

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

RUSSIA – HOSTAGE CRISIS IN BESLAN, NORTH OSSETIA

19 November 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. 19/2004; Operations Update no. 3; Period covered: 6th October to 1st November 2004. Appeal coverage: 79.0 %; ([Please click here to go directly to Contributions List](#)).

Appeal history:

- Launched on 6th September for CHF 864,844 (USD 680,000 or EUR 563,000) to assist 2,000 beneficiaries for 12 months
- Appeal budget revised for CHF 1,867,348 (USD 1,612,625 or EUR 1,234,490) to assist 5,000 beneficiaries until August 2006 ([Please click here to go directly to the revised budget](#))
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 50,000

Outstanding needs : CHF 392,559 (USD 338,850 or EUR 259,565)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Russia: Hostage Crisis in Beslan, North Ossetia Emergency Appeal ([Please click here to go directly to the Emergency Appeal](#))

Operational Summary: This operations update includes a revision of the initial Emergency Appeal. The revision has been made following intensive assessment of the needs in Beslan and North Ossetia, and identifies a new focus for effective and efficient Red Cross intervention in relation to the crisis.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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Background

Russia is in mourning for over 300 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 over 200 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 on 3rd September, when bombs rigged up inside the school exploded, collapsing part of a roof in the gym where most of the children and women were held. Russian Special Forces moved in and fierce fighting broke out. During the chaos that followed, anxious relatives rushed forward to help the fleeing hostages who had been held for two days without food or water. The local hospital admitted 599 injured people in just three hours.

Operational developments



School no. 1 in Beslan is filled with flowers, bottles of water, toys, candles and sweets. A memorial will be built on the site in memory of the victims of the hostage crisis

As of 1 November, approximately 100 people are still being treated in hospitals in Moscow. DNA testing is being used to identify bodies still lying in the morgues, the majority of whom have now been identified and taken for burial. There is no further information on the people reported missing, although the total number of missing appears to have diminished.

In addition to the physical wounds received, the local population – ex-hostages, their friends and relatives - and the whole population of Beslan and North Ossetia is experiencing huge psychological trauma. Ex-hostages and their families continue to travel to sanatoriums in Russia and abroad for rehabilitation and recuperation.

Public support to the people of Beslan has been overwhelming. Money and support has poured in from national and international organizations, governments and private donors; four teachers have set up a website at www.beslan.ru, detailing activities and support to people in

Beslan. The information on activities of the Russian Red Cross on providing help to the victims in Beslan can be accessed at the web-site www.red-cross.ru

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

The Federation and Russian Red Cross (RRC) have decided to revise the initial appeal launched on 6th September 2004 in order to ensure that Red Cross intervention and support in relation to the crisis is relevant, effective, and not duplicating any other existing or planned support programmes. (To read the original appeal, please go to http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?04/1904.pdf.)

The appeal revisions are based on the assessment of the actual and expected psychosocial needs of the people of Beslan. The assessment was conducted over a number of visits to Beslan by Russian Red Cross staff, and two specially recruited Federation delegates: a psychosocial delegate who joined the Federation delegation in Russia on 14th September and conducted a preliminary survey (26th -30th September 2004) of the actual and expected psychosocial needs in Beslan; and a Russian speaking psychologist who accompanied the psychosocial delegate on a second mission to Beslan (13th – 18th October).

During both field trips, Federation and Russian Red Cross staff conducted extensive interviews with local and international NGOs, UN organisations and government officials in Beslan, and assessed the existing and future needs of the affected population and the relevance of the existing emergency appeal.

Revised objectives and activities planned to reach the objectives

1. Address the emergency and long term needs of the affected population (as an auxiliary to existing interventions) through provision of a schools based rehabilitation programme and establishment of a rehabilitation/ community centre to support rehabilitation of the affected population and their return to work.
2. Establish a network of visiting nurses/social workers based at the North Ossetia RRC branch providing social, medical and psychological support to the affected population.
3. Strengthen the capacity of the local Russian Red Cross branch to provide social, medical and psychological support to the affected population, and prevent professional “burnout” among Russian Red Cross staff members and volunteers providing assistance to the affected population via professional support mechanisms.
4. Facilitate treatment and recovery of specific groups of the affected population in need of long term medical rehabilitation.
5. Provide informational support to project activities through creation of a regularly updated interactive internet portal (in both English and Russian language) within the existing Russian Red Cross website, through design, production and distribution of education and awareness materials, and cooperation with mass media on promotion of project activities.

