

# 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

## DPR KOREA: TRAIN EXPLOSION IN RYONGCHON COUNTY

6 May 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

**Appeal No. 12/2004; Operations Update no. 3; Period covered: 30 April – 6 May, 2004; Appeal coverage: 17 %; ([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) for 12 Months; Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 50,000.**

**Outstanding needs : CHF 1, 370,477**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Annual Appeal (01.68/04)**

**Operational Summary:** The DPRK Red Cross and the International Federation are close to finalising the details of the plan of action for the three phases of Red Cross support in Ryongchon. Thanks to support from ECHO, sister national societies and other donors the DPRK Red Cross and International Federation have been able to maintain the efficient momentum of relief activities. The DPRK Red Cross has prepared a procurement plan for the replacement of disaster preparedness stock. The final plan is expected by 18 May at which stage the emergency appeal will be finalised.

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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](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## Operational Developments

Ryongchon county is in the process of clearing away large amounts of rubble and debris following the destructive explosion which occurred two weeks ago on 22 April at Ryongchon railway station located in North Pyongan Province, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). The explosion which by now has left some 161 people dead and injured some 1,300 occurred when railway wagons, said to be loaded with highly combustible ammonium nitrate, blew up. Among the dead were 76 children whose school was levelled in the blast.

According to DPRK's Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) some 1,850 homes were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable, while a further 6,360 sustained partial damage. Among the large number of public buildings damaged was the railway station, schools, the Ryongchon county hospital, a polyclinic, a factory and an agricultural college.

Over the past days a lot of progress has been made in regard to cleaning up the area where the explosion occurred. Piles of debris where buildings once stood now line the city streets, as people, including school children, are out in the city clearing the way of fallen bricks. People who were sheltered in tents have been relocated so as to permit the clearing of the area with heavy machinery. Additionally, trucks, tractors, and ox carts are being used to remove the rubble, and most of the houses which were partially damaged are being cleared.

According to DPRK's Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) there are 1,850 homeless families. Some 450 families are still living in temporal makeshift shelters and 30 families are living in public buildings while 1,370 families are temporarily sharing shelters with friends and neighbours.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Latest Activities as of 6 May

**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.**

In the aftermath of the explosion, the DPRK Red Cross and the Federation were able to rapidly provide relief items to the affected area due to the existing network of disaster preparedness centres. The DPRK Red Cross and the Federation released relief items and medical supplies worth some EUR 326,808.

The following is a table of disaster preparedness items and medical supplies which the DPRK Red Cross will need to be replenished in order to maintain the appropriate level of preparedness.

Items	Unit	Quantity	Remarks
Kitchen sets	set	2,500	From Sinuiju & Pyongyang disaster preparedness centres.
Blankets	pcs	14,000	
Water containers	pcs	5,040	
Tarpaulins	Pcs	2,000	
Water purification tablet	tablets	720,000	
First aid Kit	kit	687	From Pyongyang DP centre.
First aid package refill kits	kit	30	
Supplementary medicines	Kit	8	Ryongchon
Supplementary medicines	Kit	13	Sinuiju
Supplementary medicines	Kit	3	Ryongchon
Supplementary medicines	Kit	6	Sinuiju (not counted in previous report)
Supplementary medicines	Kit	3	Ryongchon (distributed 30 April)
Supplementary medicines	kit	12	Sinuiju (distributed 30 April)

The demands created by the emergency exhausted the medical supplies delivered to Sinuiju and Ryongchon which had been distributed by the DPRK Red Cross and the Federation on 19 April, three days before the explosion, as part of the Societies' Federation supported quarterly distribution of medical supplies serving 1,762 institutions in three provinces and one municipality.

#### **Distribution of Relief Items (30 April – 6 May)**

The Federation's logistics delegate in DPRK accompanied six trucks with relief goods and medicine from the Republic of Korea Red Cross. The items were taken to Sinuiju on 3 May. The relief goods included: blankets, clothes, sport clothes, some food (noodles) and mineral water. An additional 10 - 12 truck loads will be brought from Pyongyang from the same consignment (including more medicine). The DPRK Red Cross has prepared a procurement plan for the replacement of disaster preparedness stock.

#### **Water**

The International Federation as supporting partner of the DPRK Red Cross has offered to play a lead role in all future water and sanitation activities related to the international community's support to cover the acute needs for homeless people and the future reconstruction activities in Ryongchon. The input to the pending Federation appeal will be made within the next coming days as new information becomes available from DPRK's Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) who is in the process of drafting a master plan for the rehabilitation phase. This master plan will include the design of the urban water supply system. The Federation's water and sanitation delegate attended a coordination meeting on 7 May where meeting participants confirmed the critical need to concentrate on supporting Ryonchong's water and sanitation systems.

The Federation is also in the process of coordinating the immediate water needs through the mobilising of bladder tanks, temporary tap stands and pump plus power equipment. These activities will be implemented in close collaboration with UNICEF and other NGOs.

#### **Health**

According to the latest information provided by the DPRK Red Cross branch in Ryongchon, four primary health clinics were affected either partially or totally from the explosion. The Polyclinic located in the vicinity of the explosion was totally destroyed. This clinic had the capacity to deal with some 80-100 outpatients per day. The DPRK Red Cross' health coordinator is liaising with WHO to get the technical specifications on the damaged Polyclinic. The other three primary health care clinics sustained partial structural damage, stress fractures and or the loss of windows. The county hospital is now resuming its activities, in spite of some structural damage to the building.

A tent is being used as a first aid station to treat minor injuries sustained during the clean up and reconstruction phase.

#### **Coordination**

The value of known assistance provided to Ryongchon is currently US\$28.7 million (excluding ongoing appeals). International agencies active in Ryongchon are working in close coordination with the government and each other. The respective agencies have assumed responsibility to function as the focal point for the various sectors where work is ongoing. The International Federation is functioning as the focal point in the areas of water and sanitation and temporary family shelter and non-food items; the WFP is the focal point for food aid; the WHO is the focal point for health and nutrition; UNICEF is the focal point for education; and, UNDP is the focal point for economic recovery and infrastructure.

On 6 May, representatives of the Federation and one desk officer from DPRK Red Cross attended the UNDP chaired meeting on reconstruction. The FDRC presented the overview of the reconstruction needs for Ryongchon. The Federation pledged interest in the reconstruction of the water and sanitation system, and the polyclinic. UNDP made a pledge for dwelling houses; and, a group of NGOs (GAA, Cesvi and Concern) pledged interest in schools, nurseries and kindergartens.

# D.P.R. KOREA - Train Explosion

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 12/2004

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

29/04/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1,652,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 17.0%
CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA/IHA		100,000	CAD	97,600	26.04.04	
FINNISH - RC		50,000	EUR	77,975	27.04.04	
JAPANESE - RC		83,195	USD	105,948	26.04.04	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				281,523	CHF	17.0%

### 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	