

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 NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES: HUMANITARIAN CRISIS – FOCUS ON TURKEY

13 June 2003

Appeal No. 08/03; Operations Update no. 10

Appeal launched on 20 March 2003 for CHF 111,039,000 for nine months for 305,000 beneficiaries.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 75,000 (pre-positioning phase)

Period covered: 20 March – 30 June 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 over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 15%; See the Contributions List on the Federation's website for details.

Outstanding needs: CHF 94,402,097

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: 01.54/2002; 01.55/2002; 01.88/2003; 01.93/2003

Operational Summary: This operations update focuses on the preparedness efforts of the Turkish Red Crescent, also called Kizilay, to assist some 80,000 people potentially forced to flee from Iraq seeking shelter in neighbouring Turkey. The Turkish Red Crescent has been on stand by and ready for action since the launch of the US-led military campaign in Iraq. Concerns over a massive influx of refugees into Turkey, however, failed to materialise. With the latest developments in Iraq and in light of the reduced threat of population movements across the border, the Kizilay has scaled down its presence in the border areas. All the staff members deployed for the operation have now returned to their branches and efforts are made to integrate the lessons learned into ongoing programmes of the Red Crescent.

Operational developments

As the situation in the Middle East had potential to trigger events with significant humanitarian consequences, including population movements of considerable magnitude within Iraq and the countries bordering Iraq - Iran, Syria, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and respective Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have formulated a strong, flexible, and cohesive Movement-wide strategy.

The Federation's immediate overall priorities were primarily focused on supporting national societies in countries neighboring Iraq in their efforts to effectively deliver assistance to the people of Iraq, particularly in the event of a large population movement, by:

- scaling up operational capacity;
- enhanced disaster preparedness training;
- pre-positioning of stocks; and
- preparing camp sites for refugees or displaced persons.

As the situation has been evolving and there was considerable uncertainty regarding the direction, duration, size, and impact of the military action and the resulting humanitarian crisis, it was difficult to predict the total number of people that might have eventually sought assistance and protection outside Iraq.

The Turkish Government estimate of the displaced, who could head towards Turkey, was about 280,000. The UN estimate of total influx – refugees and asylum seekers - to Turkey was, however, about 136,000 people and the plan aimed at providing protection and humanitarian services within the border of Turkey and right at the border of two countries.

The massive influx of refugees into Turkey, however, did not materialize as initially anticipated. Reports indicate that instead of fleeing to other countries, many people decided to move to safer areas within Iraq.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Over the last three months, The Red Crescent Society of Turkey has been engaged in extensive preparations to respond quickly to rapidly changing circumstances and be ready to meet the immediate shelter and other emergency requirements of the affected population. The National Society had originally braced itself to handle an estimated 80,000 incoming refugees.

Responding to the potentially enormous humanitarian needs caused by possible mass population movements across the border, the Turkish Red Crescent was appointed by the Government to coordinate and run the humanitarian operation in Turkey on behalf of the Turkish Government. The national society, supported by the Federation has quickly developed effective contingency plans aiming at establishing refugee camps in the border areas and providing services – health and care, water and sanitation, the distribution of non-food and food items - for target beneficiaries.

The TRCS has demonstrated a high degree of professionalism. Its response was rapid and efficient.



Turkish Red Crescent staff and volunteers discuss their preparations for a possible influx of refugees from Iraq

The Turkish Red Crescent, also called Kizilay, has immediately deployed some 400 staff in Diyarbakir, Silopi and Gaziantep, in the south-east of the country to prepare support in six camps, with the provision of accommodation and psycho-social help, and mobilized relief items from its own disaster preparedness stocks. Within weeks, tents, blankets, mattresses and kitchen sets enough to help 50,000 beneficiaries have been pre-positioned to the border areas.

59 vehicles were put on stand by. In addition, 16 mobile kitchens, with the capacity to cook 2,500 meals per hour were deployed to Silopi, a town close to the Iraqi border, together with two mobile hospitals. The TRCS also provided multi-purpose tents for schools, mosques and other social activities to meet community needs.

Eventually, the six reception camps constructed by the Turkish Red Crescent were not required as no Iraqi refugee crossed the Turkish border.

As mentioned above, the TRCS contingency plan envisaged support for 80,000 people. However, not all the relief items were available in its stocks. The outstanding needs and items for the replenishment of stocks included:

- Tents 16,000
- Blankets 160,000
- Kerosene stove 16,000
- Kerosene heater 16,000
- Mattresses 40,000
- Kitchen sets 16,000
- Jerry cans for water 16,000
- Jerry cans for kerosene 16,000
- Kerosene lamps 16,000
- Towels 48,000
- Soap sets (5 pcs) 6,000

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has contributed CHF 250,000 in relief items to Kizilay's Iraq operation and CHF 50,000 in cash for distribution cost was provided by Swiss Red Cross. UNHCR has provided additional 18,000,000,000 Turkish Liras (USD 1,200) for transport and 8,000 mattresses. AmeriCare has donated 1,584 bottles of vitamin syrup, 1,386 vitamin tablets, 2,550 syringes, 2,550 water containers, 10 2tethoscopes, 1,224 pairs of boots, 4,800 blankets ad 24 boxes of health kits.

