

# 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

## HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Appeal No. MDR81001  
23 August 2006

*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 185 countries.*

### In Brief

Operations Update no. 3; Period covered: 9 to 18 August, 2006; Appeal target: CHF 5,036,998 (USD 4,075,135 or EUR 3,190,770); Appeal coverage: 32 % ([Click here to go directly to the Contributions List available on the website](#)).

#### Appeal history:

- Preliminary emergency appeal launched on 21 July 2006 for CHF 1,329,000 (USD 1,000,000 or EUR 846,000) for three months to assist 50,000 beneficiaries.
- The appeal and budget was revised on 11 August, 2006 (budget increased to CHF 5,036,998) for three months to assist 65,000 beneficiaries. Final Report is therefore due on 11 February 2007.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated CHF 200,000 (USD 159,120 or EUR 127,455).

#### Operational Summary:

With the guns fallen silent - in line with the 1701 resolution adopted by the United Nations (UN) Security Council on 11 August 2006 that called for a full cessation of hostilities - the internally displaced families in northern Lebanon and those externally displaced in Syria and communities in south Lebanon, southern areas of Beirut and other areas, started to return to their homes. In order to assist the returnees and those who have been affected from the conflict, the National Societies of Lebanon, Syria and Cyprus have continued to work within the six objectives set in the revised appeal of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), dated 11<sup>th</sup> of August 2006.

This report covers the operational developments and Red Cross/Red Crescent action during the reporting period from 9 to 18 August, 2006.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

#### Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

*For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:*

- *In Amman (for Syria & Jordan): Ahmed Gizo, Head of Middle East Regional Office, phone: Phone +962 6 5694911 Mobile +962 79 5158204 Fax+962 6 56 94 556, [Ahmedadam.Gizo@ifrc.org](mailto:Ahmedadam.Gizo@ifrc.org)*
- *In Tunis (for Egypt): Anne Leclerc, Head of North Africa Regional Office, phone: + 216 71 86 24 85, fax: + 216 71 86 29 71, [ae.leclerc@ifrc.org](mailto:ae.leclerc@ifrc.org)*

- *In Lebanon: Knut Kaspersen, Head of Delegation, phone: + 961 136 5374, fax: + 961 136 5046, [knut.kaspersen@ifrc.org](mailto:knut.kaspersen@ifrc.org)*
- *In Cyprus: Tore Svenning Federation Representative on Cyprus, mobile: +35799957106, [tore.svenning@ifrc.org](mailto:tore.svenning@ifrc.org)*
- *In Geneva:*
  - *Evgeni Parfenov, Regional Officer, MENA Department, phone +41227304325, mobile: +41 79 3333733, [evgeni.parfenov@ifrc.org](mailto:evgeni.parfenov@ifrc.org)*
  - *Marie Françoise Borel, Media and Communications Department, phone: + 41 22 730 4346, mobile: + 41 79 217 3345, [mf.borel@ifrc.org](mailto:mfb.borel@ifrc.org)*
  - *Flemming S. Nielsen, Operations Support Coordinator for MENA, phone: + 41 22 730 4233, mobile: + 41 79 217 3343, [flemming.nielsen@ifrc.org](mailto:flemming.nielsen@ifrc.org)*

*All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

## Background and operational developments

The United Nations (UN) Security Council adopted the 1701 resolution on 11 August 2006 that called for a full cessation of hostilities and authorised up to 15,000 U.N. troops to move into Lebanon to enforce a ceasefire. According to this resolution, Hezbollah stopped launching rocket attacks on northern Israel and Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) halted all military operations at 0500 (GMT) on 14 August, 2006 .

The moment the guns fallen silent, internally displaced families in northern Lebanon, those externally displaced in Syria and communities in south Lebanon, southern areas of Beirut and other areas which have been affected by the conflict, started to return to their homes. With much damage done to infrastructure, homesteads and civilian installations, many displaced people will have no shelter even after they return to their communities.



**As thousands of people were crossing back to Lebanon, the SARC volunteers were at the Al-Jdaidah and Al-Areedah border crossing points to support the returnees**

As of 17 August, it was estimated that 200,000 displaced have returned, or are in the process of returning, from their temporary shelters in Beirut to their homes/communities in the south of Lebanon. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that at least 48,000 people had left Syria and returned to Lebanon. Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and Federation staff present at the border in Al-Areedah and Al-Jdaidah estimated that, on 15-16 August, up to 3,000 people were crossing back to Lebanon every hour during peak hours (12:00-17:00). As of 18 August, over 90% of Lebanese citizens in Syria returned home. All those accommodated in temporary shelters in schools, public buildings, youth camps have left.

