

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

DPRK: TRAIN BLAST IN RYONGCHON COUNTY

28 April 2004

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

Preliminary Emergency Appeal N° 12/2004; Operations Update no. 01; Period covered: 26 to 28 April 2004. ([click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website](#)).

Appeal history:

- Launched on 26 April 2004 for CHF 1,652,000 (USD 1.25 million or EUR 1.06 million) for 12 months for 2,000 families (10,000 people).
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated : CHF 50,000.

Outstanding needs: CHF 1, 652,000 (USD 1.25 million or EUR 1.06 million)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Annual Appeal (01.68/2004)

Operational Summary: International donors such as the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) through the Danish Red Cross, USAID/OFDA/American Red Cross, AusAid/Australian Red Cross, CIDA/Canadian Red Cross, SIDA/Swedish Red Cross, and the Finnish, Japanese, and the Republic of Korea National Red Cross Societies have quickly responded to the needs by providing support for the DPRK Red Cross' and the Federation's relief activities. There remains, however, increasing concern and pressing needs as the concentration of medical supplies and resources on the emergency has placed an extra strain on the country's limited amount of medical supplies leaving other areas of the country at risk.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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Background

Several thousand people remain homeless following the massive explosion which occurred during the middle of the day on Thursday 22 April at Ryongchon railway station, in North Pyongan Province, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The explosion occurred when railway wagons, said to be loaded with highly combustible ammonium nitrate, blew up. The powerful blast that resonated throughout the entire town of Ryongchon obliterated the station, and devastated the immediately surrounding area leaving 161 people dead and

some 1,300 injured. Among the dead were 76 children whose school was levelled in the blast. Figures released by DPRK's Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) on 25 April confirmed that some 1,850 homes were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, while a further 6,360 have sustained partial damage. Those families left homeless are still temporarily housed in public facilities, or in some cases relying on tarpaulins for shelter. Among the large number of public buildings damaged were schools, the Ryongchon county hospital, a factory and an agricultural college.

Over the past six days partial damage to Ryongchon county hospital prevented the facility from treating patients with severe injuries. Some 370 critically injured patients were therefore sent to the North Pyongan provincial hospital at Sinuiju. As of 28 April, however, Ryongchon hospital is once again becoming operational and regaining its capacity to treat patients with severe injuries.

Seventy per cent of the 371 patients who were in hospital on 28 April are school children. The largest single group of injuries are head and facial burns and wounds caused due to splintered glass from windows, and eye injuries due to penetrating objects (about 90 children injured).

At the moment the DPRK Red Cross and the International Federation are diverting medical supplies, which were scheduled for delivery to four hospitals as part of the ongoing four-province Red Cross medical programme, and transport to the affected area. Under ordinary circumstances the supplies are sufficient for three months; however given the needs created by the explosion these supplies are expected to be depleted within weeks. Extra medical supplies are expected through the government, the World Health Organisation (WHO), non-governmental organizations and Red Cross channels over the coming week. Limited amounts of available petrol and trucks, however, are placing additional constraints on the delivery of assistance.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

The impact of the explosion was felt immediately throughout Ryongchon county, instantly alerting the county's nine local Red Cross branches who responded immediately under the coordination of the vice-chairman of the local county Red Cross branch. The DPRK Red Cross and the International Federation are arranging the transport and delivery of medical and household relief supplies to the affected area. The Republic of Korea Red Cross has donated relief and medical supplies worth USD 770,000, and is playing an instrumental role in coordinating the transport of relief items into DPRK. Additionally, the East Asia regional delegation's information and disaster management delegates, and country delegates in DPRK are providing the press with a steady flow of information concerning the situation and the Red Cross response.

Latest Activities (as of 28 April)

The overall objective of this preliminary appeal (12/2004) is to address both the short-term and long-term needs of the people affected by the explosion in Ryongchon County with a three phase operation .

Phase I: Distribution of relief items from Red Cross disaster preparedness centres and other available in-country sources.

