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## **RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT INFORMATION**

*Report No. 42*

*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](http://www.ifrc.org) and [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)*

### **LATEST EVENTS**

On Thursday 11 June, in accordance with Wednesday's agreement, NATO suspended its bombing in Yugoslavia and Serb troops began withdrawing from Kosovo. The international security force (KFOR) is expected to begin arriving today. The Red Cross Red Crescent has been planning for this moment for several weeks and stands ready to assist the returnees and those remaining in Albania and Macedonia. The Movement will continue its support to the civilian population, the displaced and refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

#### ***Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia)***

Health: On Wednesday, 9 June, the Red Cross provided one Norwegian Red Cross unit, as well as antibiotics, dressing material and infusion material to the hospital in Uzice, in central Serbia. A Survey was conducted of a hospital specializing in heart surgery in Sremska Kamenica. The town located across the Danube from Novi Sad was affected by cuts in the water supply.

Delegations: Over the course of last week, representatives of the Red Cross Joint Field Offices in Serbia toured the region as they prepared a comprehensive assessment survey. Notably, the Kraljevo office visited Varvarin and Novi Pazar. The Novi Sad office paid a visit to Vrbas and Sombor, gathering information on the increasing soup kitchen needs and, together with a medical delegate from Belgrade, explored the possibilities of assisting humanitarian pharmacies and medical and social welfare institutions in Vojvodina. The Nis office, which officially opened on 27 May, carried out field trips to Leskovac, Prokuplje, Kursumlija and Zajecar.

Social welfare: In May, the Yugoslav Red Cross social welfare programme (SWP) with 150 professionals and trained volunteers, carried out 23,336 personal contacts with refugees, displaced and mostly local population. SWP teams are offering psychological support to traumatised and stressed people. They are currently managing seven telephone help-lines, and conducting visits to shelters, homes and refugee collective centres in 48 of the Red Cross branches. Special support was given to the children. Since children in Serbia have not been able to attend school since the end of March, work with children has been intensified with various workshops.

The Social welfare programme will begin training of new staff in Montenegro. Children's workshops will be the main focus of the programme and existing clubs in collective centres will expand their activities.

External Relations, information and publicity: Considerable interest has been aroused by the first ICRC direct distributions to IDPs in Kosovo. Questions from media ranging from Australian radio (Sidney) to Vatican radio and a number of local media focused mostly on that topic. Belgrade media, including the RTS, reported the medical delivery to Uzice.

(*Kosovo*) The cessation of air strikes on Thursday 10 June has meant that the Red Cross team there will now be able to increase its relief distributions within Pristina and its environs. A stock of individual parcels and wheat flour destined for Kosovo for some 100,000 persons is being assembled in Skopje and in the interim, officials from the Greek-Russian-Swiss 'Focus' Project have given the green light for their relief items already in Pristina to be used by the ICRC. Two trucks loaded with relief supplies were taken to Srbica near Glogovac today Friday, while a ten-truck convoy has left Belgrade on the start of a three-day rotation to Kosovo. An additional three delegates will join the six expatriate staff already in Pristina. On Wednesday 9 June, 15 tons of much-needed food (flour, salt) and five tons of non-food (blankets, kitchen sets, baby parcels and plastic sheeting) were distributed in Metehi, a village some 14 kilometres away from Podujevo. A truck loaded with seven MT of food (milk powder, canned beans) and non-food (clothes, hygiene parcels) from the local Red Cross also joined the convoy. Some 8,000 people from 44 neighbouring villages had gathered along the river banks to wait for the distributions. In Glogovac, about 25 km east of Pristina, 16 tons of food (flour, oil, yeast) and 2,000 blankets were also distributed.

While at the distribution site in Metehi, delegates were given some 500 names and phones numbers of relatives living abroad, and 450 Red Cross messages (RCM) were collected. In Glogovac 32 RCMs were collected.

While a reliable food supply (of bread mainly) is the primary worry of the displaced persons encountered so far, accessibility to safe drinking water is also a major cause for concern. As such, water rehabilitation equipment, (pumps, bladder tanks, tap stands and chlorine) have been sent to Pristina where the construction work on water distribution points has already begun.

### ***Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Montenegro)***

Delegations: The Federation relief team is on a one week assessment mission in Montenegro together with colleagues from the Montenegro Red Cross and the sub-delegation in Podgorica. A report will be prepared on the American Red Cross food programme.