## Lebanon



**The Lebanese Red Cross volunteers are present to render the last honours to their colleague, Mikhael Jubaili, a Lebanese Red Cross volunteer who died during a first aid mission**

The situation in Lebanon had created humanitarian needs that exceeded the capacities of the Lebanese Red Cross. Obviously, the strong volunteers' base of the National Society was not enough to encounter all the emerging needs. Support systems like logistics, human resource management and warehouses were weak and lacked preparedness. A plan of action was developed to fill in gaps and to ensure effective response during the current situation as well as future disasters. Continuous coordination with other humanitarian actors is being ensured through discussions and harmonized activities.

Mikhael Jubaili, Lebanese Red Cross Volunteer in the Emergency Medical Services (EMS), died during a first aid mission. The EMS teams have been attacked on several occasions leaving till now 1 dead, 9 wounded, 3 destroyed ambulances, and 10 damaged centres.

## Syria

The objective of the operation in Syria was to provide relief and humanitarian assistance to evacuees from Lebanon in Syria as well as prepare for effective and coordinated emergency response. As of 9 August, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) provided relief assistance to 46,122 evacuees - 21,404 people accommodated in public shelters, 22,218 living with host families and 2,500 people crossing the borders from Lebanon to Syria every day. All 14 branches were involved in this operation, with main concentrations in Damascus, Homs, Tartous and Aleppo. See table 1 for details.

**Table 1: Number of people assisted by SARC branches as of 9 August, 2006**

Branch	Number of arrivals staying in public shelters	Number of arrivals hosted by local communities & provided with assistance by SARC	Number of RC volunteers involved
Homs	7,128	1,059	200
Damascus	6,300	11,500	200
Rural Damascus	5,815	5,000	50
Tartous	0	1,250	10
Al-Qunaitira	12	174	35
Aleppo	246	1,577	200
Edleb	0	479	20
Deir Ezzour	109	9	15
Daraa	0	899	10
Al-Hasakeh	0	0	10
Hama	884	0	30
Lattakia	600	0	35
Al-Raqqa	0	121	15
Sweida	310	150	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,404</b>	<b>22,218</b>	<b>850</b>

## Cyprus

Despite the ceasefire, evacuees from Lebanon continued to enter Cyprus with a view to rapidly transit to their final destinations, through the ports and airports of Cyprus. The numbers had declined to a trickle, and the situation appears stable for the time being. Among the latest arrivals, it appears profile of evacuees has begun to change with a higher proportion having less personal resources and moving more slowly through Cyprus to their final destination.

The caseload of those stranded in Cyprus (having traveled before the hostilities) appears to have stabilized at approximately 3,500 individuals, some having moved on. Nevertheless, the accurate figures are hard to come by as these have not been formally registered. As some of these individuals/families are running out of resources, they are likely to return to Lebanon. In cases where alternative support mechanisms are not available, some are approaching the Red Cross on Cyprus to support them, which is being provided.

With the decline in the number of evacuees arriving in Cyprus, the operational response to the crisis is largely over. The Red Cross on Cyprus continues to offer assistance to a limited number of stranded persons, and to facilitate return to Lebanon for those who wish to do so.

The operation carried out by the Red Cross on Cyprus and the government was, for a small country, one of significant proportions, involving the reception and processing a population movement representing almost ten per cent of the country's population.

There is a general consensus that this crisis will continue to impact Cyprus for some time to come, both in terms of movement of people into Cyprus and the increasing importance of the island as a supply base, logistics hub and a base for any international force that may be deployed.

In the meantime, the evacuation sponsoring governments are beginning to review their plans in light of the ceasefire, with focus on:

- Reducing the operations substantially, as this has been a costly exercise (i.e. the Canadian Government has spent more than 40 million Canadian dollars).
- Cutting out Cyprus as a leg, but instead chartering planes directly through Beirut (the ship charter to Cyprus is a substantial proportion of the total cost).
- Reviewing Citizenship laws (i.e. Canadian authorities are particularly concerned with the laws being abused, as there are approximately 48,000 Canadian passport holders in Lebanon and few of them have visited Canada other than briefly and even fewer have paid any taxes. The same approach is being undertaken by other nations).

