

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 - FOCUS ON IRAN

11 June 2003

This Ops Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals.

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. 09; Period covered: 20 March - 2 June 2003;

Last update: Operations Update no. 08, issued 4 June 2003;

Next Update (no. 10) expected 18 June 2003

IN BRIEF

(to be completed by Relationship Management Dept.)

Appeal coverage: 15%

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

Outstanding needs: CHF 94,402,097

Summary: Short (three-five sentences) narrative description

Operational Developments w

The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has been designated as the main national relief organisation responsible for disaster preparedness and response, including camp management, by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its Iraq Task Force. The national mandate of the national society requires it to hold, at all times, sufficient resources of all kinds to assist 1% of the nation's population during national disasters. Therefore, the IRCS mobilized relief supplies to supplement its permanent disaster preparedness stocks to immediately assist up to 100,000 persons with the possibility to quite rapidly scale-up to serve 200,000 people and even beyond.

At the time of the launch of the appeal, the following relief package has been committed by the Iranian Red Crescent in support of possible refugees in Iran. The table below shows the breakdown in comparison with the regional deployment of the same articles. Please note, that the Federation in general did not include hygiene and food parcels into the pre-positioned relief supplies while jerry cans were procured as the main water containers instead of kettles and buckets.

Commodity	Iran (20,000 families)	Total in the region
Family tents 4x4	20,000	52,000
Blankets	100,000	385,000
Kerosine stove	20,000	45,000
kitchen sets 5 persons	20,000	66,000
Kettle	20,000	20,000
Bucket	20,000	20,000
Containers for water and fuel	40,000	40,000
kerosine lamps	20,000	61,000
Hygiene parcels (1 family/month)	60,000	60,000
Food parcel (1 family/months)	60,000	60,000

From the very beginning, the IRCS provided the co-ordination platform for UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and other partners in co-operation with the Iranian authorities i.e. with the Ministry of Interior and its Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA). The national society initiated preparations for 10 refugee camps in three western and south-western provinces bordering Iraq (Khuzestan, Ilam and Kermanshah). Campsites in the northern provinces of Khurdestan and West Azerbaijan dating back to the Iran-Iraq conflict in the eighties were re-activated.

In spite of no outflow of refugees from Iraq, the IRCS has maintained its level of preparedness throughout the conflict period with 2,000 specialized relief and rescue volunteers ready for immediate deployment.

As of 20 May it was decided, however, to reduce IRCS presence in the camp sites to a limited number of staff and volunteers on stand-by.

The Chamshari camp in the province of Ilam is the only of the ten camps originally prepared for the influx of refugees that has been taken into use. It is presently accommodating a group of Iranian nationals while their request for repatriation from Iraq is being processed by the Iranian authorities. The IRCS is responsible for shelter and food aid which is provided from the permanent disaster preparedness stock.

Several co-ordinated ICRC and IRCS consignments of humanitarian relief items, including hospital equipment and medicines, have been trucked to various cities in Iraq through the Khosravi and Mehran border-crossings. Over the past months the IRCS has provided more than 2,000 tonnes of food, hygiene articles, medical equipment (including hospital beds and wheel chairs), medicines and clothes to the vulnerable population in Iraq. More than half of this assistance was distributed during the conflict to displaced Iraqis at the border. The remainder was sent, in co-operation with ICRC, into Al-Kut, Kerbala and Baghdad. This includes 60 mt of humanitarian relief items donated by Iranian citizens and enterprises to the national society. The total value of the consignments is calculated at 793,000 US Dollars.

Coordination w

During the crisis, there has been a close co-ordination between the IRCS, the Federation delegation and ICRC in Iran with daily and later weekly co-ordination and information sharing meetings. Given the circumstances, the frequency of meeting has gradually been reduced and co-ordination now takes place in the form of ad hoc meetings and telephone contact.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Iraq, the Iranian Red Crescent has supported and co-ordinated the ICRC operations for Iraq and has so far supplied eight convoys of ICRC trucks and trailers with relief items such as wheat flour, medicinal kits, food parcels, tents, tarpaulins, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, water purification units, emergency health kits, water buckets, radio equipment and medical supplies. In one case, where ICRC experienced logistical constraints, IRCS trucks and drivers were being deployed to transport 160 mt of food through the Mehran border crossing.

Based on the framework agreement signed in Geneva between the Federation Secretariat and UNHCR on operational cooperation, a tripartite country agreement was negotiated. Although the agreement was not signed during the Iraqi crisis as planned, the parties (UNHCR/ Federation country delegation and IRCS) still consider it an important tool for future co-operation and are looking forward to it being signed.

Since the onset of the crisis, the Federation delegation has liaised closely with NGOs, other humanitarian actors and the UN specialized agencies, in particular UNHCR, which chairs the Task Force meetings, in which the Federation delegation participate. Until recently these meetings have taken place on a weekly basis.

Since May, these meetings are held bi-weekly with the focus shifting to repatriation of the caseload of some 210,000 Iraqi refugees whose presence in Iran dates back to the 1991 Gulf War.

At the time of reporting, most NGOs previously operating from Iran have pulled out of the country and re-located to Iraq.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

In line with its massive disaster response capacity and resources, and supported by the Federation, IRCS has been active in preparing for a potential influx of refugees. Until the upstart of trans-border activities, efforts were concentrated on preparing the ten selected camp sites and ensuring its effective functioning in co-operation with Iranian authorities, UN agencies and NGOs.

