

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
18 October 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. 5; Period covered: 12 September to 10 October 2006

Revised Appeal target: CHF 5,036,998 (USD 4,075,135 or EUR 3,190,770). Appeal coverage 72.5 per cent.
(Click here to go to the Contributions List.)

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 cease-fire announced on 14 August 2006 meant that the operational plans which had been drawn up for the initial three month emergency phase had to be revised. However, the most important activities planned, including procurement and distribution of essential relief supplies during the emergency phase, replenishment of National Societies' preparedness stocks and reinforcing the preparedness and response capacity of National Societies in affected countries have remained. Due to the shortened period of the emergency phase, the International Federation is confident that all requirements can be covered through the CHF 3.6 million which has been received so far in voluntary contributions in response to this Emergency Appeal.

The International Federation expresses its sincere gratitude to all donors who have supported the humanitarian assistance operation. This includes the recent contributions from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) of CHF 1.1 million through the Canadian RC and from Coca Cola of CHF 602,000 through the American Red Cross. These pledges were signed very recently, so are not yet included in the updated contribution list. Any further contributions which may be announced in response to the Appeal will be channeled to strengthen the response capacity of the Lebanese RC.

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.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Amman (for Syria & Jordan): Ahmed Gizo, Head of Middle East Regional Office, Phone +962 65694911, Mobile +962 79 5158204, Fax+962 6 56 94 556, Ahmedadam.Gizo@ifrc.org
- In Syria Alasdair Gordon Gibson, Federation Representative, Phone +963 11 4429662, Mobile +963 96122864,

email: Alasdair.gordongibson@ifrc.org

- *In Tunisia (for Egypt): Anne Leclerc, Head of North Africa Regional Office, phone: +216 71 86 24 85, fax: +216 71 86 29 71, email: ae.leclerc@ifrc.org*
- *In Lebanon: Knut Kaspersen, Head of Delegation, phone: +961 136 5374, fax: +961 136 5046, knut.kaspersen@ifrc.org*
- *In Cyprus: Tore Svenning, Federation Representative on Cyprus, mobile: +35799957106, tore.svenning@ifrc.org*
- *In Geneva:*
 - *Evgeni Parfenov, Regional Officer, MENA Department, phone +41227304325, mobile: +41 79 3333733, 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*
 - *Niels Scott, Operations Support Coordinator for MENA, phone: +41 22 730 4233, Niels.scott@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>

Background and operational developments

Lebanon

The Lebanese Red Cross (Lebanese RC) has been fully mobilized since the current crisis in Lebanon started on 12 July 2006. The mobilization has activated almost 5,000 volunteers within the Lebanese RC key service delivery areas of Emergency Medical Services, Primary Health Care, Social Services, Blood Banks and Youth volunteers.

The military operations between 12 July and the cease-fire on 14 August caused extensive damage to Lebanon's civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, bridges, main roads, ports, airports, power stations, industries and petrol stations. According to the government of Lebanon, 1,187 civilians were killed and 4,092 injured. A total blockade of Lebanon's airports and sea ports were kept until 8 September, causing major economic damage to trade and tourist industries. Even following the cessation of hostilities, it will take time to develop the necessary conditions for a secure re-establishment of civil infrastructure and society in affected areas.

The conflict caused the displacement of one million people, most of who had fled to other areas of Lebanon but some 200,000 sought shelter in Syria and other countries. The displaced have returned to Lebanon after the cease-fire but most have been forced to rent temporary accommodation whilst reconstructing their homes.

The government of Lebanon has mandated Lebanese RC to be the national provider of ambulance and paramedical services for the population since 1995. The Lebanese RC covers more than 80 per cent of all ambulance missions in the country through a network of 42 stations, 200 ambulances and 2,400 volunteers. The conflict caused direct and indirect damage to several ambulances and ambulance stations. The road and bridge damage is still limiting the ability of the Lebanese RC to reach some areas of the country, causing further damage to an already ageing ambulance fleet. Immediate renewal of the fleet and repair of some ambulance stations are thus a priority.