Table below summarises the TRCS contingency plan within the Iraq crisis operation for 80,000 people.

ITEM	Quantity Needed	KIZILAY Stock	UNHCR	SWISS RC	Ameri Cares	TOTAL Available
Tents	16,000	16,000				16,000
Blankets	160,000	160,000		6,000	4,800	174,800
Kerosene stove	16,000					0
Kerosene heater	16,000					0
Mattresses	40,000	8,640	8,000	3,000		19,640
Kitchen sets	16,000	9,921		2,779		12,700
Jerry can for water	16,000					0
Jerry can for kerosene	16,000					0
Kerosene lamps	16,000					0
Towel	48,000					0
Soap sets (5pcs)	16,000					0

The Federation has been assisting its colleagues at the Turkish Red Crescent to strengthen their disaster preparedness capacity by providing additional stocks required to meet the potential needs. The delegation in Turkey in cooperation with the Secretariat in Geneva arranged for the procurement of 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.

These items would allow the Kizilay to meet 25 per cent of the needs at initial stage. As the situation was evolving, the procurement of the remaining missing supplies was decided to be arranged for at later stages. The decision proved to be an efficient solution as no population movements have been registered across the Turkish border so far.

All non-food items procured and pre-positioned in the country are now in place in the Turkish Red Cross warehouses in Etimesgut, Maltepe, Elazig, Erzurum, Manisa, Afyon, Adana and Karistiran. The relief items procured within the framework of the Federation's emergency appeal will significantly strengthen the TRCS disaster management capacity. Turkey is a disaster prone country and the significance of the adequate preparedness for emergencies cannot be overestimated. A well-developed disaster management system will ensure rapid response and efficient coordination at the time of emergencies, particularly as the TRCS is one of the major players in this field.

Alongside the ongoing disaster preparedness work, the 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.

A core component of the TRCS contingency planning included a psychosocial support programme aimed at enhancing individual and community capacity and resiliency, through increased mobilization and utilization of individual and community resources and services. Psychosocial support of the TRCS staff was also prioritized and included psychosocial first aid, community mobilization and workers support.

All TRCS personnel operational in the field have been specially trained in psychosocial support during emergencies in order to help effected communities, themselves and each other while accomplishing the hard task of assisting the refugee population. This is believed to be a more effective response, a modification of the relief culture in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. The training included simple communications techniques rather than psychotherapy. The national society organized the similar training for the workers of the Social Services and Child Protection Ministry too planned to be deployed in refugee camps.

The psychosocial support programme was launched in response to the psychological trauma experienced following the devastating earthquakes that shook the country in 1999. It has then been accepted as a core component for branch development and prior to this crisis, efforts were underway to integrate psychosocial programme into pilot branches. As a part of this process, TRCS has identified psychosocial programming as a component of an integrated relief response in complex emergencies and natural disasters.

As no other national society in the region has been engaged in psycho-social support programmes, the Turkish Red Crescent focused on strengthening cooperation in this field. Copies of the programme material used by the Turkish national society have been disseminated to other Federation delegations in the region for further sharing with their counterpart national societies.



Training in psychosocial support has been a crucial element of the operation for a possible humanitarian emergency in south-eastern Turkey

With the latest developments in Iraq, the possibility of population movements towards the Turkish border has decreased. The Turkish Red Crescent has scaled down its operation along the border between Turkey and Iraq. All the staff deployed to the operational area has returned to their branches and are now integrating the lessons learned into ongoing activities of the Red Crescent.

Federation coordination

Federation and the Turkish Red Crescent have worked in partnership with government authorities, United Nations agencies and other non-governmental organisations as part of a coordinated effort to confront the potential humanitarian challenges in case of massive population movements from Iraq.

The contingency planning in Turkey was part of Movement-wide and coordinated humanitarian relief strategy. All components of the Movement have been involved in extensive coordination to ensure that humanitarian support is delivered effectively and in accordance with strict standards and principles. The Federation has maintained close working contacts with the national society in order to discuss and agree on practical steps to enable it cope with the potential emergencies. Contingency planning has included regular consultations with the ICRC, and the constant exchange of information with the United Nations agencies, particularly UNHCR.

A cooperation agreement was signed in Geneva between the Federation and UNHCR to provide framework for operational cooperation between the UNHCR and the Federation including individual Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in relation to the Middle East crisis and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to conflict affected populations in Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey. Building on the capacities and mandates of each, the Agreement has set out the potential areas of cooperation and the terms and conditions governing the operation modalities of such operation.

