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RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT INFORMATION

Report No. 36

This report is published thrice-weekly as a general update on Red Cross Red Crescent activities during the Balkans crisis, targeting primarily the Movement's components and supporters. Today's text can also be found on the internet: www.ifrc.org and www.icrc.org

LATEST EVENTS

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

The ICRC team is now installed in its previous offices in Pristina. Contact with the local authorities and the Kosovo Red Cross have begun. Security constraints for the team remain considerable. The Montenegro Red Cross reports the arrival of 600 displaced persons from Kosovo in the village of Dacice, 410 in Ulcinj, and an increased number of displaced in the municipality of Niksic.

Relief distribution: Earlier this week, five Red Cross Red Crescent trucks arrived in Pristina containing some 24 MT of bulk food, 2,350 individual parcels, 470 hygienic parcels, 4,000 m² of plastic sheeting and 500 pieces of tarpaulin. They were unloaded at the Kosovo Red Cross.

On Wednesday, a 'humanitarian boat', donated by the ICRC to the local Red Cross, was launched in Novi Sad. The boat will be used to ferry vulnerable people (elderly, children) from one side of the Danube to the other. It will also carry humanitarian assistance across the river running between the two parts of the city and between vast areas of the province of Vojvodina.

Health: A meeting was held on 25 May with Belgrade authorities to discuss the repercussions on the population of cuts in electricity and the water supply, particular attention was given to the effects on medical institutions. Following an assessment of the medical situation in Cacak by an ICRC team, medical supplies including surgical material, infusions, and oral drugs will be sent to the hospital there while dressing sets will be routed to the local Red Cross.

Logistics: In the middle of the week, five trucks transporting baby, hygienic and individual food parcels, plastic sheeting, surgical and dressing material for emergency interventions reached the country.

Five trucks of oil (22,660 litres each) and two trucks with beans (22,140 kgs each) have arrived for the refugee programme. In addition, distribution of close to 60% of the German Red Cross donation of 57,500 hygienic parcels has been completed.

External Relations, information and publicity: Great interest was generated by the re-opening of the office in Pristina by the ICRC. Representatives of the Red Cross addressed the BBC, AP, AFP, RT Portugal, and members of the local media. An interview was also given to RT Portugal on the special needs of elderly refugees.

Social welfare: (Special Report) The psycho-social support programme has been operational within the Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) since 1993, contending with the needs of some 600,000 refugees, as well as Yugoslav citizens living under conditions of continuous stress caused by loss of homeland, proximity of hostilities, decline of the standard of living, and the loss of relatives and friends. Programme activities include a 'help line' for victims of war, counseling sessions with professionals and/or specially trained Red Cross volunteers, visits to collective centres and host families, occupational and recreational activities for children and elderly and the opening of Red Cross youth, elderly and family clubs within local branches. Education and training were regularly carried out over the last six years in order to upgrade the knowledge of active co-workers and give a basic training to selected Red Cross volunteers.

At the beginning of this year, the YRC psycho-social support programme was operational through a network of 56 co-workers and 300 volunteers all over the country. As of March 24, additional numbers of volunteers, mostly professional psychologists and psychiatrists, joined the Red Cross psycho-social activities. The Montenegro Red Cross network is currently looking for 20 additional staff within the programme. Since the beginning of the current crisis in FRY, the programme has adapted its activities in order to provide emergency psychological assistance to the most vulnerable group comprised of traumatised children and the elderly. Help-lines have been opened in six municipalities, while in 48 others psychological first aid is regularly given in shelters. Belgrade Red Cross helpline recorded 200 calls in April. In Novi Sad, Red Cross mobile teams, including a psychologist are visiting the most vulnerable citizens.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

UNHCR estimates that more than 30,000 refugees have entered Macedonia over the past five days. On Wednesday, 230 refugees who had arrived on Tuesday at Blace were transported by bus to camps in Korce, Albania. According to UNHCR, 292 refugees from Kosovo arrived on Thursday in Macedonia, mainly through the Jazinec border crossing and 61 men crossed at Blace.

