

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

VATICAN: ITALIAN RED CROSS MOBILIZATION FOR POPE'S FUNERAL

7 April 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 Information Bulletin (no. 01/2005) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Pope John Paul II, who passed away on Saturday 2 April, will be laid to rest after his funeral which will take place on the 8th of April (tomorrow) in Rome, Italy. The Italian authorities anticipate that approximately 4 million pilgrims have arrived in Rome to pay the last honors to the Pontiff.

Red Crescent action

The Italian Red Cross has mobilised hundreds of volunteers to offer first aid, comfort and other assistance to the people who will attend the Pope's funeral. At the time being, as the Italian Red Cross Extraordinary Commissioner Maurizio Scelli has pointed out, there is an efficient response from the National Society volunteers. Currently, 2,500 volunteers are providing emergency assistance to more than 1,000 people daily, who suffer from dehydration, low blood pressure, fainting spells, heart conditions and diabetes while waiting in queue to see the Pontiff.

In addition, the National Society has deployed 50 mobile first aid teams, 50 doctors, 75 ambulances and 2 field kitchens. The first aid services are provided in 12 small emergency field hospitals and other posts on St Peter's Square, on roads around the Holy See and in temporary camps arranged for people who have no place to sleep.

Meanwhile, the Austrian Federal Railways has requested 4 paramedics from the Austrian Red Cross who will be accompanying a special train from Vienna to Rome, organized for visitors to the Funeral. Austrian Red Cross will be on 24 hours alert stand by through the entire weekend in order to respond to emergencies during the funeral ceremony.

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