

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
22 September 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. 4; Period covered: 19 August to 11 September 2006

Revised Appeal target: CHF 5,036,998 (USD 4,075,135 or EUR 3,190,770). Appeal coverage 36.4 per cent.

(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 were 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:

The cessation of hostilities on 14 August changed the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and the neighbouring countries. The large numbers of displaced people that were in Syria have, in the main, returned home. This in itself presents challenges, as houses and public facilities in Lebanon have been badly damaged and severe pollution has increased environmental health needs.

On Cyprus, while the need for operational support is over, the International Federation will continue supporting Red Cross on Cyprus in disaster management and assisting in the organization's further development. In Egypt, the Egyptian Red Crescent (ERCS) organized public fund-raising and supported the government donations to Lebanon. At the same time as being a donor, the National Society (NS) needs International Federation support to build and strengthen its Organizational Development and Disaster Management capacity at branch level, to become a well functioning NS.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission. The 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.

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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>

Operational developments

The humanitarian situation has changed dramatically since the cessation of hostilities on 14 August. Almost all of Lebanon's displaced people have returned home. Many, however, returned to find their houses and health and educational facilities badly damaged or destroyed. Many returnees had to take up temporary accommodation. Environmental health needs are escalating due to severe pollution and delays in clearing dead bodies, rubble, debris and the unexploded ordnance.

Other problems reported by the returnees include shortage of water and electricity supplies. There is a need to expand preventive health programmes including psychological support and ensure equity in distribution of relief items. Humanitarian agencies have so far provided the vulnerable populations with food, water, medicines, blankets, shelter materials, fuel for generators and water pumps.

The Government of Lebanon developed an Early Recovery Process for the period 31 August – 31 December 2006. The plan, which was designed to respond with short-term emergency actions, was launched to the donor community in Stockholm on 31 August.

The Lebanese Red Cross continued to receive and distribute relief aid from partner National Societies and other donors. Lists of donations are available at the Lebanese Red Cross- operations room.

Syria

In Syria, almost all externally displaced people have left Syria and returned to Lebanon. Schools and temporary shelters are now empty and all those who remained in Syria are being accommodated with host families and are no longer in need of assistance.

Recognition at the highest level was awarded to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) for its work during the crisis in Lebanon. Syrian President, Bashar Al-Assad and his wife invited SARC's President, members and volunteers at a reception to show appreciation for the humanitarian response by the Syrian people during the emergency.

There are no longer any identified needs for the small numbers of displaced remaining in Syria. SARC has continued consolidating its figures regarding the operation, with a distribution table for all donors now completed.



A Lebanese Red Cross volunteer during a household visit to a family affected by the conflict.

Photo: Lebanese Red Cross

With support from the International Federation Regional Office in Amman, SARC began an After Action Review on 5 September, which is expected to deliver a first draft of its findings on 10 September. Findings will conclude the revision to the Emergency Appeal for Syria, which will include focused support to a contingency plan.

Support to SARC activities continues from bi-lateral partners. Cooperation included an extension of the Disaster Management (DM) project which is being implemented jointly with the British Red Cross, an agreement with the Danish Red Cross to provide volunteer trainers in Psychological Support, and continued support from the Netherlands Red Cross in the provision of relief supplies, restocking of warehouses, provision of equipment and support to volunteers. Movement partners from the Arabian Gulf countries, such as United Arab Emirates and Kuwaiti Red Crescent, have supported SARC with the provision of vehicles and in-kind relief supplies.

Cyprus

The activities related to the evacuation of people from Lebanon are, essentially, over. Nearly 60,000 individuals of many nationalities left Lebanon by sea to seek safety and repatriation to their respective countries through Cyprus. Though the absolute number of people transiting Cyprus was smaller than the number who arrived in Syria, in relation to the size of the country and its population, the influx was very large.

Red Cross on Cyprus reacted immediately when the arrivals began in mid-July. It mobilized its volunteers and deployed them as teams in the ports of Larnaca and Limassol, on a twenty-four hour basis, as well as in the island's main international airport in Larnaca. At these locations, the Red Cross made available and distributed food, drink, hygiene articles and other non-food items. The volunteers also provided practical assistance to those who needed to contact health facilities, provided wheel-chairs for persons with impaired mobility, facilities for looking after small children and babies, and other services, including an offer to arriving evacuees to make free phone calls to family and friends elsewhere.

Red Cross on Cyprus received significant support from the public, which responded to the situation through donations of goods, cash and offers to volunteer. Likewise, the Red Cross received wholehearted support from the private sector.