Humanitarian evacuations from Macedonia have reached 65,749 with the departure on Wednesday of 2,174 refugees to Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Under the program, UNHCR has received offers for 137,000 places from 40 countries.

Refugees in FYRO Macedonia

	<u>Arrivals</u>	<u>Departures</u>	<u>In Camps</u>	Registered <u>with MRC</u>	Estimated <u>Unregistered</u>	<u>Total</u>
24-May	8,500	1,142	96,300	140,365	10,000	246,665
25-May	7,500	1,562	102,200	140,365	10,000	252,565
26-May	292	2,174	106,100	141,800	8,000	256,000
Totals	16,292	4,878				

Sources; UNHCR,MRC (estimates in italics)

Relief distribution: The latest figures from the Macedonian Red Cross indicate that: 142,039 refugees are now registered in 25,179 host families; this exceeds the current planning figure. The May distributions of hygiene parcels, blankets and mattresses are ongoing for refugees and their host families (28 May).

Health: Health teams have begun a vaccination campaign against measles among refugees hosted by local villagers. Around 5,000 children have been vaccinated during the first week of the campaign led by WHO and UNICEF. The Ministry of Health says 90 percent of Macedonian children have been immunised, but a much lower number of youngsters from Kosovo have been vaccinated.

Since its opening on 13 May, the Norwegian Red Cross hospital in Cegrane has had 646 admissions. Mainly to the Out Patient Department where the treatment has been carried out. The combination of equipping the hospital, making routines and protocols, establishing relationships with local health authorities and other agencies/organisations and the employment and education of the local staff have been a tremendous challenge for all.

Starting in June, it will be required that refugees living in host families have both a refugee green card and registration certificate with the Macedonian Red Cross before they are given access to the state health care system.

Social Welfare:(Special Report) Because of the recent influx, areas reserved for educational activities have had to be allocated to new arrivals at Stenkovec and Cegrane. UNICEF has expressed concern about this development, which slows the establishment of stability in the daily life of camp children. UNHCR shares this concern and is looking at the possibility of transferring the school tents to an area located in between the two Stenkovec sites.

Since 1993, the Macedonian Red Cross has provided an Information Centre in Skopje for refugees throughout the country. Sometimes the service is as simple as coffee and conversation, but often the needs are more complex. The centre has provided advice, counseling, medicine and other help. It is a "homey" place for youth separated from family, the elderly, single parents and any refugee needing support, advice or counseling. The centre is open Monday-Friday from 7:30 AM to 8 PM, and 8 AM to 4 PM on the weekend.

Starting in response to the arrival of Bosnian and Serbian refugees, the centre now also serves refugees from Kosovo by providing books, school supplies and bus tickets to secondary students, newspapers from the home countries, information about services available in Macedonia, some medicaments for chronic illnesses, eye glasses, and allows a place for refugees to receive phone calls from families who live in other parts of Europe. An example of special help was providing contact for Bosnian refugees to participate in the elections in Sarajevo.

There are eight psychologists who volunteer their counselling services through the MRC, and the Institute of Psychiatry at the University in Skopje takes referrals from the centre. In April, the centre conducted interviews with 1,500 beneficiaries, had 636 information requests by telephone, provided medicaments and related support for 563 people, and gave psychological counselling or referral for 25 people.

Less formal programs have begun in Cegrane camp, where the Palestinian Red Crescent and Norwegian Red Cross staff have organised volley ball games between the staff and the refugees, and provided some toys for the children who are patients. The Palestinian Red Crescent has plans to provide psychological counseling to refugees at Cegrane and Stenkovic I/Brazda camps.

The French Red Cross (FRC) will be implementing another program in co-operation with the French embassy. The FRC will provide information about psycho-social integration to those refugees departing to France. Most already have families in France, but this program will serve as a continuing liaison from camps, transit, and arrival, where the FRC will meet the refugees at the airport in France.