The worst affected areas of Lebanon are the areas south of the Litani River, the Bekaa valley towns of Baalbeck and Hermel, the suburbs of Haret Hreik and Dahiyeh in Beirut as well as key infrastructure elsewhere. The Lebanese RC is operating in all these areas and has a particular role in Lebanon's disaster management system. During the first weeks of the conflict, the Lebanese RC was the only organisation with access to all the affected areas. The volunteer base is strong with committed, highly motivated and well trained people.

The Lebanese RC is coordinating all its response activities with the government. It is well integrated into the country's disaster response mechanism. Joint meetings between the Lebanese RC, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) are held to coordinate the Movement response and share information.

Syria

Until the ceasefire in Lebanon, the displaced population seeking shelter in Syria was estimated at 180,000 people. Estimates were based on figures collected by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (Syrian Arab RC), United Nations agencies and the government of Syria. The majority of the displaced were women, children and elderly.

Since the cessation of hostilities, almost all of those displaced by the crisis have returned to Lebanon. Those who remain are accommodated with host families and there are no identified needs for continued emergency assistance.

Whilst the situation in Lebanon seems to be stabilising, continuing tensions in the region means that it is essential to have in place a contingency plan for response to future emergencies with a strong Syrian Arab RC component, focusing on coordinated and rapid humanitarian response mechanism, in case of any renewed influxes.

There were no significant changes in the humanitarian situation since the last report. The Syrian Arab RC consolidated the data collection and analysis of its activities and response during the emergency with the completion of an After Action Review (AAR) in Syria from 3-13 September. The Syrian Arab RC and the Middle East Regional Office in Amman reviewed and approved the findings of the After Action Review document. The document is being translated into Arabic for onward circulation to Partner National Societies (PNS) and all interested parties. The final English version of the AAR has been shared with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) office in Damascus and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Damascus, as well as the ICRC.

UNOCHA has also begun an exercise to assess the efficacy of the United Nations' response to the influx of Lebanese displaced people into Syria. This process will enable the United Nations Agencies in Syria to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their response, which will be used to enhance future preparedness and response mechanisms. The Federation office in Damascus submitted its input to the UNOCHA questionnaire. UNHCR is conducting its own review with a team in Syria and held a meeting with the Syrian Arab RC President, accompanied by the Federation Representative and Syrian Arab RC's Disaster Management Director.

Good cooperation continues with the ICRC Damascus. The ICRC will continue to support Syrian Arab RC in its logistics capacities, including training and staffing. The Federation is expected to include complementary support in mid to long-term capacity building for Syrian Arab RC through its Annual Appeal for the region 2006-2007.

The new headquarters for Syrian Arab RC, situated on the northern outskirts of Damascus close to its warehouse, is on schedule for completion by end of November, with a move expected in early December.

Cyprus

The 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 the National Society, which is volunteer-based. The situation required deploying hundreds of individuals over several weeks, which represented an enormous effort at branch and headquarters levels as well as on leadership.

In Cyprus, the operation is basically over, and the remaining challenges are more long term issues, like organizational development, training and capacity building.

Egypt

The operation at Rafah border crossing is an ongoing concern related to the chronic and protracted emergency situation in Gaza. The opening and closing of the crossing point is influenced by the escalation of violence in Gaza, but is not directly related to the crisis in Lebanon, or that people from Lebanon crossed into Egypt. Egyptian Red Crescent will draw up a contingency plan, supported by minimum response capacity for any eventuality.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

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 a satisfactory level within the emergency period of three months.

Lebanese Red Cross

The decline in the 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 because of the war- 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.

From Lebanese RC point of view, the war has left its finger prints on the volunteers who, for more than 40 days, have been working day and night to accomplish their mission and deliver the best services possible for the affected people. Experiencing the war from its different angles- victim, volunteer and being sometimes a target- has, and will create burn out if not properly treated and if volunteers are not properly debriefed.

Additionally, Lebanese RC has a network of nine blood banks that have played an important role in providing and delivering blood to isolated areas during the war. In order to improve the stock management and donor lists, a computer network and a database is needed to improve the management system and increase efficiency.

