jordan	229	up
Syria	5	No change
Iran	234	up
TOTAL	468	up

Movement Coordination w

A sub-regional meeting of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was held on 6 April in the United Arab Emirates, to ensure a coordinated response to humanitarian needs in Iraq and neighbouring countries. The National Societies from the region, the Federation and ICRC representatives voiced deep concern over the humanitarian consequences of the conflict. They have committed to help the Iraqi population affected, as well as the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, in a coordinated manner and in accordance to the Fundamental Principles.

It has been agreed that the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, based on its own decision, should communicate the needs as soon as possible through channels put at their disposal by the ICRC. The needs should be addressed to the ICRC and the Federation, who will inform National Societies and coordinate mobilization of necessary resources. The delivery of assistance will be facilitated by the ICRC as the lead agency in the Movement’s response to the Iraq crisis.

In addition, participants called upon all parties to the conflict to fully respect the principles and rules of international humanitarian law.

ICRC and the Federation are continuing close cooperation at the field level, in accordance with originally defined roles and responsibilities. Joint ICRC/Federation field assessment missions in southern Iraq are scheduled in the coming week, while the Federation’s Iraq delegation is awaiting security clearance for a return to Baghdad.

Inter-Agency Coordination w

Inter-agency coordination efforts are ongoing, both at the field and headquarters level, through regular sectoral and regional meetings. The UN and NGOs have agreed to align their assessment methods to avoid duplication.

They also agreed sectoral assessment forms and posted them on the HIC website. In addition, it was agreed to use UNJLC logistics assessment forms for all logistics assessments.

UN agencies and NGOs have agreed to share information about pre-positioned stocks for humanitarian aid distribution. IOM is appointed the focal point for non-food items, while all other information should be submitted directly to UNJLC.

WHO and its partners in the Health Sector Coordination Group have agreed on a process to coordinate the health assessment process, purchase and delivery of medical supplies, the movement of convoys to Iraq, and to provide technical advice on the procurement of drugs, as per the essential drug list of Iraq. All agencies have been advised to use WHO's rapid health assessment form to provide consistent information on the health situation throughout Iraq. This picture can then be used by all agencies in their response planning.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

The Red Crescent Societies of Jordan, Syria and Iran, with help of the Federation and ICRC, are continuing their preparedness for a possible influx of refugees, by maintaining the pre-positioned stocks and camps for third country nationals and refugees.

In Turkey and Kuwait, activities of National Societies are limited, in view of the lack of any TCN and refugee influx, as well as a low likelihood for this scenario in the future. Regular inter-agency coordination activities in Ankara and Kuwait city continue, and the originally built-up disaster preparedness capacities of National Societies are maintained.

Jordan¹

The Jordanian Red Crescent Society (JRCS) continues to successfully manage a camp for third country nationals, which hosts the average of 250 TCN a day. The camp management is done in close cooperation with a number of NGOs, as well as ICRC and IOM. Since the beginning of the registration process on 24 March, over 900 TCN have passed through the camp in transit to their home countries.

All outstanding maintenance work in the camp has been completed, with electricity, water and sanitation system and warehousing procedures functional. Between them, the Jordanian Medical Association and the JRCS are ensuring health screening and primary assistance to TCN, through a basic health post. All cases in need of further attention are referred to specialised hospitals.

NGO partners are responsible for provision of food, as well as wet feeding programme for children under 5. Following recommendations of WHO, quality of food rations has been improved with meat, fruit and vegetables.

Since the beginning of the crisis, some TCN and Iraqi nationals with irregular ID documents have been stranded at the border between Iraq and Jordan, while UNHCR negotiated their passage to the camp with the authorities. On several occasions, ICRC and JRCS visited the border crossing and provided basic assistance in food and non-food items. In recent days, it has been noted that the number of such cases, mostly Iranian and Palestinian nationals, is increasing, with up to 250 people waiting at the border for several days. Following inter-agency discussions, it has been agreed that UNHCR and the Hashemite Charity Commission will take the responsibility for assisting those people before their transfer to the camp B.