Target beneficiary group: Children and adults belonging to the following groups: hostages, their family members and friends; staff and volunteers working to support the victims; general population affected by the hostage crisis.

Beneficiaries: 5,000

Objective 1: Address the emergency and long term needs of the affected population (as an auxiliary to existing interventions) through provision of a schools based rehabilitation programme and establishment of a rehabilitation/ community centre to support rehabilitation of the affected population and their return to work.

- **School based psychological support programme**

The Russian Red Cross plans to implement a long term psychological support programme at schools. This will involve recruiting a group of professional psychologists to train teachers on how to conduct activities to reduce psychological stress, promote ability to communicate, increase social competence, interaction and acceptance of others, using the *“Community based psychological support: a training manual”* (see below for details). Activities conducted by the trained teachers will be incorporated within the existing school curriculum and conducted on a weekly basis throughout the school year. At the same time, teachers will carry out similar activities with students’ parents, on a twice monthly basis. The teachers will distribute informational leaflets on how to cope with psychological stress as a consequence of emergency situations for various target groups: men, women and children. The programme will also incorporate preparedness for possible crisis situations, and elements specific to the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement - humanitarian values and principles and International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

The teachers themselves will also benefit from the programme through participating in the training course and having access to psychologists. Professional psychological consultants will be available for back up support and advice and psychological counselling throughout the programme implementation period. This programme is based on a “psychological support for schools” programme implemented successfully in the past by different members of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement. The existing programme will be adapted to meet the specific needs in North Ossetia, taking into consideration cultural awareness. Special care will be taken to ensure that the programme meets those needs that are not being met by other international organizations/NGOs/ government departments operating in Beslan.

Programme implementation will also require a clear memorandum of understanding with the Russian Federation Ministries of Health and Education, and strong cooperation and experience exchange with other organisations working in the same sphere (e.g. UNICEF).

- **Establishing a community/rehabilitation centre in Beslan**

In a revision to the original emergency appeal, Russian Red Cross and the Federation will now focus on building one community/ rehabilitation centre rather than two separate rehabilitation centres. This change has been made to avoid duplicating the plans of the Russian Federation Ministry of Health and UNICEF to establish rehabilitation centres in Beslan.

The centre, established in Beslan, will act as a base for activities designed to assist the local population (initially 1,500 people) to cope with the psychological impact of the hostage crisis. The centre will be supervised by the Russian Red Cross in cooperation with the International Federation. Activities will be oriented to prevent social problems and to defuse the psychological tension in the region that has increased since the school siege unfolded.

Activities in the centre will include:

- Play rooms (library, audio-video, toys, games);
- Physiotherapy room/ gym facilities
- Computer room equipped with computers connected to the Internet;
- Hobby groups (art-design, knitting, dances etc.);
- First aid and IHL training for children and teenagers;
- Psychological and legal counseling;
- Training on home care for parents of affected children (upon request);
- Youth activities centre
- Support groups for adults (women and men).

There will be a particular focus on providing support to the male population, potentially through specially tailored courses. In particular, Red Cross expects to attract men seeking support for their children through the youth activities on offer - this expectation is based on the experience of the Federation- recruited psychologist who noted the strong father-child bond in North Ossetia, and the number of fathers willing to approach an external Red Cross representative and ask for professional counselling on how to best support their children.

Russian Red Cross will also ensure the centre has the capacity to develop and implement new activities upon the specific request and needs of the beneficiaries. The centre will cooperate with the psychologists and teachers involved in the schools support programme. Possible areas of cooperation include support for volunteers; participation of teachers in the centre's activities; referral from schools to the centre and vice versa of people in need of social support; attracting volunteers to work at the centre from among teachers and students involved in the schools programme.

- **Translation, printing and distribution of a community psychological support training manual**

To increase Red Cross capacity to respond in times of psychological trauma, the Federation and the Russian Red Cross will jointly develop, translate and print the Federation "*Community based psychological support: a training manual*". This manual is the basis for a training course for volunteers which teaches basic information on psychological support, what it is, how to best provide it in different circumstances. It already exists in English and Spanish and is presently being translated into French, Arabic and Farsi. The training course has been used successfully in many countries worldwide, including Iraq, where Red Crescent volunteers who participated on the course now have the knowledge and skills to provide more effective, community based psychological support to the local population. There is also discussion regarding potential inclusion of separate cultural/conflict-specific modules for the Russian Federation.

