

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

8 September 2004

RUSSIA - HOSTAGE CRISIS IN BESLAN, NORTH OSSETIA

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. 19/2004; Operations Update no. 01

Launched on 6 September 2004 for CHF 864,844 (USD 680,000 or EUR 563,000) for 12 months to assist 2,000 beneficiaries.

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Russia annual appeal (01.82/2004) click below
http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/018204.pdf

Operational Summary: Please refer to information bulletins and news stories for further information on the Red Cross response to the hostage crisis at: <http://www.ifrc.org> (for news stories); http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?rpts04/Ossetia%20Info.Bull%20no.2.pdf and http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?rpts04/Ossetia%20Info.Bull%20no.1.pdf (for bulletins).

This appeal for longer term rehabilitation support for the people of Beslan was launched on Monday 6 September. An action plan is being developed with the help of psychological and emergency health specialists. In the meantime, Russian Red Cross and the International Federation continue to fundraise locally and internationally for relief items to meet the immediate needs of the people affected by the school hostage crisis.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *Russian Red Cross:* Phone 7 095 126 5731; Fax 7 095 230 2868; email mail@redcross.ru
- *Russia Delegation:* Phone 7 095 937 5267; Fax 7 095 937 5263; email Moscow@ifrc.org
- *Miro Modrusan, Desk officer, Secretariat.* Phone 41 22 730 4324; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email miro.modrusan@ifrc.org

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>

Background

Russia is in mourning for the 336 people killed during a siege on a school in Beslan, a town in the Southern Republic of North Ossetia. On 1st September, masked armed fighters stormed the school taking more than 1,000 children, their relatives and teachers hostage. Family relatives had been at the school celebrating the first day of the new term when the hostage takers took over at approximately 9.30am local time.

The siege ended in carnage last Friday, when bombs rigged up inside the school exploded, collapsing part of a roof, and Russian Special Forces moved in.

Over 400 people remain injured in hospitals in Beslan and neighbouring towns. 17 of the most injured, including 11 children, have been transferred to Moscow. Official figures put the death toll at 336 although with up to 200 people still unaccounted for this figure is feared to rise. Some children in hospital are too young or traumatised to identify themselves. Many bodies lie unrecognisable in hospital morgues, disfigured by the explosions that rocked the school.

Funerals for up to 200 of the dead took place in Beslan on Monday.



A Russian police officer carries a released baby from the school seized by heavily armed masked men and women in the town of Beslan in the province of North Ossetia near Chechnya, 2 September, 2004. An armed gang, holding hundreds of people hostage in a Russian school, on Thursday freed four infants and at least two women. REUTERS/Viktor Korotayev CVI/GB 02/09/2004 /courtesy www.alertnet.org

Operational Developments

The International Federation and Russian Red Cross are in the process of developing an action plan - with assistance from disaster relief health specialists based in Geneva - to meet longer term needs as outlined in the appeal launched on Monday.

To read the appeal, please go to: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?04/1904.pdf.

Russian Red Cross representatives were in Beslan over the weekend conducting a needs survey in four hospitals in and around the town, and results of an ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) needs assessment are expected in the near future. The Moscow delegation information officer has flown to Beslan to speak with the local Red Cross branch and Red Cross staff and volunteers working on the scene, and start a preliminary capacity assessment. The Moscow delegation has also requested a psychosocial support coordinator to assist in design and implementation of activities to support rehabilitation of people affected by the hostage crisis.

The Red Cross fundraising campaign for support to the people affected by the school hostage crisis is fully underway. Yesterday evening, one of Russia's major television channels, NTV, broadcast a rock concert, under the Red Cross emblem, with running phone lines collecting donations from the general public. A Moscow company, which has worked in cooperation with Russian Red Cross on its HIV/AIDS anti-stigma campaign, has voluntarily designed and printed postcards with details on how to support Russian Red Cross response to the Beslan school hostage crisis, and is distributing these in Moscow and the surrounding region.



Russian Red Cross Vice President Raisa Lukhutsova giving an interview to NTV, one of Russia's most popular TV channels. On September 7 NTV broadcast a charity rock concert, appealing for donations to support the Red Cross response to the Beslan crisis.

Leading Russian and international journalists and TV channels continue to approach the Red Cross for interviews on their involvement in the ongoing relief operation.

Representatives of Russian Red Cross and the Moscow delegation have conducted television, radio and press interviews with national and international press organisations and press offices, including the BBC and the UN in New York. The Federation appeal will be posted on the UN and Alertnet.org websites.

The profile of the Red Cross in Russia has been hugely increased during the past few days, with a particularly strong media presence in and around the Red Cross headquarters. A Red Cross press conference for Russian Red Cross, the International Federation and International Committee of the Red Cross is planned for next week to discuss latest developments and offer national and international media the chance to address Red Cross staff who have been operating in Beslan.

Russian Red Cross and the International Red Cross have also been working in close cooperation with high level officials within the Russian government, in particular with Emercom (Ministry for Emergencies).

Meanwhile, Russian Red Cross continues to be inundated with national and international donations – from businesses and members of the public – of money, toys, sweets, mattresses, bed linen, computers, technical and medical equipment and other relief items. Volunteers have been working with Red Cross staff to package and load these donations. Several trucks loaded with these relief items departed today for a Moscow airport, where goods will be loaded on to Emercom (Russian Federation Ministry of Emergencies) planes. The planes will leave Moscow tomorrow at 7am and are due to arrive in Vladikavkaz at 10am local time.

Norwegian Red Cross in cooperation with the Norwegian Board of Health affairs late on Monday evening dispatched a flight to the North Ossetia Republican Branch of Russian Red Cross. The consignment, containing 10 surgical supply kits, three ambulances and other medical equipment, was funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. German Red Cross will be sending a charter flight with medicines and medical supplies to Beslan, in response to the request from the Russian Embassy - following a request from the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation.

A truckload of medical supplies, funded by ICRC, left from Moscow for Beslan yesterday evening. Experienced ICRC tracing teams will start working to help trace those people still unaccounted for five days after the bloody end to the siege. Russian Red Cross, the International Federation and ICRC are working in close cooperation and coordination throughout this period.

Other donations – in kind and cash – are incoming or have been indicated by sister National Societies, including British, Icelandic, Swedish, Danish, and Japanese National Red Cross Societies, and embassies (including USA embassy). The Irish government (USD 100,000) and Japanese government (EUR 100,000) have also supported the appeal.



Emma Kalugina and her daughter Dasha brought some books to Red Cross as donations for the children in Beslan.

“This is the first time I’ve taken part in such huge charity appeal” says Emma, a professional psychologist. “I just had to. Initially I wanted to take these books directly to the children brought to hospitals in Moscow, but I realized that doctors are too busy to deal with this. Then I found the Red Cross appeal on the Internet and we came here”.

When they saw how much work is happening at the Red Cross reception point, Emma and Dasha volunteered to help with accepting and packaging the donations that continue to arrive.