At the same time, IRCS is involved in the Movement plans for an effective provision of assistance to the Iraqi Red Crescent Society and the vulnerable population in Iraq by providing humanitarian relief supplies co-ordinated by ICRC.

The IRCS management has committed the national society to continue providing humanitarian assistance to the Iraq rehabilitation operation, including the provision of hardware for building up the disaster response capacity of the Iraqi Red Crescent headquarters and its branches, in full co-operation with the Federation and ICRC.

Objectives, activities and results w

Health and care w

Objective 1 : the health situation of the targeted population is maintained at satisfactory level within the emergency period of three months.

The Iranian Ministry of Health (MoH) has the overall responsibility for health related issues including the contingency planning to set up health clinics (poli-clinics) in the camps, each unit covering 20,000 refugees while the district general hospitals in the nearest town, were designated as referral hospitals. UNICEF was appointed the main agency dealing with health services in the camps by MoH.

The Iranian camp site model, designed by the IRCS and adjusted to actual conditions once the sites were identified, had made provisions for establishing basic health posts in co-ordination with the authorities, UNICEF and NGOs and manned by volunteers.

In March and April, Federation ERU pre-deployment health and wat/san assessment teams visited the camp sites in Iran to determine the needs of a possible ERU deployment. A team of technical representatives from the Norwegian Red Cross, Austrian Red Cross and the Japanese Red Cross covered the camp sites in the western provinces of Ilam, Kermanshah and Khuzestan while the Japanese Red Cross team also covered the sites in the northern provinces of West Azerbaijan and Kurdistan.

Water and sanitation w

Objective 1: the water and sanitation situation of the targeted population is maintained at satisfactory level with the emergency period of three months.

All campsites were designed to have showers with a provision rate of 1 per 100 persons. Latrines were planned for a short term and fixed toilets for longer term with a provision rate of 1 per 20-25 persons.

Depending on the site, water was planned to be supplied by pipeline from identified sources or from tanks, initially filled by water tanker until pipeline or local well was established.

The IRCS initiated preparations for adequate wat/san conditions in the camp sites in collaboration with the Iranian authorities, UN and NGOs.

Although the camp sites are not being used, installed latrine and shower facilities will remain on the sites for some time and will be the responsibility of the Iranian authorities.

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items w

Objective 1: The general condition of the targeted population is maintained within the emergency period of three months

In its preparedness for an eventual influx of refugees, the IRCS had stored food supplies in its branch warehouses located in close proximity to the camp sites to cover an initial emergency period. For longer-time supplies, the WFP had signed a letter of intent with the IRCS to provide food in the camps.

Shelter w

Objective 1: Adequate shelter facilities are maintained for the targeted population for the emergency period of three months:

The IRCS mobilized the necessary shelter facilities from their own disaster preparedness stocks. All provincial branches responsible for one or more camps kept trucks ready and packed for immediate deployment. The trucks remained loaded for a long period, but as the low likelihood of a refugee influx into Iran became clear, tents and other supplies were re-located to the warehouses.

In order to be well prepared, some of the provincial branches carried out drill exercises with staff and volunteers at the camp sites. Some two thousand specialized relief and rescue workers among staff and volunteers were on a permanent stand-by for immediate deployment.

Basic camp infrastructure such as access roads, electricity supply and lighting was set up and remains fully functional.

National Society Capacity Building w

During the preparatory phase of the operation, the Federation gave training and technical advice to IRCS staff and volunteers on the issues of logistics, general reporting, ERU assessment techniques and planning.

As the areas identified for camp sites are located in the former battle zone, at that time controlled alternatively by both Iraq and Iran military forces, and therefore contains a great number of war remnants, core IRCS staff and volunteers participated in mine and chemical weapons awareness campaigns organised by UNICEF.

ICRC carried out training in emergency tracing.

WHO hosted a one-week workshop in health in emergencies and disaster management for the national society headquarters- and provincial branch managers.

Although IRCS staff and volunteers did not get the opportunity to use and demonstrate their preparedness and skills as envisaged, IRCS personnel report that the experience gained by active preparations has been extremely useful, and will be of direct benefit in future disaster response activities.

Federation Delegation w

In order to assist the IRCS in the management of this operation, the Federation delegation in Iran was strengthened with three expatriate staff with expertise in disaster management, logistics and reporting.

In co-operation with the IRCS, the delegation prepared the missions and facilitated several field visits for the visiting pre-deployment ERU teams, including a one member logistics ERU preparedness assessment mission from the British Red Cross in March 2003.

In April and May, the delegation team made various visits to IRCS provincial branches and camp sites to assess preparedness and response capacity. Reports were compiled upon the completion of each visit and its findings shared with the national society.

Advocacy/Public Information w

The Federation's country delegation has given full support in the efforts to disseminate information on IRCS activities to the public through the media. Since the beginning of the crisis, the Head of Delegation has been giving interviews to the international media and briefings to the interagency meetings on a formal as well as informal basis. The delegation continues to provide input for the Federation's official operations updates, daily updates posted on DMIS and other information as requested.

Outstanding needs w

An operational budget of a total of CHF 2,180,400 of which 1.750,000 are related to direct costs of contingency preparations undertaken by the IRCS between October 2002 and May 2003 was presented to the Federation secretariat in May 2003 for reimbursement to the national society. The balance concerns the delegation co-ordination and management expenses.

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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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