Syria

The Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) maintains two transit camps - Al Bukamal and Al Tanf - for assistance to all categories of population moving from Iraq, included TCN, Iraqi refugees, Syrian nationals and Palestinians. The registration has so far been carried out by the Government of Syria. SARC and the Federation have called upon UNHCR to establish constant presence in camps and take over the registration process.

¹ For a detailed report on JRCS activities in response to the Iraq crisis, refer to the Federation's operations update no. 4, issued on 14 April 2003, and posted on the Iraq crisis page of the Federation's website www.ifrc.org.

In recent days, Syria has closed its border to all but most urgent humanitarian cases. Up to 100 TCN, mainly Iranian nationals, have been reported stranded at the border close to Al Bukamal camp, awaiting authorization to cross as soon as the frontier reopens. ICRC, SARC and the Federation carried out visits to the border and provided blankets and food.

Health services to TCN in the two camps are provided by SARC relief health team, who are maintaining health posts with basic medicines and material. SARC health post in the Al Tanf camp consists of an outpatient unit, containing examination facilities and basic equipment for treatment and medication; the in-patient unit contains two beds for temporary observation and equipment for oral rehydration and intravenous medication; surgical unit with facilities and equipment for minor surgery; storage and pharmacy tent. All tents are fully equipped, containing small amounts of medicines sufficient for a short period of time and a limited number of patients. Additional medication is expected to arrive shortly in form of the new emergency health kit (NEHK), while immediate needs are covered by local procurement.

Following unsuccessful negotiations with WFP on the provision of food assistance to the camp residents, due to few beneficiaries it has been decided that SARC will continue to assume this responsibility through local procurement and distribution of food.

The Federation has agreed with SARC to organize training of 30 national society volunteers in the psychological support programme. The workshop will be carried out in May, and trained volunteers will be expected to provide psychological support to refugees and TCN in the SARC camps.

With major conflict in Iraq approaching an end, SARC has undertaken a number of concrete steps to prepare for upcoming cross-border operations, in cooperation with ICRC:

- SARC have agreed to provide 'cash-for-kind' donation to procure one 18,000-litre water tanker to support ICRC action in Iraq.
- SARC is in process of compiling an inventory of all donations held by branches in Syria, for eventual donation of required items as cross-border support through ICRC.
- SARC is in the process of compiling detailed inventories of all medical stock in their possession, for repackaging and stocking in SARC warehouses. A proposal to establish a committee consisting of professional pharmacists is being prepared, to allow packaging, numbering, identification of stocks, which will conform to ICRC specifications, in order to facilitate cross-border support to Movement activities.

Iran

Since the beginning of the conflict, the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) developed a comprehensive contingency plan in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, the Federation, UNHCR and other partners, to assist up to 100,000 people in the camps alongside Iraq-Iran border. The National Society, the Federation and the UN remain prepared for any eventuality.

Meanwhile, humanitarian agencies in Iran have started preparations for cross-border operations in Iraq. As part of efforts to facilitate such operations, the government of Iran gave an official approval for cross-border operations, and reaffirmed its willingness to grant the necessary support in all operational aspects.

In preparation for the new food aid corridor, WFP has pre-positioned 2,800 metric tonnes (MT) of emergency food rations in the western towns of Kermanshah and Ahwaz. UNICEF has dispatched its first humanitarian convoy from Iran into Iraq, carrying 120,000 litres of drinking water for hospitals and health centres in Al-Fao pensinsula.

The IRCS is ready to provide cross-border humanitarian assistance to Iraq, through established Movement coordination channels. Logistical preparation is underway, including the establishment of one or more additional supply pipelines to Iraq, such as in the southern Khuzestan province. This will correspond to the official cross-border crossing points given by the Iranian authorities, namely Orumieh, Koshravi, Mehran and Shallamsheh.

The IRCS will coordinate with ICRC and the Federation in preparing and sending humanitarian consignments to Iraq. Presently, two consignments are ready to be handed over to ICRC, containing 50 MT of relief items and medical supplies.