Overall, Red Cross on Cyprus played a significant role in ensuring that the evacuees arriving in Cyprus could pass through the country with a level of physical comfort, and in dignity. The volume of the evacuee flow, and the speed with which the situation developed, placed enormous strain on Red Cross on Cyprus. The organization is predominantly volunteer-based, and deploying hundreds of individuals over several weeks represented an enormous effort at the level of branches and at the level of headquarters and leadership.

The International Federation sought to support Red Cross on Cyprus through its emergency appeal, by deploying a Federation Representative and through the provision of one staff person. While the need for operational support is over, the International Federation intends to continue supporting Red Cross on Cyprus in areas such as disaster management, training and orientation for volunteers, and by offering to assist in the organization's further development.

Egypt

The Egyptian Red Crescent Society (ERCS) established a Disaster Management plan and budget which was included in Emergency Appeal MDR81001 to provide regular relief assistance to people stranded on both sides of the Israeli-Egyptian border. This was designed to especially assist ERCS branches already exposed to repeated closures of the borders as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

ERCS has acted as a donor, supporting the large governmental donations to Lebanon, the ICRC Appeal (CHF 100,000 was donated) and the few Lebanese families and Egyptian citizens working in Lebanon who went back to Egypt. ERCS has also launched a public appeal to fundraise for Lebanon and is managing these donations, organizing their transport and delivery to Lebanon RC. The ERCS Secretary General is keeping close communication with the Lebanese Red Cross President.

ERCS has the capacity to be a donor and organize a successful local and public fund-raising, while at the same time being in real need of International Federation support to build and strengthen their Organizational

Development and Disaster Management capacity at branch level in order to become a well functioning National Society (NS).

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 neighboring 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.

Progress/achievements

Lebanese Red Cross

- Donations from Partner National Societies included medicines sent by the Red Crescents of Iran, Turkey, Libya, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Kuwait. For additional information on donations-dates received, contents, number of shipments and storage/distribution, contact the Lebanese Red Cross-Operations Room.
- The Jordan Red Crescent donated an un-earmarked amount of USD 100,000 in support of the Lebanese Red Cross health and emergency relief efforts.
- The Lebanese Red Cross has activated its volunteers from the Psychological Support Programme (PSP). A group of 25 volunteers from different departments were recruited and trained three months before this crisis and they are now being trained on PSP in emergencies. The International Federation assisted the National Society in developing a PSP plan of action. A local professional employee was hired to assist in the implementation of a five month plan of action and in the development of a longer term plan of action for next year.



A Lebanese Red Cross physician volunteer on duty Photo: Lebanese Red Cross

The decline in living conditions resulting from the war- loss of homes, living in overcrowded areas, loss of privacy, lack of playing space for children and loss of the right to play- have, and will continue to have, a great impact on the psychological situation of the affected population. Children are of particular concern as few mechanisms exist in Lebanon targeting their needs.

Palestine Red Crescent Society- Lebanon Branch (PRCS/L)

The PRCS/L is operating five hospitals and nine health centres inside the Palestinian refugee camps and/or close to the refugee camps in Lebanon. As a health and humanitarian organization serving the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the PRCS/L responded to the humanitarian crisis in coordination with the Lebanese Red Cross and other humanitarian players.

The following table provides a summary of the PRCS/L activities with the number of displaced people beneficiaries during the hostilities on Lebanon as of 15 August.

Type of service	Hamshari hospital (Saida)	Balsam Hospital (Tyre)	Haifa Hospital (Burj El-Barajneh, Beirut)	Safad Hospital (Tripoli)	Nazareth Hospital (Bekaa')	TOTAL
Outpatient	150	3697	225	806	250	5128
Laboratory	1340	940	445	270	100	3095
X-Rays	168	104	121	176	50	619
Emergency	462	1020	259	184	50	1975
Admissions	87	106	14	56	25	288

Kidney dialysis	0	46	0	0	0	46
Normal deliveries	0	10	15	7	10	42
Caesarian sections	0	3	0	0	0	3
Abortions	0	2	0	0	0	2
Surgical operations (war injuries)	0	15	9	0	12	36
Dental services	0	210	0	0	0	210
TOTAL	2207	6153	1088	1499	497	11444