### ***Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia***

According to the UNHCR, only 150 refugees from Kosovo entered Macedonia on Wednesday (9 June); all the refugees from Gnjilane, Pristina, Vucitrn and Kosovska Kamenica arrived through the official borders, with 90 in Tabanovce, 56 in Jazince and four at the main immigration control point in Blace. Departures under the UNHCR-IOM humanitarian evacuation program totalled 2,782 on 8-9 June, bringing the overall count to 82,015. Destinations were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom and USA.

The UNHCR estimates the total population of refugees in Macedonia to be 256,900.

Relief Distribution: The Federation and ICRC are preparing to dispatch a Red Cross contingency stock of bottled water to the Blace border area to distribute to refugees as they travel back to Kosovo. There are currently 109,960 1.5-litre bottles of water and 33,422 high protein biscuits (BP5) in the border contingency stock which are available for relief aid.

Relief Supplies	Received by:	Distributed To:	Distributed To:	Distributed To:	
	Central Warehouse	Refugees	Host families	Social Cases	Total no. Distributed
Hygiene parcels (ECHO)		527			527
Hygiene parcels (Swiss Red Cross)			279		279
Mattresses	1,492	1,388			1,388
Blankets		25			25
Hygiene parcels (German RC)					0
Hygiene parcels (IFRC)		1,129			1,129

***(Relief/Distribution 9 June 1999)***

Health: According to the WHO, water and sanitation services in the camps continue to improve after the introduction of latrine supervisors. Cegrane and Blace camp have improved their latrine hygiene. Showers are still lacking in some camps (Stenkovec II, Cegrane, Bojane). Health NGOs and agencies are encouraged to transfer patients from camps to the Red Cross field hospitals for inpatient services including elective surgery. The referral of patients to Tetevo Mental Hospital is sometimes difficult. There is a lack of equipment in the hospital and uncertainty about reimbursement to the institution. There are also problems with referral of patients from Tetevo to Skopje for involuntary treatment.

Tracing: Since the beginning of the crisis, the ICRC Tracing Agency has received 1,696 tracing requests and registered 1,482 vulnerable people (the majority of which are unaccompanied children, but also include elderly, physically and mentally disabled persons). As of 9 June, 580 families have been reunited. For the week ending 9 June, the ICRC tracing offices (Skopje, Tetevo and seven camps) have received 5,046 visitors and 508 phone calls, and 363 names were given for broadcast. There were 596 registrations on the ICRC website [http:// www.familylinks. icrc.org](http://www.familylinks.icrc.org); through the site, 33 Red Cross messages received and six were sent out.

External Relations, information and publicity: Red Cross Red Crescent delegates conducted interviews or briefings with the following media on Wednesday-Thursday (09-10 June): CBC/Canadian Broadcasting Corp., CKNW/Radio Vancouver, *L'Humanite*/French newspaper, *Los Angeles Times*, Radio Malta, NBC News, Radio Canada/Toronto, ABC News, Fokus/German magazine, Norwegian TV, Antenne 2/France, National Public Radio/New York, TSF/Television Suisse Romande, and Macedonia media: Nova Makedonia, Večer, Flaka. The international media is focused on two topics: ICRC operations in Kosovo, and the plans and capacity of the humanitarian organisations' response to needs of the returning refugees.

## *Albania*

Only ninety people were registered as having crossed into Albania from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The following figures represent the current Red Cross Red Crescent caseload in Albania for both refugees and host families 90,078 in Kukes; 119,799 in Tirana; 28,496 in Shkoder; 78,182 in Durres; 24,214 in Elbasan; and 28,357 in Fier.

With the peace settlement refugees are slowly starting to come to grips with the implications. The UNHCR is in the process of implementing a mass information campaign for refugees and displaced in conjunction with Media Action International, concerning the repatriation process and specific procedures for return, as well as available humanitarian assistance. The first information brochure will be available in the coming days, with the usage of television and radio, backing up leaflets, which will primarily be distributed in camp.

While precise planning is hampered by the fact that there are still many unknown factors and uncertainties about future developments, the Kukes sub-delegation has already started to develop some contingency plans and scenarios regarding programme planning. At present the Sub -delegation plans to continue to focus its work towards current objectives and figures for assisting refugees in host families and the host families themselves. It does not at present intend to expand the team in the delegation, but will be conducting a thorough stock check of relief items in the coming days, making adjustments as necessary. It is anticipated that further food and non-food items, to include additional medical and water/sanitation stocks, will be required, and discussions are already underway with the Tirana Delegation.

Relief distributions: An analysis of the physical inventory of the Tirana warehouse which was conducted a few weeks ago reveals that there has been less than a one percent loss recorded for the foodstuffs. A good buffer stock has been established in the second Durres warehouse. The joint delegation has been asked to facilitate the delivery of 500,000 Meals Ready to Eat to Skopje, for later use in the province of Kosovo. Also being prepared for transfer to the delegation in the Macedonia are vehicles: six Scania heavy goods trucks and three trailers will leave for Skopje on Sunday.