Once translated, this course manual will be the basis of training the following groups on how to provide effective psychological support: teachers (within the schools programme); Red Cross staff and volunteers (with the potential to train Red Cross staff as trainers of trainers). The course manual will also provide information on psychological support for staff working in other fields of Red Cross assistance across Russia (e.g. Tuberculosis (TB) programme, providing psychological support to staff working with TB patients).

Objective 2: Establish a network of visiting nurses/social workers based at the North Ossetia RRC branch providing social, medical and psychological support to the affected population.

- 30 visiting nurses and social workers will visit affected families with the aim of identifying needs, providing social, medical and psychological support and advocating for further support from local authorities. Activities will be implemented with the constant support and supervision of professional psychologists.

Objective 3: Strengthen the capacity of the local Russian Red Cross branch to provide social, medical and psychological support to the affected population, and prevent professional “burnout” among Russian Red Cross staff members and volunteers providing assistance to the affected population via professional support mechanisms.

- **Capacity building of the RRC branch in North Ossetia**

To increase the capacity of the local RRC branch in Vladikavkaz, the appeal will support recruitment of a team for realisation of the project, including a project coordinator, a technical administrator, a social manager, two psychologists, and drivers. In addition, computer and copying equipment and vehicles will be purchased to facilitate easy reporting on goods received and distributed, and to ensure easy communication between the branch and RRC Headquarters.

- **Psychological support to the Russian Red Cross staff in North Ossetia**

2 professional psychologists will work with Russian Red Cross staff (visiting nurses and office staff) to reduce the risk of professional “burn out” and psychological problems among the staff as a result of the hostage crisis, and to support them in their work to relieve the psychological stress of the local population. Activities will involve counseling of the staff, accompanying visiting nurses during working hours and visits to the vulnerable population, and monitoring the ongoing needs of both staff and beneficiaries. One of the psychologists will have the specific function of supporting visiting nurses across North Ossetia to provide effective support to the beneficiaries, and a second will work with the office staff at Vladikavkaz branch and with other organizations requesting specific psychological support – among them the Beslan Committee (local administration and civil committee dealing with the aftermath of the hostage crisis); and the teacher’s committee (a committee of teachers from number 1 school in Beslan).

A Red Cross psychologist conducted an initial group support session for 15 Red Cross staff, nurses and volunteers working across North Ossetia on 17th October 2004. A total of 40 people were expected but general fear of travel throughout the region prevented many from attending the session, which confirms the need for extensive psychological support in the region. Those who did attend expressed their gratitude and commented on the usefulness of the information received and the opportunity to share professional experiences and exchange knowledge. They also requested further support in the future (a request which will be met through the five workshops).

- **Training in PSP for Russian Red Cross staff and volunteers**

The Russian Red Cross will carry out 5 training workshops in psychological support on the basis of the translated ‘*community based psychological support: a training manual*’. Training workshops will be conducted for the psychologists working on International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) programmes (with potential to become trainers of trainers) in the Northern Caucasus; for Russian Red Cross staff (including visiting nurses) and volunteers working in Northern Ossetia, Kabardino – Balkaria and Ingushetia. As a result, basic awareness and sensitization regarding psychological support will be increased among all Red Cross staff working in the targeted regions, and Red Cross capacity to provide effective psychological support in the future will be significantly increased. Furthermore, training will enable incorporation of psychological support components into existing Red Cross programmes in the region.

Objective 4: Facilitate treatment and recovery of specific groups of the affected population in need of long term medical rehabilitation

- **Funding of long term medical treatment of victims of the school crisis in specialized clinics in Russia and abroad, on a case by case basis**

In line with the original appeal, the Federation and Russian Red Cross is prepared to support sending affected families and relief workers/ hospital staff to sanatoriums (health spas) for rehabilitation and recuperation. The Federation and Russian Red Cross intend to make sure that all ex-hostages and their families are offered the opportunity to go to a sanatorium. Appeal funds will only be used in case that the public resources currently supporting such activities are insufficient to meet the needs of all the target groups.

This activity also anticipates a possibility of funding individual cases of medical treatments, including surgical interventions and provision of prosthetics.

Objective 5: Provide informational support to project activities through creation of a regularly updated interactive internet portal within the existing Russian Red Cross website, through design, production and distribution of education and awareness materials, and cooperation with mass media on promotion of project activities.

- **Creation of interactive portal at the RRC web-site (with remote administration) that will help to coordinate assistance to the victims of Beslan**

The interactive portal at the RRC web-site (with remote administration) will help to coordinate assistance to the victims of Beslan and inform partners and the population in general about these activities. It will help ensure permanent communication with the affected populations and their families as well as provide counseling for those applying to the RRC for medical, social, psychological or legal assistance. All information will be available in Russian and English languages to facilitate easy access for international partners and provide the opportunity for experience exchange.