- Hamshari Hospital and Nazareth Hospital received a total of 29 dead bodies from the Lebanese Red Cross ambulance services.
- PRCS/L received medicines and medical supplies from local and international NGOs
- Hamshari Hospital sent a team composed of an orthopedic doctor and a general surgeon to Balsam Hospital to assist in surgical operations on war injuries.
- Hamshari and Balsam Hospitals collected blood donations and sent them to the Lebanese hospitals.
- Hamshari hospital medical teams organized many visits to IDPs in Shelters and offered needed medical care.
- The Municipality Council and the Lebanese Organisations of Saida presented an appreciation certificate for the PRCS/L for their humanitarian aid and services carried out during the war on Lebanon.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

- UNICEF agreed with SARC that they will train volunteers on psychosocial support, basic counseling, recreational activities and management of the Child Friendly Spaces (CFS). The first training course, involving 28 SARC volunteers from all 14 branches, took place in Damascus 3-5 September.

Red Cross on Cyprus

The volunteers provided practical assistance to those who needed to contact health facilities, provided wheel-chairs for persons with impaired mobility, facilities for looking after small children and babies, and other services.

Objective 2: Water and sanitation

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

Progress/achievements

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

Now that the shelters have been vacated following the cessation of hostilities, Wat/San intervention is not needed as part of the emergency response in Syria. However, the After Action Review provides a focused contingency plan for SARC to respond immediately in case of a future emergency, which will include a consideration of water and sanitation requirements, including the provision of latrines and showers. This will be complemented by the bi-lateral DM plan of action supported by the British Red Cross over the coming three years.

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

Lebanese Red Cross

The Lebanese Red Cross continued to work alongside other organisations to provide basic needs to the affected people. In addition to services provided by Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and the Medico-social department, the Youth department with its 1,100 volunteers throughout Lebanon, is distributing non-food items,

water, hygiene kits and food to over 150,000 beneficiaries and is continuously working on needs assessments. A total of 449,507 hygiene kits were distributed during the conflict and this will continue towards the end of the year. The youth also distributed 227,350 litres of potable water to displaced people supported by the ICRC.

During the conflict, the EMS department carried out 6,279 emergency medical transportations, assisted 932 victims and transported 292 dead bodies.

Actions of other National Societies and partners

- The United Arab Emirates Red Crescent (UAE Red Crescent) have carried out a full relief programme of approximately USD 9,301,216, in favour of the Lebanese people including the following items:
 1. Mobilisation of an air fleet, consisting of 26 airplanes containing medical, food and shelter relief items, as well as 24 ambulances.
 2. Mobilisation of a ship, which transported 847 tons of relief items.
 3. Provision of items needed by the victims through the UAE Red Crescent delegations in Syria and Lebanon.
 4. Support for the International Federation and the Lebanese Red Cross.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

The objective of the SARC operation was to provide relief and humanitarian assistance to evacuees from Lebanon in Syria as well as prepare for effective and coordinated emergency response. During the emergency, SARC provided relief assistance to 65,009 evacuees, of whom 25,149 people were accommodated in public shelters and 39,860 people were living with host families. All 14 branches were involved in this operation, with main concentrations in Damascus, Homs, Tartous and Aleppo.

There have been no significant changes since the last report. SARC has continued consolidating its figures regarding the operation, with a distribution table for all donors now completed. A contingency plan is under discussion with SARC to replenish emergency relief items, training of volunteers, providing additional logistics support and training of warehousing staff. Support for this will be from a range of partners, including the International Federation and the ICRC as well as bi-lateral support from the Netherlands Red Cross, the British Red Cross and the UAE Red Crescent.

Red Cross on Cyprus

The Red Cross made available and distributed food, drink, and other non-food items.

Objective 4: Shelter

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

Progress/achievements

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

Following the ceasefire and the return to Lebanon of the majority of the evacuees, there is no longer any need for temporary or emergency shelter in Syria to assist those displaced by the crisis. SARC has 1,000 tents (adequate for 5,000 persons) in stock, as a previous donation from the Netherlands Red Cross, and these will be included in its contingency planning for the supply of relief items in preparation for future emergencies.

The positive experience gained by SARC over the utilization of youth summer camps in Syria as temporary shelters will be developed and used in its future planning.

Objective 5: Capacity building

National societies in the region are better prepared to respond to man-made and natural (including epidemics) disasters.