A shipment of three MT of chlorine was sent to the Shkoder area for the water supply.

In Krume a new round of relief distributions started on 10 June. Some 544 refugees in host families and 59 host families received 5 MT of wheat flour in Zahrisht and Golaj villages. A months ration of eight kg was distributed to the majority of beneficiaries; however, some beneficiaries were allocated additional supplies as a means to compensate them for the smaller ration they received during the previous distribution exercise.

The current round of relief distributions in Kukes Town have now been completed. In total, 43,786 beneficiaries (40,930 refugees in host families and 2,856 host families), between 5 and 9 June, received 27,688 food parcels (French and Swedish Red Cross), weighing 238 MT and 175 MT of wheat flour. Each refugee in a host family received a two week ration, amounting to half a Swedish Red Cross food parcel or a whole French Red Cross food parcel and four kgs of wheat flour. Host families received a one month ration, amounting to a full Swedish Red Cross food parcel and four kgs of wheat flour. The next distribution in Kukes town is due to start on 21 June.

On 9 and 10 June, the Kukes Sub-delegation received 27.5 MT of wheat flour, 3,320 Swedish Red Cross food parcels, weighing 35.2 MT and 5,361 French Red Cross food parcels, weighing 29.5 MT. Secondary deliveries of wheat flour, weighing 10 MT, were made in Kukes and Krume. An additional warehouse has been found, and will be operational from Saturday.

The Albanian Red Cross has been instrumental in developing an improved system of distribution since this operational phase first started on 6 May in Kukes. Their work includes negotiating with the local authorities, dealing with the necessary refinements to the Beneficiary List, verifying the Beneficiary List, organising distribution teams in the seven points, and creating a more orderly distribution system. The general trend in beneficiary numbers is upward. Indeed, since 6 May, the numbers of beneficiaries have increased by over 6,000, and currently stands at 43,786. Interestingly, in the last distribution, it is the host family numbers which have increased proportionately the most (a 60% increase), with the refugee numbers remaining fairly static in Kukes town (only an 8% increase), ie refugees are dispersed in more host families.

Health: Final preparations for the PNS Health Meeting (scheduled for 11 June in Tirana) took place. Co-ordination between the WHO and the Ministry of Health continues on the issue of medical/drug donations to institutions in the country. The Red Cross Red Crescent operation is the only actor that has been providing medicines to the nation's hospitals. The second follow-up visit to the Lac and Lezhe areas took place to assess the medical donations that have been made to those areas. An increase in the incidence of diarrheal diseases has been noticed and is expected to grow even more in the coming summer months. The Japanese Red Cross mobile clinics will be located in Mamuras (Kurbini District) and Fushe-Kruje (Kruje District)--both are in the Red Cross Red Crescent operation's Tirana region. This was made possible with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. Another three medical evacuations took place from Bajram Curri.

The Italian Red Cross field hospital, on 8 and 9 June, treated a total of 369 patients, of which 190 were under 10 years old. They had 13 inpatients on 8 June, which decreased to 8 the following night and organised two medical evacuations on 8 June, one of which involved a baby. Two baby boys were also born at the field hospital.

The Finnish Red Cross basic health clinic has gained three doctors during the past two days. A Finnish nurse also assisted with a medical evacuation to Tirana on 10 June. During the period a total of 833 patients were also treated.

Shelter: The total number of registered refugees is 465,389; of that number, 84,461 are in tented camps. The Red Cross Red Crescent caseload remains at greater than 367,000--there are 328,468 refugees living with host families and 39,180 host families. Construction of new tented camps has been stopped; refugees are not moving towards and into them. However, those camps that are already under construction will be completed, and winterisation of these camps will also proceed as has been planned. News regarding a peace agreement has had the effect of reducing the amount of people that have been relocating from Kukes to other parts of the country.

Tracing: Services being offered by the ICRC Tracing Department are being very well-received by the refugee populace and are considered of great importance. These services help the refugees' state of emotional well-being. More than 5,050 visits have been recorded since the operation began, with almost 25,000 telephone calls having been made by the refugees to relatives living abroad, and more than 21,000 messages were typed for radio broadcast. The following categories (and numbers of cases) have been recorded: unaccompanied elderly (216); parents having lost children (146); unaccompanied children (178), family reunion cases opened and closed (396/36), Red Cross messages in and out (58 & 17).

