

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: EMERGENCY SERVICE, REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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period covered: January - March 1998

The more assertive role of the United Nations' High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Carlos Westendorp, and the growing international cooperation with the Republika Srpska under its Prime Minister, Milorad Dodik, combined to bring fresh impetus to the political process of change in BiH in the first quarter of 1998. However, the picture was much more gloomy in the social and humanitarian arenas. The returns of refugees and displaced people to so-called 'minority areas' continued to be extremely small, whilst funding for the International Federation's planned programmes in 1998 rapidly declined, threatening levels of relief and social assistance the Red Cross can offer to vulnerable people this year. Further funding is rapidly needed if programmes for the elderly, sick and children psychologically affected by war are not to be severely cut back.

The context

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) between 1992 and 1995 which was ended by the Dayton/Paris Peace Accord in December 1995 left over 100,000 dead and a further 2.1 million people who were forced to flee their homes. Implementation of the Dayton Agreement has proved to be exceedingly difficult and slow, however, despite international pressure for compliance, due to local resistance and the complexity of the reconstruction and return process. The International Federation began its work in BiH in 1995 and this year plans to assist 350,000 beneficiaries through the 143 local branches in Bosnia and Herzegovina (79 in the Federation Entity and 64 in Republika Srpska).

Latest events

Progress was achieved in the first quarter of the year in the political reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but on the key issue of refugee and IDP returns the designation of 1998 as 'the year of minority returns' remained a mirage. Clashes between Serb and Croat local people and returnees in Drvar, Derventa and Maglaj in early May — during which offices of the High Representative and the UNHCR were attacked and badly damaged — severely dented hopes of an increase in the rate of minority returns and revealed once again the determination of extremists to try to prevent the implementation of this key element of the Dayton Agreement.

In the face of continuing failure by the different political representatives to agree on a host of Bosnia and Herzegovina state-related issues, Carlos Westendorp, the United Nations' High Representative, flexed the new powers given to his Office (OHR) by forcing through the

introduction of a single licence plate, currency and new flag and imposing the design of these and other insignia.

Meanwhile, arrests of indicted Bosnian Serb war criminals continued — including by the police force in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is not allowed under the peace agreements. Serbians in the Republika Srpska responded to these apprehensions by closing down the road that connected Sarajevo to the majority-Serb entity.

A definitive decision on Brcko was once again postponed by the OHR Supervisor, Robert Farrand. The new schedule foresees a final arbitration phase at the end of 1998 followed by a decision in early 1999. Progress in a number of sectors occurred in the town, in which Moslems and Croats were included in the municipal council and in the police force.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Home Care & Secondary Health •

The Home Care Programme continued to function well and meet its *Appeal* targets. A new monitoring system was established and co-ordination meetings to plan the future of the programme took place at the entity levels. Volunteer numbers remained unchanged: in the FBH, there were 537 volunteers, while in the RS the figure was 426 (a total of 963 volunteers). On average, 12,763 beneficiaries are seen by these volunteers (see chart below for monthly figures).

Statistics for the Home Care Programme

	January			February			March		
	FBH	RS	Total	FBH	RS	Total	FBH	RS	Total
Beneficiaries	5378	7,331	12,709	5,359	7,432	12,791	5,359	7,432	12,791
Visits	27,340	25,901	53,241	28,315	27,523	5,838	26,353	28,191	54,544
Referrals	1,637	180	1,817	1,534	137	1,671	1,615	148	1,763

Distribution of bedsheets, diapers, Elderly Aid Parcels, walking canes/mobility aids, activist kits and many other items continued throughout the three months. However, Secondary Health Assistance programmes were slowly phased out and the hearing aid project was completed.

Mobile Technical Teams •

The number of Mobile Technical Teams (MTTs) operating across the country remained at 29. The programme by the end of the first quarter was badly needing further donations to guarantee activities later in the year. Meanwhile, further improvements were made to the teams' operational capabilities. In mid-January, canopies for the MTT vehicles were installed and additional tools and equipment from the latest ECHO contract (ECHO 2) were purchased and distributed. Improvements were also made in the monitoring and reporting of MTTs in the RS.

Beneficiary Numbers for the Mobile Technical Teams Programme

January	February	March	Total
1,148	1,345	1,510	4,003

Relief •

The total number of relief items distributed in the first quarter of 1998 were as follows:

ITEM	PERIOD	Fed. Entity	Rep. Srpska	TOTAL
BED PANS	01/98-02/98	25	20	45
DECUBITUS PADS	01/98-02/98	24	21	45
DIAPERS	11/97-12/97	95,920	96,000	191,920
ELDERLY AID PARCELS	01/98-02/98	2,070	3,921	5,991
SHEETS	11/97-12/97	8,798	0	8,798
ACTIVIST KITS	01/98-02/98	140	0	140
NOTEBOOKS		500	600	1,100
PENS		500	600	1,100
TOILET CHAIR	01/98-02/98	9	3	12
WALKING FRAME	01/98-02/98	15	5	20
WALKING STICKS	12/97-01/98	1,700	0	1,700
WHEEL CHAIR	12/97-01/98	7	5	12

With the conclusion of the ECHO (2) contract on 31 March 1998, all outstanding procurement and delivery of relief items for stockpiling in support of the Population Movement programme and for support to the home care programme have been performed as follows:

	QUANTITY	DISTRIBUTION
ELDERLY AID PARCELS	14,816	STOCKPILING
MOTHER AND CHILD PARCELS	2,200	STOCKPILING
COOKING SETS	1,872	STOCKPILING
FIREWOOD	400 m ³	KRESEVO, FOJNICA, KISELJAK, BILALOVAC
STOVES	200	SARAJ-ROMAN, ISTOCNA-HERC, STARA-HERC, SARAJEVO, CENTRAL BOSNIA, DOBOJ-ZENICA

Logistics •

Preparations are underway to effect procurement and delivery, and plan the distribution of items covered under the new ECHO (3) contract. The grant allocation is for 1.5 million ECU, with the contract period running from 1 April to 31 December 1998. International procurement has been organised through the Regional Logistics Centre, Zagreb. Procurement of certain items (aprons for the home care programme and working clothes for the MTT programme) will be performed locally in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and preparations for this are currently underway.