Logistics: Dispatches from the International Federation's central warehouse at the end of the week included: 2,400 mattresses and 442 hygiene parcels(donated by the Swiss Red Cross). Deliveries included: 5,530 sleeping mats (donated by the German Red Cross), and 2,400 mattresses.

The Macedonian Red Cross arranged for donations of food that may have otherwise perished, to local charitable and non-profit organizations. These goods were delivered to the Rehabilitation Centre for Youth, Rehabilitation Centre for Deaf Children, Worker's Organisation for Care of Children and Youth: 5,396 litres of fruit juice, 2,800 milk, 1,600 kgs rice, 2,000 cans fish, 4,000 packs of pasta, 1,000 one litre bottles of cooking oil, 5,200 cans of vegetables, 5,000 kg flour, 3,600 bars of soap.

Macedonian customs officials have instituted new regulations for humanitarian shipments. Only the Macedonian Red Cross will be allowed to receive untaxed humanitarian goods and there will be stricter customs regulations. There is no real effect on Federation operations, other than some delays in customs. The government is strongly recommending that the UN and other agencies purchase their aid goods here in Macedonia.

Tracing: The ICRC Tracing Agency has registered 889 vulnerable people (the majority of which are unaccompanied children, but also include elderly, physically and mentally disabled persons). Cumulative through Thursday (27 May): total of 1,282 families have made tracing requests; 377 families reunited and 112 family reunion requests are pending; 244 names were given for broadcast.

Red Cross Messages - week ending 27 May

	<u>COLLECTED</u>	<u>DISTRIBUTED</u>
Intercamp	248	245
Albania	3	31
Europe/other countries	139	142
TOTALS	390	429

*5 were sent back to sender

ICRC Beneficiaries-week ending 27 May

<u>ICRC OFFICES</u>	<u>VISITORS</u>	<u>PHONE CALLS</u>
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Tetevo office	211	25
Refugee camp centres	3,198	127
TOTALS	3,559	347

Macedonian Red Cross: The MRC met yesterday with local police, the El Hilel organisation and UNHCR representatives to work out a better system to register an estimated 10,000 or more unregistered refugees living in villages in the Lipkova region.

External Relations, information and publicity: International Red Cross and Red Crescent Information delegates conducted interviews or briefings with the following media and representatives of national societies on Wednesday-Thursday (26-27 May): Briefings were provided to Fokus Macedonian magazine, German TV and the German Red Cross press officer, briefing about ICRC tracing activities in the Balkans to CNN; and an interview with Radio/TV Portugal on ICRC tracing activities and presence in Kosovo.

The Macedonian Red Cross held a press conference for about 50 representatives of the local media as part of the 36th annual celebration of solidarity week, where the MRC appeals for public and corporate donations. The president and secretary general of the MRC were joined with the Macedonian minister of labour and social welfare. The presentation and questions focused on humanitarian aid to social cases and the summer camps organised for social cases and refugees.

Albania

There are an estimated 461,208 refugees from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Albania. The Red Cross Red Crescent operation estimates that there are over 310,000 beneficiaries across the country. Albanian Red Cross volunteers--some 2000 strong in 36 local branches--are working in various activities.

Health: Amongst the refugees from Kosovo, the threat of tuberculosis (TB) is becoming more worrisome. The WHO has begun preparations for a national TB programme. According to this UN agency, there is a need for TBC medicines, detergent, disinfectant (for hospitals) and new equipment to upgrade the hospitals. In a joint effort, the Albanian Ministry of Health and the WHO are assessing the needs in the field.

Shelter: A "winterization programme" document, with a basic concept and project planning, will be issued next week, according to an announcement made by the Emergency Management Group (EMG.) At the present time, the "winterization cell" is compiling information with which it will produce an estimated mean cost for the renovation and winterization of collective centres. All donors and agencies that are preparing their own plans for winter should inform the EMG's Shelter Desk about these plans. The EMG has noted that there is a lack of information being given to it for certain small shelter projects (which makes it difficult to track the actual number of such projects and refugees).

According to reports from the EMG Shelter Desk 71,454 refugees are currently accommodated in tented camps and 95,288 are currently being housed in collective centres. According to the latest figures there are 34,072 host families in Albania and 333,031 refugees staying with host families.