The ICRC protection team, on 7 and 8 June, opened the following cases/requests: eight special radio messages; seven family reunification requests; three tracing requests concerning unaccompanied minors and five concerning abandoned elderly people; two Red Cross messages received and two Red Cross messages distributed; and one special tracing request. In addition, the team facilitated 1,022 satellite telephone calls and 403 radio messages from the Kukes Office, Kukes Main Square, the United Arab Emirates Camp and Kukes II.

Participating National Societies: For the first time, a representative of the Hellenic Red Cross attended the weekly PNS meeting. The attending representatives were told that consolidation would occur within the organisation, improvements would be made and that planning would take place to take the Red Cross Red Crescent into the next step of the operation.

*French Red Cross Refugee Monitoring Programme:* As part of the French Red Cross' (FRCS) monitoring role in Albania, it has, in conjunction with the Albanian Red Cross, UNHCR, Relief International, SCF and MSF, established a very comprehensive monitoring programme aimed at 400 refugee families (10% of refugee families hosted by Albanians) currently living in Kukes Town with host families. A detailed questionnaire has been produced specifically for this task, the questionnaire is designed to gauge the appropriateness of food parcels, there is also a section on general statistical information about refugees in host families, their future plans, the facilities provided by the host family, and general issues concerning health, water/sanitation, security, etc. The results of the questionnaire should be completed by 16 June and the results will be shared with all interested organisations in Kukes.

External relations, information and publicity: SPEAR radio for refugees is in the process of making a 20 minute feature on unaccompanied elderly. Antena 3 (Spanish television) travelled to the Macedonian border in the east and then to the Albanian coastal city of Kavaje with the ICRC's tracing team to film a family reunion which will be broadcast on the morning and evening news and for later retransmission in South America. BBC Radio (5 Live and West Midlands) was interested in the return of refugees. Reuters also did a story on the elderly being reunited with their families. The ICRC HoD, the Albanian Red Cross President, and Secretary General participated in a 40-minute discussion about the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and its activities in Albania at the studios of the national television. An interview with a Finnish Red Cross/Plan International journalist addressed perspectives of the Red Cross operation in Albania. Dutch National Television filmed a story detailing the life of a mother and child in the camps. The joint delegation's Psycho-social Programme Co-ordinator was also interviewed by these journalists. Further contacts were made with TV Suisse Romande, who were briefed about relief distributions. The *Daily Mirror* was also briefed about the Red Cross Red Crescent programmes in general, to include activities in light of the changing situation on the ground.

Delegation: Work continues on enlarging the joint delegation's office space to accommodate additional staff and growing departments. A handover of all logistics assets from the ICRC to the International Federation continues within the department.

The Deputy Director of the Europe Department and the Refugee Officer from the International Federation visited the Kukes Sub-delegation on 9 and 10 June. Following extensive meetings with the Head of Sub-delegation and the ICRC Team Leader, visits were made to the Finnish Red Cross basic health clinic, the Protection Team's satellite phones, refugees living with host families and in collective centres, the UAE Red Crescent camp and the Italian Red Cross camp. On 9 June, the Communications Advisor for the ICRC and team members, visited the Sub-delegation in order to discuss general communication issues and dissemination. He had meetings with the ICRC Team Leader and other staff members at the Sub-delegation.

Outstanding needs: Child-specific food needs in Albania are not being met by the present international humanitarian effort according to the Emergency Management Group.

***Bosnia and Herzegovina***

The signing of Thursday's agreement to suspend military operations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) is not an instant solution to the refugee crisis in the Balkans.

The UNHCR reports that the total number of refugees who have fled to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) since the start of the Kosovo crisis increased from last week's figure of 104,600 to a current total of 105,100.

According to UNHCR 45,000 refugees have fled to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and 60,100 to Republika Srpska (RS). While ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and Moslems from Sandzak are arriving in FBiH, Serbs from FRY are moving into the Bosnian Serb entity. A total of 60,100 Serb refugees from FRY have fled to RS including 30,100 Serbs from Croatia that fled to FRY during the war in Croatia and Bosnian Serbs that left Bosnia during the four-year war in this country.

Relief distribution: The World Food Programme (WFP) in BiH is scheduled to close by 10 July. A small WFP unit will remain in BiH as a liaison office. Catholic Relief Service will take over WFP activities regarding the distribution of food to the collective centres.

Shelter: A total of 9,703 FRY refugees are accommodated in refugee camps. The number of camps has increased from 29 to 39 over the last ten days. There are 19 refugee camps in FBiH and 20 in RS, including 13 transit centres, four tented sites and two collective centres in FBiH and 20 collective centres in RS.

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