Institutional Development •

Financial Assistance

The rehabilitation and refurbishment of office space continued with the financial assistance of DfID (via the British Red Cross), the Swedish Red Cross and others. The new Red Cross of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's headquarters was also outfitted with office equipment (through a donation from the Austrian Red Cross) and a vehicle was purchased (thanks to support from the German and Austrian Red Cross).

Cash allocations to the 146 local RC branches, 17 cantonal/regional RC branches and the Republika Srpska Red Cross headquarters were DM 300, DM 500 and DM 1,200, respectively as shown in the totals below.

	No. of cantons or regions	No. RC branches	Total	Branch support (DM)	Administrative support (DM)
FBiH RC	10	82	92	38,400	21,200
RCRS	7	64	71	30,900	16,400
Total	17	146	163	69,300	37,600

Blood Programme

The traditional Red Cross role within community welfare services was strengthened through ECHO-provided meals for blood donors and through the provision of blood programme materials for both Red Cross entities as follows:

	Booklets	Certificates	Posters	Stickers	Key rings	Pencils	Total
RCRS							
Semberija/ Majevisa	0	3'000	5'000	0	0	500	8'500
Doboj	10'000	3'000	5'000	0	0	800	18'800
RCRS HQ	0	3'000	0	0	0	0	3'000
FBiH RC							
Tuzla	2'834	1'570	0	1'400	882	0	6'686
Total	12'834	10'570	10'000	1'400	882	1'300	

First Aid

Preparations were made for more First Aid projects with the purchase of materials funded by DfID and for Public Health Education, for which a general plan was discussed with local Red Cross leaders.

Youth

Youth seminars were held in the municipalities of Bihac, Kljuc, Gorazde, Trebinje, Doboj and Modrica. Six new Red Cross Youth Groups were formed and preparations continued for the expansion of the Youth Development team.

National Society Development

The selection of members for the Inter-Entity Contact Group (IECG) was finalised in February; each entity-level Red Cross structure appointed its three members to the IECG, which is tasked with drafting statutes for the National Society and the convening of a General Assembly to adopt the statutes. Joint efforts began in March, when the members met at the Sarajevo-based headquarters of the International Federation and discussed the future in a

cordial and united fashion. Cross-entity Red Cross meetings — at the local level — are becoming more popular and frequent.

Population Movement •

A final report on the Social Policy, Protection and Practice Conference (held in December) was compiled and sent out to donors (further copies are available from the Geneva Secretariat or the Sarajevo Delegation, tel: +387 71 666-009).

Meetings with the ICVA and the OHR were held to discuss strategies aimed at improving information co-ordination for agencies and offices providing advice to refugees. The dissemination of information for returning refugees and internally displaced persons was also discussed with the RCFBH. The 'Freephone' project (a toll-free telephone service for potential returnees) was revised and renamed 'Call-back'. This is an ongoing effort, in co-operation with the local Red Cross.

The needs of those living in the collective centres in the Visegrad area (in the RS) were discussed with representatives of the Ministry for Social Welfare, the Secretary of the Visegrad Red Cross and the area's Home Care co-ordinator. The Ministry officials stated that the only durable solution for these people (many of whom are from the 'Open City' of Konjic) is the construction of flats in the area.

Children Affected by Armed Conflict (CABAC) •

Though only two of the expected six CABAC units were operational, they continued to function at full capacity and without difficulties. The number of children (aged between 11-14 years) in Bihac was increased to 600, whilst Banja Luka remained at its target of 900. Activists in Bihac began preparations for the first internal evaluation of activities (the programme has been fully operational for three months).

Public Awareness •

The revised edition of the former *Sign of Peace* brochure was published with the new title *Red Cross ... Red Crescent*. The first draft of the inaugural newsletter for refugees based in third countries contemplating return to BiH, *Back Home*, was finished. However, after feedback from the Secretariat its introduction in an expanded form was put back to June. Plans for 1998 were discussed with the RCRS leadership.

Outstanding needs

At the end of March, major National Society donors were approached with a proposal to help fund the 43 Mobile Technical Teams for the remainder of 1998. So far, confirmed funding has been received for 260 MTT months, leaving a shortfall of 88 months. Donors are urged to consider offering even small amounts, as each team can be sponsored for only CHF 6,900 a month.

The major shortfall in funding has also had a severe impact on the levels of relief goods that can be distributed by the International Federation to the most vulnerable beneficiaries in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the home care and MTT programmes.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The International Federation's development initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina are progressing well, with the formation of the IECG and the increasing tempo of contacts between the two entity Red Cross structures at both local and leadership levels. Relief operations, however, have been badly affected by the international community's growing concentration of effort on maintaining and rewarding political progress in BiH. Yet thousands of vulnerable people continue to rely on humanitarian assistance as pension and other social service entitlements fail to meet their basic needs. The provision of such assistance is just as vital in the rebuilding of Bosnia and Herzegovina as political and infrastructural investments, and donors are urged to assist the International Federation and the local Red Cross structures to do more to help this vulnerable group.

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