The UNHCR has 31 unresolved cases of stranded evacuees covering a total of more than 60 individuals, mainly women and children, who were evacuated by the USA but subsequently denied entry into the USA.

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

**Goal: The suffering of the people fleeing the armed conflict in Lebanon and those crossing to neighbouring countries has been alleviated.**

### Objective 1: Health and care

**The health situation of the targeted beneficiaries is maintained at satisfactory level within the emergency period of three months in the countries neighbouring Lebanon.**

## Progress/achievements

### Lebanese Red Cross

- The Lebanese Red Cross, through its Emergency Medical Services Teams, continued its work of evacuating wounded, dead bodies, and emergency transportation. Between 9 and 18 August 2006, they evacuated 220 wounded, 145 dead corps, and 2,783 emergency transportation;
- The National Society, through its medical services, offered medical check-up, medicines, and vaccination to around 10,000 people;
- The Lebanese Red Cross, through its Psychological Support Programme (PSP) team, offered psychological support to 3,600 children by games, paintings, and role plays. The Federation is offering technical support to the Lebanese Red Cross and a plan of action has been jointly developed.
- The Blood Banks of the Lebanese Red Cross collected 180 units of blood, delivered 200 units, and launched 5 blood donation campaigns;
- The Qatar Red Crescent deployed an advance medical post in Lebanon-Saida, in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross.
- The Saudi Red Crescent deployed a field hospital in Beirut. The National Society has also contributed a variety of medical supplies and equipment to the operation.
- The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent has sent 40 ton of medical assistance to Lebanon, in coordination with the Lebanese Red Cross.
- The Kuwait Red Crescent has sent 10 MT of medicine to the Lebanese and continued to deliver relief items through various channels.

### Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

- Bilaterally, the German Red Cross contributed first aid kits and World Health Organisation (WHO) health emergency kits, as well as covered some of SARC's logistics and administrative costs.
- The Italian Red Cross and SARC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by which the Italian Red Cross will contribute EUR 20,000 to cover the cost of drugs for chronic diseases.
- The Danish Red Cross carried out a psychosocial needs assessment during 31 July – 9 August, 2006. The assessment team visited 7 SARC branches involved in the emergency operation. The assessment report recognized the need for psychosocial assistance, provision of PSP kits, training of SARC volunteers in stress management, provision of a list of basic PSP advice that the volunteers can use in their relief activities, and technical support. A project proposal was drafted, which will be revised with the ceasefire. The PSP component will be incorporated in the revised appeal.
- Two Malaysian Red Crescent officers arrived in Damascus during 15 – 20 August, 2006 accompanying a shipment of 250 kg of medical items to SARC. Due to space constraints, the Malaysian carrier (MAS) could only offer Malaysian Red Crescent space for 250 kg of goods to be transported out of the total shipment of 1 ton. The balance is expected to be dispatched in stages in following shipments. The Malaysian Red Crescent officers assisted SARC in the clearance and transfer of the dispatched items.

The newly published WHO document “Guidelines for Disease Surveillance/Early Warning and Response – Middle East Crisis” provides Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) health professionals who are involved in this operation with technical guidance and templates for setting up a disease surveillance and early warning and response system for the current Middle East crisis. To access this document, please go to the website at: [http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/middle\\_east/Lebanon\\_crisis\\_WHO\\_CD\\_surveillance\\_early\\_warning\\_guidelines\\_AUG\\_%202006.pdf](http://www.who.int/hac/crises/international/middle_east/Lebanon_crisis_WHO_CD_surveillance_early_warning_guidelines_AUG_%202006.pdf)

## Objective 2: Water and sanitation

**The water and sanitation (watsan) situation of the targeted population in the countries neighbouring Lebanon is maintained at satisfactory level within the emergency period of three months.**

**Progress/achievements****Lebanese Red Cross**

The Lebanese Red Cross, through its youth department and in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provided over 140,000 liters of water for 14,000 beneficiaries.

The Federation supported the youth department of the Lebanese Red Cross to develop systems and procedures for water distribution.

**Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)**

The watsan situation in the temporary shelters is adequate and there is no need for intervention. The SARC volunteers distributed bottled drinking water supplied by various private donors. Now that the shelters were vacated following cessation of hostilities, watsan intervention is not needed any more.

**Red Cross on Cyprus**

The Red Cross on Cyprus continued to provide drinking water and first aid and snacks to the new arrivals.

**Objective 3: Emergency relief (food and non-food)**

**Displaced persons/evacuees and host families, in countries surrounding Lebanon, have access to adequate shelter, food and other appropriate emergency support services.**

**Progress/achievements****Participating National Societies (PNSs) activities**

- The Saudi Red Crescent has contributed to the operation with a variety of food and non-food items, including tents, mattresses, pillows, blankets and four vehicles.
- The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent has contributed to the operation with food and non-food items including food, hygienic materials and tents.
- Bahrain Red Crescent sent shipments of assorted relief items including food and non-food items.

**Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)**

- SARC started distributing 80% of the goods in their warehouses to all branches. 20% will remain as contingency stocks.
- Kuwait Red Crescent donated 10,000 blankets, 5,000 kitchen sets, 5,000 food parcels and 4 pickups. The Kuwait Red Crescent coordinated with SARC the distribution of food and blankets at the borders for the Lebanese returning home.
- As the Lebanese families started heading home, Kuwait Red Crescent, in coordination with SARC, hired 10 buses on the first day of the ceasefire (14 August) to transport people in need and provide snacks and bottled drinking water
- Qatar Red Crescent donated 5,000 food parcels, 5,000 mattresses and two Samsung ambulances and they are ready to provide further support upon SARC's request.
- United Arab Emirates Red Crescent provided baby parcels and education materials in coordination with the SARC PSP team. They will also provide milk for babies upon SARC's request. In addition the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent, through SARC, arranged for local procurement of relief items including: 5,000 hygiene kits, 5,000 mattresses, 5,000 blankets, 1000 kitchen sets and two generators (30 KVA). These items were already delivered to SARC warehouse. Also, medicines were distributed in Zabadani shelter in Rural Damascus.
- Spanish Red Cross provided non-food items, financial support (EUR 30,000) and is working with SARC on a joint telecom assessment. Donated items include 5,000 blankets, 2 800 jerry cans, 180 hygiene kits, 50 first aid back bags and 700 tarpaulins.
- Turkish Red Crescent provided tents (90sq m).

- ICRC provided non-food items (baby milk, 2 generators, 1 forklift, 6 land cruisers, rental trucks) in addition to financial support of USD 30,000 and is supporting SARC in coordinating and handling the RC/RC movement supply line into Lebanon.
- The Netherlands Red Cross and SARC have signed an MOU by which the Netherlands Red Cross will support SARC with EUR 250,000 (financial and in-kind support). This support will cover needs including hygiene kits, 4 pickups and running costs. A total of 1,000 tents were delivered and EUR 100,000 transferred to SARC bank account.

### **Red Cross on Cyprus**

- A UN coordination meeting was held in Larnaca jointly chaired by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) and attended by some 40 people representing UN agencies, International Organisations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as the Minister of the Interior and the Lebanese ambassador. The subject was principally logistics, using Cyprus as a hub for on carriage to Lebanon. Of principle interest:
  - The World Food Programme (WFP) has inaugurated a ferry service - Larnaca/Beirut/Larnaca - on Mondays and Fridays. The service is free of charge to the user and the Federation is an approved organisation as regards usage. Passage time is about 4 hours each way.
  - UNJLC is operating a vessel - Larnaca/various ports - in Lebanon. The vessel has reefer capacity thus ensuring cold chain integrity.
  - Both of the above services are currently underutilised. For more information, please see [www.virtualhic.org](http://www.virtualhic.org) and [www.unjlc.org/Lebanon](http://www.unjlc.org/Lebanon).
- Some (but not all) Lebanese families in Cyprus are beginning to discuss return in light of the ceasefire and there is a need for information for these families to make an informed and voluntary choice. Therefore, assistance is requested from the Lebanese Red Cross and the Federation office in Beirut.