Activities under implementation include:

- Community Based First Aid (CBFA) training courses for women in the most affected areas and distribution of hygiene kits for people attending the CBFA training.
- Purchasing of four mini-buses to transport Lebanese RC youth and CBFA teams to distribute hygiene kits and deliver CBFA training.
- Health education sessions on personal and household hygiene in schools for children and adolescents.
- Training of 20 youth volunteers on CBFA to reach a wider community.
- Activities for children with creative ideas (drawing, dancing, acting and story-telling) to let out the traumatic experiences they lived through. These activities are accompanied by awareness sessions to parents about psychological stress, its impact on children and how to deal with it.
- One-day training for volunteers on psychological approach in working with children and parents when distributing relief items.
- Training of 14 members of the PSP team on debriefing techniques and carrying out debriefing sessions for volunteers.
- Awareness session for Lebanese RC volunteers' leaders (First Aid Teams and Youth) about stress management and volunteer management under stress.
- PSP Training of Trainers for 20 people to enhance the PSP capacity and preparedness.
- Collecting and developing PSP case studies to improve intervention and preparedness in future activities.
- Developing a stock management network between the nine blood banks.
- Developing an online database for blood donors to improve blood availability and blood distribution.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent

- No immediate emergency needs. First aid kits and WHO emergency health kits were supplied by German Red Cross and are held in stock.
- The Danish Red Cross will facilitate a PSP training of trainers (ToT) workshop for Syrian Arab RC volunteers/staff. Proposed dates are 5-10 November.

Red Cross on Cyprus and Egyptian Red Crescent:

No activities during the reporting period.

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.

No activities

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.

Lebanese Red Cross

The Lebanese RC is working alongside other organisations to provide basic needs to the affected population. In addition to the Emergency Medical Services and medico-social services, the Lebanese RC Youth department with its 1,100 volunteers continues to work on needs assessments and distribute relief items until the end of the year.

Effective logistics services are crucial to the ability of Lebanese RC to handle the influx of relief goods and ensure proper management of its fleet (ambulances, mini-buses, cars, trucks). Currently, the logistics department is understaffed and lacks basic resources to effectively handle its tasks. The Federation and the Lebanese RC logistics department have developed a Plan of Action to strengthen the logistics department with combined resources coming from ICRC and the Federation. The plan focuses on developing procedures and systems to ensure proper warehouse management, stock management, fleet management and procurement procedures.

Activities under implementation include:

- Developing procedures to ensure proper stock, warehouse management, and fleet management and renewal.
- Developing systems and procedures to ensure proper procurement process.
- Purchasing of two vehicles (4x4), two cargo vans and two mini-buses for the logistics department.
- Organizing training on logistics procedures for Lebanese RC.
- Assisting Lebanese RC to issue operational updates and daily situation reports reflecting emerging needs resulting from the situation to be shared with the different stakeholders.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent

- Food and nutrition: No need for contingency stock, though a framework agreement should be in place with local suppliers.
- Non-food items (NFI): Replenishment of stock for items including kitchen sets, mattresses, bed sheets, tents and electricity generators are needed. It will be necessary to keep a contingency stock for 5000 persons to cover ad hoc requests, as well as to be prepared for the possibility of deterioration in regional security, which might lead to renewed movement of population into Syria.

Tenders/requests for quotations have been sent to suppliers for the replenishment of Syrian Arab RC's emergency stock and for contingency preparedness, as well as for the additional supply of assets (vehicles and IT support) and equipment to support Syrian Arab RC volunteer emergency response teams. Procurement is expected to be completed by end of December.

Red Cross on Cyprus

Though the operation is over, the Federation is considering supporting the Red Cross on Cyprus to replenish its stocks through reimbursing the operational costs and materials used during the crisis.

Objective 4: Shelter

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

Activities related to the evacuation and sheltering of people from Lebanon into Syria and Cyprus are over since the displaced/evacuees have returned to their communities.

Objective 5: Capacity building

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

Lebanese Red Cross

The Lebanese RC programmes and activities resulting from the crisis, has clearly shown the great need to increase the capacity of the Lebanese RC support departments particularly at the level of planning, needs assessment, reporting, communication and human and financial resource management.