Progress/achievements

Lebanese Red Cross

Effective logistics services are crucial for the ability of the Lebanese Red Cross to handle the increased influx of relief goods (more than 100 million tons to date) and ensure proper management of its fleet (ambulances, mini-buses, cars, trucks). The current logistics department is understaffed and lacks basic resources to effectively handle all the incoming goods. The International Federation and the Lebanese Red Cross logistics department have developed a Plan of Action to strengthen the logistics department with combined resources coming from ICRC and the International Federation. This plan of action focuses mainly on developing procedures and systems to ensure proper warehouse management, stock management, fleet management and procurement procedures.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

The quick response to the emergency from SARC at all levels, including the immediate mobilization of 1000 volunteers and the provision of relief supplies and shelter for the displaced, has had a positive impact on the recognition of SARC in the eyes of the public, and an improved awareness within national and international structures of its abilities to respond. The spontaneous offers of assistance generated by the crisis from a wide spectrum of the private sector, as well as from the general public, were mainly channeled through SARC, as it provided the most flexible structure to react to the needs of the situation. This responsibility led to significant pressure on its capacities, and the focus ahead is to ensure a consolidation of the strengths displayed by SARC during the crisis, and to improve its capacities in coordination and cooperation.

SARC is holding discussions with ICRC, the International Federation and other partners regarding the optimum utilization of funds for capacity building in the case of a future emergency.



A group of SARC volunteers holding discussions as part of the After Action Review

The After Review identified restocking and capacity building needs in Disaster Management. A consultant from the British Red Cross joined the review team and participated in discussions and shared conclusions.

Good cooperation has been established with ICRC Damascus and a proposal has been made to support SARC in its logistics capacities over the coming two years. This will include the provision of assets (vehicles, IT and telecoms equipment), as well as support to training and staffing. Timing for this will coincide with the move to the new headquarters for SARC, situated in the northern outskirts of Damascus close to one of its regional warehouses, and there will be a request from the International Federation to support infrastructure and administration in this location.

This support will be complemented by International Federation support in DM and capacity building that will be identified following the After Action Review, as well as by the British Red Cross bi-lateral DM project, which has been extended for three more years, until June 2009.

DM training for new volunteers started at branch level, with a target of 25 new volunteers at each branch, making a total of 350. The latest course is currently underway at Homs branch with 35 participants.

The residual caseload of evacuees residing with host families in Syria will be assisted by ongoing SARC activities, if any needs are identified. Measures have already been taken to establish a closer dialogue with the relevant United Nations Agencies to ensure a complementary Plan of Action and to avoid duplication. UNHCR held discussions with SARC over support to its contingency planning, and a framework agreement has been drafted to enable operational partnership and improved coordination of joint activities in case of future emergencies. The World Food Programme (WFP) has also expressed a wish to engage in cooperation over contingency planning.

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.**Progress/achievements**Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

SARC appointed an Information Officer from Homs Branch to work at the Headquarters in Damascus. Supported by the International Federation Regional Information Officer from Amman, she will be responsible for the production of National Society newsletter (Solidarity), reporting and information updates and will also be a member of the After Action Review team.

The Information Officer from International Federation Regional Office in Amman joined SARC for the After Action Review to facilitate work on the case study, and will provide articles and photographs on SARC activities to the International Federation public website.

Capacity of the Federation and coordination

The Middle East regional office in Amman, Jordan continues to coordinate International Federation support to the National Societies in the region in line with Strategy 2010 and the International 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 International Federation and ICRC has the overall leadership responsibility for coordination of the movement's response to the conflict in Lebanon and its consequences in neighbouring countries.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC)

- 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 United Nations and NGOs are working with or through SARC to coordinate and harmonize relief activities.
- Following the ceasefire and the return of most of the displaced population to Lebanon, the team from the Middle East Regional Office has resumed normal support and coordination from the office in Amman. An International Federation Representative in Syria began his assignment in Damascus on 21 August at the beginning of a three month mission, and will be working closely with SARC management, the International Federation Regional Office and Movement partners to provide support in capacity building and future emergency response.
- The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Officer, located in Geneva, visited the International Federation Office in Damascus.
- The International Federation Representative in Damascus has been supporting SARC in its coordination and liaison with UN Agencies, donor missions and other operational partners through regular visits, where the work of SARC and its volunteers has been highlighted. He was invited to attend a meeting of SARC Governing Board, held in Damascus on 30 August.

Red Cross on Cyprus

Red Cross on Cyprus worked closely with Cyprus' Civil Defence organization, which is the agency designated to deal with emergencies, and with other representatives of the government, especially the immigration authorities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and social welfare services. The Red Cross was also represented in the main co-ordination body established by the Government of Cyprus, and participated actively in the work of this body.

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