At the country level, the UNHCR, the ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and the TRCS reached an agreement on the 'would be' roles and responsibilities of response organizations in early December 2002. This was followed by a four-day seminar organised and conducted by the Federation in cooperation with the TRCS and the UNHCR for deputy governors, high level representatives of the different government agencies at headquarters, the TRCS and programme officers of the relevant UN and other international agencies. The purpose and objectives of the workshop were to:

- establish common understanding on roles and mandates of international organizations and agencies;
- orient the camp managers on international laws, standards and mandates in respect of refugee/asylum seekers; and
- ensure these responsible people from the government agencies, TRCS and international organizations know each other and speak the same language before their deployment.

The Sphere handbook, code of conduct during emergencies and enormous amounts of documents from UNHCR and other UN agencies have been distributed to the participants. The TRCS played an important facilitation role during the seminar and has been appreciated by the participants and sponsors for the well-done work.

Inter-agency coordination efforts have been ongoing through regular sectoral and regional meetings. The TRCS has established a general coordination unit for humanitarian assistance in Diyarbakir, regional coordination unit in Silopi, the southeastern Turkish border town, and a logistics unit in Gaziantep, which was also declared the first arrival point for relief items.

Roles and functions of various organizations/institutions involved in the operation in Turkey are summarized below:

National organisations /Turkey:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs: responsible for the coordination of international assistance and relations;
- Ministry of Interior: responsible for overall coordination and camp management including security;
- Ministry of health: responsible for the coordination and delivery of health services, nutrition, water and sanitation issues in collaboration with the TRCS and UNICEF.
- Ministry of education: coordination of education and psychological support to children;
- Ministry of defense/General Staff: provide protection and security;
- Civic – military logistics support/NATO standard: assist and facilitate the delivery of intended humanitarian services - provide logistical support.
- Turkish Red Crescent responsible for coordinating and running the humanitarian assistance operation on behalf of the Turkish government.

UN system:

- UNHCR: leading coordination agency of the UN system, responsible for protection and registration of refugees/asylum seekers in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and other agencies;
- UNICEF: responsible to coordinate health/nutrition, psycho-social support in collaboration with the relevant government agencies and the TRCS;
- IOM: coordinate with the UNHCR, Ministry of Interior and the TRCS in the transportation of refugees/asylum seekers;
- WFP provides basic food supplies in coordination with the UNHCR and the TRCS.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement:

- Federation: lead agency in Turkey coordinating humanitarian assistance within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement; provide technical, material and other assistance to the TRCS operations and serve as a link between the TRCS and members of the Movement; mobilize international donor organizations resources to support the TRCS operations through advocacy and international representation; play active monitoring role.
- ICRC: responsible for tracing, family messages and protection in collaboration with the TRCS, UNHCR and the relevant government agencies;
- Partner National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies: on bilateral programmes in Turkey – Red Cross Societies of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Italy – closely work with the Federation’s delegation and the TRCS in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and ensure individual security.

Non-governmental foundations/associations:

- Turkish psychological association: assist and advice planned services;
- Children welfare agency: assist and advice planned UNICEF programmes;
- OXFAM: coordinate potable water delivery with UNHCR and the TRCS.



Recent earthquakes, such as this one in Afyon, have made the Turkish Red Crescent aware of the importance of psychosocial support

Now that concerns over an influx of refugees into Turkey failed to materialize, relief workers in the southeastern Turkish border area have turned their attention to the humanitarian crisis inside Iraq.

National Society Capacity Building

While the focus was the emergency relief efforts, the operation provided valuable learning and growth opportunities for the Red Crescent Society in Turkey. Capacities of people at the national society have strengthened as management was exposed to new operational methods, requiring rapid decision-making and intense multi-actor coordination. Staff and volunteers benefited from on-the-job learning. Lessons learned will be analysed and integrated into ongoing Red Crescent programmes.



The psycho-social support programme has become a core component of the TRCS branch development efforts

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Given the delicate and complex political and security situation in and around Iraq, communications required special attention. In line with the Statutes of the Movement, the Federation has acted as a representative of the Turkish Red Crescent at the international level, taking advantage of the interests in the country to provide coverage of the national society and its activities.

In accordance with the Seville Agreement and the subsequent communications policy agreed by the Federation and the ICRC, the Federation has acted as a spokesperson for the Movement operations in Turkey. In Diyarbakir, a press and information centre for local and foreign journalists was established. The capacity of the TRCS was additionally supported by a Federation media delegate who has taken the responsibility for national and international media requests forwarded to the TRCS headquarters.

The TRCS and the Federation has been constantly in touch with representatives of international and national media disseminating information on the Red Crescent preparedness efforts to provide physical and psychological relief for potential refugees. A number of articles were published in the local newspapers. A story about the TRCS work was posted on the Federation's web page. The Federation/TRCS information team gave few live and pre-recorded interviews on the preparedness efforts undertaken by the Kizilay in preparation for the potential influx of refugees.

For further information 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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