Logistics: The second Red Cross ferry, the Atlantic Carrier, arrived in Durres on 26 May with a load of 29 trucks. This shipment includes 21 trucks of food parcels (45,000 units), 6 trucks of wheat flour (110 Mt.), 1 truck of hygiene parcels (1,760 units) and 1 truck of blankets (8,500 units). Also onboard were 2 Toyota Land Cruisers.

Agreements were reached on replacements for the helicopter and for the other Red Cross ferry, the Sancho Panza. The helicopter, another Super Puma, will be registered in Switzerland and will arrive in Tirana this weekend, while the new ferry, RORO EuroCarrier (the sister ship to the Atlantic Carrier), will be in Vasto (Italy) between 03-07 June.

Warehouse stock in Tirana is as follows: 3.7 kg food parcels (11,401); 5 kg food parcels (16,150); 10.5 kg food parcels (12,115); BP-5 biscuits (9851 12 kg boxes); pasta (25,223 kg); milk powder (25,100 kg); sugar (60,190 kg); wheat flour (267,251 kg); baby diapers (1,864 cartons); hygiene parcels (11,854); bed linen (52,875); blankets (548); cooking sets (2,001); mattresses (226); shoes (127 pairs); socks (3,144 pairs), undergarments (13,269); and t-shirts (242).

Tracing: The ICRC is continuing to reunite separated families. A young boy that had been stranded in Kukes was brought to his parents in Gjirokaster. After the parents had notified the OSCE in the southern town that their son was still in Kukes, the OSCE involved the ICRC, which found the boy recuperating in a camp, flew him to Tirana and transported him by vehicle to his parents. This is one example of the 27 reunions that the Red Cross Red Crescent operation have accomplished in Albania (including reunions with people in neighbouring FYR Macedonia). Another 201 families are awaiting reunion

Participating National Societies: The Emergency Advisor of the British Red Cross arrived to begin his 4-day trip to Albania. He will visit the joint delegation's co-ordinators, the Albanian Red Cross and the UNHCR. Additionally, Mitchell will be visiting the field operations, as well. On 26 May, the fifth PNS coordination meeting took place at the delegation in Tirana.

External relations, information and publicity: A documentary photographer from Sygma Press (America) was taken to Shkodra to stay for three days with refugees living with a host family. In an interview with CNN, the appeal was discussed as were the Red Cross Red Crescent activities and PNS camps. Emphasis was placed on the various Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies providing assistance in the country.

Delegation: The most recent office changes have meant that the ICRC's Tracing Department has taken an entire section of the upper-most floor of the joint delegation's office.

Outstanding needs: Telecommunications difficulties have hit Albania; the mobile telephone network on which much of the operation is dependent is overburdened. This has created difficulties in reaching people and organisation of operations.

Kukes Report

On 26 and 27 May, the movement of refugees was as follows: 1,243 entering into Kukes; 4,296 leaving Kukes. The new arrivals consisted of men, women and children.

Relief distribution: The second round of food distribution in Krume Municipality started on 26 May. In accordance with the findings from the nutritional survey conducted after the first round of distributions, which indicated an additional need for non-food items, refugees in host families will now receive hygiene kits with their food distribution. The wheat flour will only be

distributed to the new comers, as a one month ration was already provided to the registered beneficiaries during the last exercise. The current round of distribution is completed for the village of Gajrep and Krume Old town. Some 2,121 beneficiaries received 22.47 MT of Swedish Red Cross food parcels and 272 Hygiene kits.

The French Red Cross (FRCS) have an understanding with the ARCS, whereby the FRCS will run a nationwide scheme monitoring relief programmes. As such, a French Red Cross Relief delegate is currently stationed at the Kukes Sub-delegation, and will be working on establishing a system for monitoring relief distributions in this region.