Activities under implementation:

- Setting-up of the planning department to support and lead the Lebanese RC planning processes.
- Setting-up of the logistics department to support functions including sorting out of in-kind donations and fleet management.
- Incorporating new financial software and procedures.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent

The Federation has continued support to DM capacity building through completion of its After Action Review, and approving its revised emergency budget, which will enable Syrian Arab RC to begin restocking of warehouses, and reimbursement of a significant proportion of its operational costs during the emergency. This will be complemented by bi-lateral support from British Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross.

The proposal between Syrian Arab RC and the ICRC as to mid-long term support to Syrian Arab RC over its logistics capacities has been approved. This will include the provision of assets (vehicles, IT and telecoms equipment), as well as support to training and staffing, over the coming two years.

The completion of the new headquarters for Syrian Arab RC is expected by end of November, with the move completed by the end of the year. Support to capacity building will be forthcoming from the Federation Annual Appeal, and will include training of Finance Officers, Communications Officers and IT upgrades for the new Headquarters. This will be complemented by support from ICRC, British Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross who are studying proposals.

Funds from Regional OD budget will provide additional training of Syrian Arab RC finance staff at Headquarters and branch levels in November 2006. The British Red Cross bilateral funding will support training in DM (assessment and planning) in November and December 2006. The Netherlands Red Cross is looking into providing equipment for the National Intervention Teams (NIT) and the Operations Room.

The Dubai Regional Logistics Unit and Global Fleet Base will remain at the disposal of Syrian Arab RC to assist in fleet procurement and any logistical capacity support they might need.

Red Cross on Cyprus

While the need for operational support is over, the Federation intends to continue to support the 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.

Egyptian Red Crescent

The Federation is exploring the possibility of using the appeal to support the Egyptian Red Crescent in strengthening the Disaster Management capacity at branch level, in order to become more efficient in responding to the crisis at national and regional levels.

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.

Lebanese Red Cross, activities under implementation:

- Designing a website.
- Recruiting and training a group of volunteers on communication and Red Cross in order to keep the website of the Lebanese RC and Federation updated.
- Equipping the communication department office with the needed equipment for website development and sustainability.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent

The Information Officer from Federation Regional Office in Amman joined Syrian Arab RC for the AAR, and assisted in the completion of the second Syrian Arab RC newsletter on the emergency operation. He also facilitated work on the case study following the AAR. The second/concluding Syrian Arab RC newsletter on the emergency operation has been completed and printed. Funding for this has been provided by ICRC.

Capacity of the Federation and coordination

- The Middle East Regional Office in Amman, Jordan continues to coordinate the 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 Federation delegation in New York maintains contact with Member States and the UN system.
- The ICRC based on the joint statement signed between the 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.

Lebanese Red Cross

The Federation Delegation in Lebanon continues to coordinate support to the Lebanese RC for developing logistics, finance, planning, communication and volunteers' management systems.

Syrian Arab Red Crescent

- The Syrian Government had mandated Syrian Arab RC to be the lead agency in providing assistance to the evacuees from Lebanon. Syrian Arab RC is also responsible for coordination and liaison with the relevant ministries. The United Nations and NGOs are working with or through Syrian Arab RC to coordinate and harmonize relief activities.
- The Federation Representative in Damascus has been supporting Syrian Arab RC in its coordination and liaison with UN Agencies, donor missions and other operational partners through regular visits, where the work of Syrian Arab RC and its volunteers has been highlighted.

For additional information about this operation, please click here to see appeal and operations updates:

- DREF Bulletin, 19 July, 2006: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?06/MDR81001.pdf
- Preliminary appeal, 21 July, 2006: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?06/MDR81001p.pdf
- Operations update 1, 27 July, 2006: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?06/MDR8100101.pdf
- Operations update 2, 3 Aug, 2006: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?06/MDR8100102.pdf
- Emergency appeal, revised, 11 Aug, 2006: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDR81001revised.pdf>
- Operations update 3, 23 Aug, 2006: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?06/MDR8100103.pdf
- Operations update 4, 22 Sept, 2006: http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?06/MDR8100104.pdf

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