On Monday 26 April, the DPRK Red Cross sent two representatives to the field to monitor the distribution of relief items. Furthermore, the DPRK Red Cross vice-chairman traveled to Ryongchon and Sinuiju on 27 April to monitor how the situation is evolving. The Federation's logistics delegate conducted a field visit to the hospital in Ryongchon. On Wednesday 28 April, the DPRK Red Cross/International Federation's water sanitation and health team conducted a technical assessment of the affected area and details of the findings of this visit will be shared in the next operations update.

On 28 April the DPRK Red Cross and the Federation released a medical tent from its stock in Sinuiju to temporarily house the Ryongchon EUP clinic. The clinic's building which was located close to the railway station was completely destroyed by the explosion.

Three Federation land cruisers transporting specialised medication, medication for the treatment of eye injuries and intravenous fluid provided by WHO and Premiere Urgence arrived in Sinuiju on 28 April. Consumption of

medicines for the treatment of eye injuries is far higher than the ordinary usage rate. Ordinarily fifty packages of the eye medication is sufficient to cover the needs of a three month period; however, given the nature of the disaster and the enormous number of problems patients are experiencing with their eyes some ninety packets of medication are being used per week. Cooperation between relief agencies has been very good and the DPRK Red Cross and the Federation are working with organisations such as the WHO to ensure these needs for medicine are met. Additionally the Federation's logistics delegate in DPRK is working to find solutions to the shortage of transport and in particular the shortage of fuel that is being created by the crisis.

Ryongchon operation: DPRK Red Cross/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Distribution (Household items):

Date	Item	Unit	Quantity	Warehouse
24.4.04	Kitchen set	set	2,000	Sinuiju, DP Centre
24.4.04	Blanket	pcs	10,000	Sinuiju, DP centre
24.4.04	Water container	pcs	2,000	Sinuiju DP centre
24.4.04	Tarpaulin	pcs	2,000	Sinuiju DP centre
24.4.04	Water purification tablet	tablet	720,000	Sinuiju DP centre
24.4.04	FA kit (DM)	kit	687	Pyongyang DP Centre
24.4.04	FAP refill kit (CBFA)	kit	30	Pyongyang DP Centre
24.4.04	TOTAL			
24.4.04	Kitchen set	set	500	Sinuiju DP centre
24.4.04	Blanket	pcs	4,000	Sinuiju DP centre
24.4.04	Water container	pcs	1,228	Sinuiju DP centre
24.4.04	Water container	pcs	1,812	Pyongyang DP Centre
	TOTAL			
28.4.04	One Truckload of Household items			

Distribution (medicine):

Date	Item	Kit	Cartons	Hospital
24.4.04	Supplementary kit	8	80	Ryongchon CH
24.4.04	Supplementary kit	13	130	Sinuiju
24.4.04	Supplementary kit (extra)	3	30	Sinuiju
	TOTAL			
28.04.04	One Truckload Medicine			

A ship transporting relief items, from the Republic of Korea Red Cross left Incheon Harbor on Wednesday at 11h30. The ship which is transporting 16 containers of emergency household items such as food, blankets and clothing is scheduled to arrive in Nampo on Thursday 29 April. The items will then be transported to the affected area by the Federation and the DPR Korea Red Cross. The logistics capacity of the Federation has received positive recognition from agencies working in Ryongchon and is key to successfully meeting the needs of the beneficiaries, by ensuring the efficient transport of the items.

Coordination

Representatives of the Federation participated in a coordination meeting held by OCHA earlier this week. During the meeting it was determined that the Federation will function as the focal point in regard to activities concerning family shelter, the distribution of non-food and relief items water and sanitation. The World Food Programme was recognised as the focal point for food assistance. The WHO will cover health and nutrition support, with the Red Cross being acknowledged as a key player in the sector as well. The UNDP was acknowledged as the focal point in regard to economic recovery/rehabilitation/reconstruction of houses.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

D.P.R. KOREA - Train Explosion

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 12/2004

PLEDGES RECEIVED

26/04/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,652,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 0.0%
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				0	CHF	0.0%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	