In addition, timely and adequate information on RRC assistance for the victims in Beslan will considerably widen RRC contacts with mass media, general public, potential and acting donors, and raise the RRC profile.

- **Production of information and training materials on psychosocial support**

Russian Red Cross and the Federation will design, print and distribute information materials targeting different groups of the population – men, women and children – and providing basic psychological support on expected reactions after exposure to extreme stress, how to cope and when to seek professional advice. These materials will be distributed throughout North Ossetia and also kept in stock for distribution in case new crises emerge across the Russian Federation.

Cooperation and coordination

The Federation and Russian Red Cross are also considering further expansion of the support programmes to areas outside North Ossetia, primarily within the framework of training courses on psychosocial support, and distribution of information materials on crisis situations. All activities will be conducted in cooperation with ICRC, who have extensive experience in the region and specialist knowledge. Possible activities for cooperation include the schools programme – ICRC has extensive experience in teaching International humanitarian law; psychosocial training for Red Cross staff – ICRC psychologists are already working in the region and might potentially be trainers of trainers on completing the psychosocial support course; distribution of information materials on coping with psychological stress – ICRC has access to remote/ restricted areas for distribution.

Information and Representation

Information support for the RRC programme in Northern Ossetia so far includes:

- 21 press-releases sent to mass media
- 5 appeals to the population and businesses spread through the Russian mass media
- 51 television reports and interviews
- 23 radio reports and interviews
- Permanent cooperation with 12 national and international news agencies (ITAR TASS, RIA Novosti, Interfax, Argumenty i facty, Prime-Time, RossBusinessConsulting, ASI, Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France Press, BBC etc.). Working contacts have been established with 92 printed and electronic mass media
- 21 publications in print media
- 20 news bulletins with photos placed on the RRC web-site
- Press-conference in Russian information agency “Interfax”
- RRC participated in the national charity TV/radio marathon “Compassion”
- Special issue of the RRC magazine “RoKK”
- Photo exhibition displayed at the RRC headquarters.

The profile of the Russian Red Cross has been significantly raised, both nationally and internationally, thanks to media coverage of their support to victims of the Beslan hostage crisis. In recent weeks, articles on Russian Red Cross and the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement have appeared in Russian Newsweek, in the Moscow Times, and numerous other publications (including the Federation website www.ifrc.org).

The Federation delegation in Moscow has produced a short film documenting Russian Red Cross activities (collection, transport and distribution of donations). A link to this video will be available shortly on the Russian Red Cross website www.red-cross.ru.

The Russian Red Cross expresses gratitude to all those who have taken an active part in supporting the people affected by the tragedy in Beslan.

The revised appeal budget is attached below. Please click here to return to the title page and contact information

BUDGET SUMMARY

APPEAL No. 19/2004

Russian Federation: Hostage crisis in Beslan, North Ossetia

| TYPE | <u>ORIGINAL VALUE</u> | <u>REVISED</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| RELIEF NEEDS | IN CHF | IN CHF |
| Medical & first aid | 68,000 | |
| Teaching materials | 8,000 | 67,500 |
| Other (sanatorium) | 390,000 | 32,875 |
| Other (school-based PSP) | | 373,750 |
| Other (community centre) | | 165,120 |
| Other (Support to Vladikavkaz branch of RRC) | | 12,500 |
| TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS | <u>466,000</u> | <u>651,745</u> |
| <u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u> | | |
| Computers & telecom. equipment | 6,000 | 13,000 |
| <u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u> | | |
| Programme support (6.5% of total) | 56,215 | 121,378 |
| <u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u> | | |
| Transport and storage | 7,600 | |
| Vehicle costs | 3,600 | 18,000 |
| <u>PERSONNEL</u> | | |
| Expatriate staff | 41,100 | 338,250 |
| National staff | 147,040 | 483,600 |
| Workshops and training | 12,560 | 50,000 |
| <u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u> | | |
| Travel & related expenses | 8,100 | |
| Information expenses | 10,000 | 79,000 |
| Administrative & general expenses | 106,629 | 112,375 |
| TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS | <u>398,844</u> | <u>1,215,603</u> |
| TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES | <u>864,844</u> | <u>1,867,348</u> |
| LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-) | | <u>1,474,789</u> |
| NET REQUEST | | <u>392,559</u> |