Logistics: On 26 and 27 May, the Kukes Sub-delegation received 2,110 of Swedish Red Cross food parcels weighing 23.2 MT; 200 French Red Cross food parcels weighing 1 Mt and 60 hygiene parcels. Secondary deliveries were made to distribution points in Kukes town, as follows: 1,784 French food parcels, 2,110 of Swedish Red Cross food parcels and 64 MT of wheat flour.

Tracing: The protection team has given priority to the arriving former detainee and is helping them establish contact with their relatives. An additional delegate has arrived from Tirana for a couple of days to assist the team with this work.

In addition, on 26 and 27 May, the Protection team opened the following new cases/requests: seven Red Cross messages received; 13 family reunification requests; four special radio messages; five tracing requests for unaccompanied minors; one debriefing (mentioned above) and two medical case passed to the Tirana Medical Department. Over the same period, 1,017 satellite telephone calls and 101 radio messages were transmitted from the Kukes Office and Main Square, the MSF camp, the UAE Red Crescent camp and the Italian Red Cross camp. The 18 new UNHCR commissioned satellite telephones were installed by British Telecom in the MSF camp on 27 May, and are now fully operational.

Health: Recent departures have made staffing a priority at the Finnish Red Cross basic health clinic. This, coupled with a drop in delegate medical and non medical staff, will result in difficulties running the clinic on a 24 hour basis. Delegates at the clinic are currently trying to recruit additional local medical staff, however this is problematic, as other hospitals and clinics have also lost their staff during the past two days in the same way, as such there is a shortage of doctors and nurses in the Kukes area. Discussions with local authorities and the various Red Cross Red Crescent bodies are underway concerning this matter.

Despite this problem, on 26 and 27 May, the Finnish Red Cross basic health clinic treated a total of 460 patients, of which 108 were under six years old. They also inoculated 103 children against polio and measles. An assessment/monitoring team from the World Health Organisation based in Tirana, visited the Clinic's medical stall in Kukes town in order to evaluate stocks, etc. Staff at the Clinic also distributed health educational materials to the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent and the Italian Red Cross field hospitals. The preventative health care materials focused on diarrhoea, common diseases, breast feeding and maternity care.

Earlier this week, the Italian Red Cross field hospital treated a total of 395 patients, of which 189 were under ten years old. During the same period they also organised the medical evacuation of eight patients, to include five children and a three month old baby. On 26 May, another baby girl was born in the camp, and named after the Italian medic who delivered her.

External Relations, information and publicity: An interview was conducted with the television section of CBC radio-Canada, which focused on the tracing activities, and included an interview with the Protection delegate. Contacts were also made with a freelance British photojournalist and Associated Press.

Delegations: Preliminary discussions are currently underway concerning the expansion of the Red Cross Red Crescent Bajram Curri operations. As such, on 26 May a team consisting of Federation, ICRC and ARC representatives went on a two day information gathering mission to Bajram Curri, some 100 km north-west of Kukes. The general security situation was evaluated, and an initial needs assessment was conducted, focusing on displaced and refugees. Medical supplies were also distributed to the hospital.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

FRY refugees continued to cross into BiH during the past week. According to the UNHCR, the total number of refugees who have fled to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) since the beginning of the current crisis in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) is approximately 104,000 people. Some 44,000 refugees have fled to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and 60,100 to Republika Srpska (RS).

Shelter: Host families are providing shelter for many of the refugees. Less than ten percent of FRY refugees are accommodated in camps. There are 29 shelter facilities in FBiH and RS accommodating 7,825 people. These facilities consist of 14 collective centres, 11 transit centres and 4 tented sites.

Relief distribution: The Red Cross of the Czech Republic has donated: 28 palettes of mineral water, 7 palettes of instant soup, 2 palettes of biscuits, 14 palettes of toilet paper, 1 palette of toilet soap, 3 palettes of paper handkerchiefs, 2 palettes of bandages, 5 palettes of sanitary napkins, 1 palette of baby diapers and 1 palette of shirts. The British Red Cross donated 44 bales of baby clothes.

Outstanding needs: Hygiene parcels, baby food and other baby care items, blankets, food, etc., remain urgent needs.

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