### **Objective 4: Shelter**

**Adequate shelter facilities are maintained for the targeted population for the emergency period of three months in the countries neighbouring Lebanon.**

#### **Progress/achievements**

##### **Lebanese Red Cross**

The Lebanese Red Cross, through its youth department, is working on continuous needs assessment and on improving the situation in shelters and shelters management. The Federation supported the Lebanese Red Cross to improve the needs assessment tools.

##### **Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)**

SARC has 1,000 tents (adequate for 5,000 persons) in stock, in case the existing shelter facilities (public buildings) are not available anymore. The tents will be added to SARC's emergency stock to be built as there is no need for distribution following the return of the Lebanese evacuees.

##### **Red Cross on Cyprus**

The Red Cross continues to arrange accommodation for individuals stranded in Cyprus without means to sustain themselves until their departure for Lebanon or a third country.

#### **Other neighbouring countries**

The State of Qatar - Ministry of Interior Affairs issued a decree allowing all Lebanese coming through the Syrian borders to acquire an instant entry visa at Doha International Airport. In response to that, the Qatar Red Crescent formed a committee to assist arrivals by providing them with adequate shelter, financial aid and medical assistance

for one month. The Qatar Red Crescent coordinated with the existing Lebanese community to offer moral support for 219 new comers so far to Qatar to help them to settle fast in their new surroundings and keep in touch with their own communities. The Qatar Red Crescent is also offering its services to connect the Lebanese evacuees with their relatives and friends upon arrival. To date, Qatar is still receiving people from Lebanon on a daily basis and continues to offer them the support and assistance needed.

### **Objective 5: Capacity building**

**National societies in the region are improving their capacity to respond to this and future crises.**

#### **Progress/achievements**

##### **Lebanese Red Cross**

The Federation support to the Lebanese Red Cross structures in logistics, finance, youth and volunteers' management continues. The on job support and strengthening the systems helped the Lebanese Red Cross to cope with the increasing demand on its services to respond to the growing needs of the population affected by the conflict.

The Lebanese Red Cross has developed, with the Federation's technical support, a plan of action to develop the capacity of the logistics department. The plan will be supported financially by both ICRC and IFRC and the implementation process has started.

In addition, the Federation has supported the Lebanese Red Cross in strengthening its finance system to manage to increased budget. The Lebanese Red Cross and the Federation are working to develop systems and procedures to improve its financial management and to further strengthen it.

##### **Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)**

SARC seeks to ensure the systematic availability of essential relief items and services to be able to respond to the needs of the displaced population. An emergency stock enough for 50,000 persons for one month should be readily available even though hostilities have stopped and Lebanese people started returning home. However, it is preferable not to use more than 50% of the emergency stock and stocks must be replenished before using the other 50%. Proper planning of new purchases and delivery is essential to ensure that SARC will always possess an emergency stock. This is part of its present disaster management strategy and planning.

The emergency stock should be pre-positioned in several locations in Damascus area and the North of Damascus. The first road to be cut, in case of renewed conflict, will be the road going to the North from Damascus, cutting off Damascus from the north and from the main inhabited area of Syria. Evacuees are entering and will be entering Syria from the Northern border of Lebanon. Pre-positioning at Homs, Idlib and Aleppo is the best way to avoid a possible blocking of relief stocks. Tents presently positioned in SARC training centre in Sweida in the south should be moved north.

##### **Red Cross on Cyprus**

The plan of the Federation Representative Office of having trainings/workshops for the volunteers of the Red Cross on Cyprus is proceeding. The trainings will be based on the recent experience of the evacuee operations. Before the crisis, the Red Cross on Cyprus was already planning for such a society-wide workshop in October, at which a variety of subjects will be discussed, including (but not limited to) disaster preparedness, organization of response, Red Cross Red Crescent Principles and values, volunteers management, reporting and Restoration of Family Links (RFL) and related issues. The RFL training and activities will be closely coordinated with ICRC. The proposed initial training should be seen as a contribution to both the maintenance of preparedness for the eventuality of more evacuees coming to Cyprus, and to wider capacity building measures.

In addition, a project proposal is being developed to utilize the Movement's network for RFL and tracing. The Federation Representative Office is working with the Red Cross on Cyprus to develop a plan of action for next phase of crisis.

## Objective 6: Communications – Advocacy and Public information

**Support the National Societies to improve their communications capacities and develop appropriate communications tools and products to support effective operations in the countries neighbouring Lebanon.**

### Progress/achievements

#### Lebanese Red Cross

The Federation has supported the communication department to strengthen its capacities. The Federation is working with the Communication department to strengthen further its capacities and increase the visibility of the Lebanese Red Cross.

#### Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)



**The SARC deployed its volunteers to provide water, snacks, hygiene kits and baby parcels to the returnees**

The Regional Federation Information Officer joined the support team in Syria and worked closely with the SARC Communication Officer on producing a newsletter with update on SARC activities. He, along with the Communication Officer and the Information Focal Point of Homs Branch, visited Tartous and Homs in order to write stories and include them in the newsletter. The newsletter was published on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August and a second newsletter is being prepared. Several web stories were written and sent to the Media services and are being posted to the Federation website. The Regional Information Officer and SARC Information Officer documented the return of the Lebanese people at the border crossing points where SARC deployed its volunteers to provide water, snacks, hygiene kit and baby parcels to the returnees.

#### Red Cross on Cyprus

The Red Cross on Cyprus enjoys a high degree of confidence among the population and with the government, and has good relations with the media. To help cope with the media inquiries during the crisis and to make the media presence more consistent and systematic, the Red Cross hired on a short-term contract, a press officer who has produced material for the local media as well as for the Federation.

## Capacity of the Federation and coordination

- The Middle East Regional Office in Amman, Jordan, continues to coordinate Federation support to the National Societies in the region in line with Strategy 2010 and the Federation Global Agenda Goals and Framework for Action. The main focus is to strengthen the capacities of the National Societies to enable them to respond positively and effectively to the needs of the most vulnerable people.
- The ICRC, based on the joint statement signed between the Federation and ICRC on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, has the overall leadership responsibility for coordination of the movement's response to the conflict in Lebanon and its consequences in neighbouring countries .
- The Federation Office in Lebanon has increased its capacity to be able to support the Lebanese Red Cross particularly in relief systems, logistics, finance, planning, communication, volunteers' management, and psychological support programme.
- The Syrian Government had mandated SARC to be the lead agency in providing assistance to the evacuees from Lebanon. SARC is also responsible for coordination and liaison with the relevant ministries . The UN and

NGOs are working with or through SARC to coordinate and harmonize relief activities. The Federation is assisting SARC in managing the operation, coordinating the support and responding to the organizational needs. The Middle East Regional Office deployed a team including the Regional Disaster Management Delegate, Regional Information Officer, Regional Finance Controller, Information Officer, Regional DM Officer to assist the SARC at various stages of the operation. The team was strengthened by a team from the Federation Secretariat comprising an Operations Manager and a Field Logistics Officer. Later the team was joined by a special adviser from the Netherlands Red Cross to assist in the overall coordination of the operation. The Federation Middle East Regional Office released funds to SARC equivalent to CHF 520,000 as working advance in support to the National Society to respond to the needs of the people evacuated from Lebanon - including Lebanese, Third Country Nationals on transit (TCN), and Palestinians from the refugee camps in Lebanon.

- The Federation's Regional Logistic Unit in Dubai supported the operation through the deployment of a Field Logistics Officer during the first days of the operation and continued to provide technical advice from a distance to the Federation team on the ground through telephone and e mail.
- The Federation New York Office continued to keep the Missions informed about the Federation and the Respective National Societies' actions and give feed back to the field and Geneva Secretariat about the overall updates of the humanitarian action shared between different stakeholders at the UN Secretariat in New York.
- In Cyprus, the Federation Representative Office is trying to organize a more formal coordination arrangement with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR as well as ICRC, particularly bearing in mind the increasing problems of people passing through or stranded in Cyprus.

In line with this, an initial coordination meeting, hosted by the Federation, was held between the Federation, ICRC, UNHCR and International Organisation for Migration (IOM). During the meeting, the following was agreed:

- There would be joint planning for a possible future influx of people into Cyprus, including the identification of potential reception centres (although it was agreed that the Cyprus authorities dislike anything that might remotely look like a camp and will go some distance to avoid this including hosting people in hotels, hostels and similar usually using the Red Cross on Cyprus as a conduit for funds).
- Planning would begin to facilitate return as and when requested and that the Federation and UNHCR would work together to provide as much information as possible to enable families to make an informed choice.
- Parties would meet regularly.

**[Please click here to return to the title page and contact information.](#)**