In the past week, reports were received that up to 50,000 IDPs have gathered in the Iraqi town of Badrah, 16 km from the Iranian border crossing of Mehran. On 12 April, a UN inter-agency security and assessment mission was carried out in Badrah, and confirmed that not more than 3,000 IDPs remain in the area. They are not intending to cross the border into Iran, and plan to return to their homes as soon as security is re-instated. IRCS dispatched relief supplies from its stock for 2,500-3,000 people, and organized a visit of its medical team to the hospital of Badrah. Presently, medicines and water are reported as the only requirement for assistance. IOM has taken the lead in following up the assistance to, and movement of, the remaining IDPs in Badrah.

Kuwait

The Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society (KRCS) disaster preparedness plan of action to assist refugees or internally displaced people has so far not come into effect and is not expected to, in view of the low likelihood of a refugee influx into Kuwait. The KRCS activities within the framework of the appeal are, therefore, limited.

Consistent with its agreement to work within the context of the Seville Agreement and subsequent agreements since the outbreak of hostilities, the KRCS continues to be highly interested in carrying out humanitarian interventions in Iraq, but at this point no clear cut possibilities within the appeal have been identified.

In the meantime, KRCS unilateral activities continue, with convoys of relief assistance and NS staff and volunteers being dispatched into southern Iraq.

Turkey

With the latest developments in Iraq, the possibility of population movements towards the Turkish border have decreased. The Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) has started withdrawing its staff from the operational area, to keep only a limited number of staff - - approximately 60, compared to 379 at the end of March - in the border area with Iraq. In line with these developments, the head of the relief directorate, in charge of the Coordination Unit for Humanitarian Assistance in Diyarbakir, has returned to Ankara.

The delegation has finalized the tendering process, in cooperation with the Secretariat logistics department, and a purchase contract was signed for the following relief items included in the Federation's emergency appeal: 4,000 kerosene stoves, 4,000 kerosene heaters, 2,900 jerry cans for water, 4,000 jerry cans for kerosene, 4,000 kerosene lamps, 12,000 towels and 4,000 soap sets.

TRCS has hired and trained psychological support officers, who were deployed in Silopi, alongside the remaining three Kizilay disaster response teams and a logistics team of some 45 staff. Their joint work will contribute to the integration of psycho-social concepts into existing disaster response services. As the response teams are phased out, psycho-social workers will return to the communities to begin the initiation of branch development activities in their field of expertise.

Alongside the ongoing disaster preparedness work, TRCS is also preparing to consolidate stocks of non-food items for possible cross-border operations in coordination with ICRC, as soon as the situation allows.

Federation Delegation w

The International Federation has maintained its field structure in the countries neighbouring Iraq, and will continue to provide support to national societies in the region in their preparedness for an eventual refugee influx, as this possibility is still considered by all humanitarian organisations. Upon agreement of priority areas and the timing of the second phase of the operation, the structure and staffing of the Federation country delegations in Jordan, Iran, Syria and Kuwait will be reconsidered.

The Iraq delegation, which was evacuated from Baghdad in the eve of the military operation, has now returned to Amman, where it will be preparing for its return to the country. In the meantime, the delegation is preparing a draft plan of activities for the second phase of the operation. In the coming days, the programme coordinator and health delegate will join ICRC in assessment trips in the south of Iraq, out of Kuwait. The head of delegation will remain in Amman, until the situation allows his return to Baghdad.

Advocacy/Public Information w

Media attention has largely shifted from the situation in the neighbouring countries towards Iraq itself, in view of the recent military developments and the ensuing security crisis and humanitarian needs in the country.

The regional information team, consisting of four expatriate and three national staff, has been providing high level support to the National Societies and Federation delegations in the region. This has been done through media mobilization, RC/RC and video coverage on the Federation's website, and facilitation of news agencies' visits to border camps ran by the National Societies of Jordan and Syria.

In view of the media's shifting focus, the information team in Amman has closely liaised with the ICRC counterparts in the region, to provide accurate and up-to-date information on the humanitarian situation and needs inside Iraq.

