

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

## IRAQ: STAMPEDE

2 September 2005

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 181 countries.

### In Brief

This Bulletin no. 2 is being issued as an update on the Iraqi Red Crescent response in the wake of the tragedy on the Ala'imma bridge in Baghdad. The Federation's Iraq delegation (based in Amman) is actively supporting the national society as it joins efforts to support the thousands of people affected by this disaster. The Federation will communicate further if the situation dramatically changes and the status of the national society's response and whether international support is sought.

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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 Organisations \(NGOs\) 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>

### The Situation

The death toll in the Baghdad stampede tragedy continues to rise. Latest reports indicate that 1,199 people have died as a result of the stampede as well as hundreds injured. The number killed could rise further. The Shia religious celebration, involving two million pilgrims, quickly turned to horror on Wednesday 31 August with people crushed or being drowned in the river Tigris, after falling or being pushed by weight of numbers. Most of the victims were women and children. As people streamed towards the Shrine of Musa Al-Kadhum, in north Baghdad in Al-Kadhimiyyah district (see map) panic appeared to break out. News reports spoke of chaos being sparked by rumours of a suicide bomber in the crowds. The pilgrims arrived from many places to mark the annual commemoration of Imam Musa Al-Kadhum.

Hours before the crush, three mortar bombs shelled the Mosque of Al-Kadhimiya killing seven and injuring more than 37. The families of the victims have started to hold funerals for their loved ones.

No	Name of Hospital	Dead	Injured	First Aid Services
1	Adnan Khairulla	300	250	250
2	Al-Nu'man	156	204	20
3	Medicine City	158	200	65
4	Nursing House	100	8	65
5	Al-Kadhimiya	20	71	40
6	Al-Mansoor	36	61	70
7	Surgical	175	30	1
8	Baghdad	254	2	100
<b>Total</b>		<b>1199</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>611</b>



### National society action

The Iraqi Red Crescent Society (IRCS) response continued last night and early today with the focus evolving into ongoing transportation of injured people between hospitals and homes as well as provision of vaccinations and psychosocial support. Three tracing teams (total of 15 volunteers) from the Baghdad Branch were in the disaster area helping to link people with their loved ones. Some food parcels were also distributed. The IRCS is receiving relief items from the UN for distribution. Sixty-five volunteers are now working around the clock helping those in need. The national society is planning to draft trained volunteers from other areas as back up. Assessments are ongoing and any external support required will be communicated.

In the immediate aftermath of the stampede, 50 volunteers were dispatched to the area. They were backed by seven vehicles (two ambulances, two trucks, two 4WD and a minibus). The volunteers administered first aid on the scene to some of those most in need. The initial team was soon backed up by a first aid centre set up on site. As injured people were ferried to various hospitals, the IRCS sent 1,000 blankets to Al-Nu'man, Medicine City and Baghdad Nursing House hospitals. The below photograph captures some of the grief yesterday.



In addition, several items were sent to Kadhimiyah Hospital, including packs of basic medical supplies (300), blankets (100), body bags (40), stretchers (7), and bed sheets (150). Some of this equipment was available thanks to donations from Caritas. Basic medical supplies are still sought. The national society continued to coordinate with Red Cross Red Crescent partners, including the Federation and ICRC. The ICRC is the lead agency of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in Iraq. The scale and intensity of the disaster made effective and rapid response a challenge. The national society, however, was quick to link up with colleagues from the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, including the Federation, ICRC, UAE RC and Kuwaiti RC to ensure action was coordinated. The Federation has authorized the release of USD100,000 from an emergency contingency fund contained within its ongoing emergency appeal (08/2003)



[<click here for latest operations update>](#)



*Photos, above, a father holds his daughter (Reuters) and right, the search goes on for victims in the river Tigris (AP).*

Although the Ala'imma bridge tragedy has been in many ways overwhelming, the IRCS has again proved to be an effective supporter of vulnerable Iraqi communities during yet another tragic period in the country. The extreme insecurity in Iraq has prompted the departure of many international humanitarian organizations. Because of this, the role of the IRCS as a nationwide, indigenous and community-based supporter of vulnerable people has become even more important.