Plans for an intense information and advocacy campaign in Iraq are being developed, and their realization will follow the return of the Federation's delegation to Baghdad.

Outstanding needs w

Please refer to the attached list of pledges, and the mobilisation table indicating outstanding needs. For more details, refer directly to the Logistics and Resource Mobilisation department mentioned below.

Unearmarked contributions continue to be required to ensure enough flexibility in the design and implementation of the second phase of the operation.

Also, donors are requested to coordinate their contributions with the Federation and ICRC, to avoid duplication of assistance and/or gaps in the provision of the same.

For further details please contact:

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Donors providing in-kind relief in response to large-scale emergencies are urged to contact Birgitte Stalder-Olsen, email: birgitte.olsen@ifrc.org, phone: 41 22 730 4245, fax: 41 22 733 0395 in the Federation's Logistics and Resource Mobilization Department to avoid any unnecessary delays in the clearance and delivery of emergency relief assistance.

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.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

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

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Iraq - Humanitarian crisis						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 08/2003		PLEDGES RECEIVED				17.04.2003
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				111'039'000		TOTAL COVERAGE 11.5%
AMERICAN - RC		15'000	USD	20'400	07.03.03	SYRIA RC DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
AMERICAN - RC		15'000	USD	20'400	07.03.03	JORDAN RCS DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
AMERICAN - RC		100'000	USD	136'000	20.03.03	THE REGION
AMERICAN - GOVT/PRM		3'000'000	USD	4'080'000	27.03.03	THE REGION
AMERICAN PRIVATE DONOR		1'000	USD	1'360	28.03.03	
AMERICAN PRIVATE DONOR		900	USD	1'225	11.04.03	
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID				50'000	07.08.2002	IRAQ
BRITISH - RC		10'000	GBP	22'425	19.02.03	SYRIA CONTINGENCY RELIEF STOCKS
BRITISH RC/DIFD		490'196	GBP	1'052'941	21.03.03	THE REGION
CANADIAN - RC		25'000	CAD	23'200	09.04.03	THE REGION
CHINESE - RC		50'000	USD	68'075	01.04.03	THE REGION
DANISH - RC		462'500	DKK	90'650	11.12.2002	IRAQ
DANISH - GOVT		5'634	USD	7'648	13.01.03	REGIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
DANISH - RC		925'000	DKK	182'225	20.03.03	THE REGION
FINNISH - RC		40'000	EUR	58'656	12.12.2002	SYRIA & JORDAN CONTINGENCY
FINNISH - GOVT		144'231	EUR	211'082	05.03.03	IRAQ
FINNISH - RC		95'000	EUR	140'173	01.04.03	THE REGION
GERMAN - RC				50'000	04.02.03	IRAQ
ICELANDIC - RC		6'000'000	ISK	105'330	24.03.03	THE REGION
IRISH - GOVT		500'000	EUR	737'750	31.03.03	THE REGION
IRISH - RC		25'000	EUR	36'888	07.04.03	THE REGION
ITALIAN - RC		100'000	EUR	146'350	21.03.03	
ITALIAN - GOVT/BILATERAL EMERGENCY FUND)		100'000	EUR	146'350	20.03.03	
ITALIAN - GOVT/BILATERAL EMERGENCY FUND)		900'000	EUR	1'327'950	28.03.03	THE REGION
JAPANESE - RC		10'000'000	JPY	121'140	16.12.2002	IRAQ
JAPANESE - RC		415'904	USD	565'629	24.03.03	THE REGION
KOREAN, REP. - RC				50'000	04.02.03	THE REGION
MONACO - RC		15'000	EUR	22'133	20.03.03	THE REGION
NETHERLANDS - RC		89'345	EUR	130'756	27.02.03	MOBILISATION TABLE
NEW ZEALAND - RC		25'000	NZD	18'763	04.03.03	IRAQ
NORWEGIAN - RC		67'445	NOK	13'521	10.12.2002	REGIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		503'000	NOK	101'204	29.10.2002	IRAQ

