

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 لجمعية الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

NEPAL: DEMONSTRATIONS

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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 183 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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An injured person being transported by a Nepal Red Cross first aid team after receiving treatment

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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 demonstrations and nationwide strikes called by the seven party alliance of Nepal are continuing despite the King's address on 21st April. As of 23rd April, 14 people have been killed during the demonstrations and although an exact data is not available, it has been reported in the national media that more than five thousand people have been injured. The hospitals in Kathmandu are full of the wounded and the medical associations have alerted their members to concentrate on emergency cases.

The seven party alliance has flatly rejected the King's request to put forward a name for prime minister. They have officially decided to continue with the ongoing strikes and demonstrations. Due to this, the streets of Kathmandu and other major cities of the country are full of demonstrators.

A daytime curfew has again been imposed in the Kathmandu valley since 21st April. However, the demonstrators have defied the curfew in a number of places resulting into clashes with the security forces. In the Kathmandu valley alone, more than two hundreds people have been wounded every day. A curfew has also been enforced - and defied by demonstrators - in a number of places outside Kathmandu Valley. As a result clashes between the demonstrators and security forces are increasing.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) has been providing emergency first aid to the people wounded in the clashes between security forces and demonstrators across the country since the very first day of the general strike and the demonstrations which followed. NRCS has so far provided first aid to 2,071 wounded patients in Kathmandu valley alone as of 23rd April 2006. 287 wounded patients have been transported to various hospitals for further treatment.

In close coordination with Red Cross ambulances and Blood transfusion services programmes, the NRCS first aid programme unit has been deploying more than 60 first aid volunteers every day from National Headquarters. In addition to this, district branches have mobilized a sizeable number of first aid volunteers to work at various other locations, and mobile teams have also been at the service of the wounded wherever needed. These teams across the country have provided service to thousands of victims, the exact numbers are still awaited.

The first aid volunteers have generally been deployed at 6 strategic locations in the capital. From these locations, the mobile teams move to various areas as needed and provide first aid service impartially to demonstrators, security forces, journalists and any other person needing assistance. Depending on the situation and needs, strategies are being changed: mobile to static and vice-versa. The volunteers have been providing mainly three types of services: immediate first aid, referral to hospital or transportation of patients to home or elsewhere as needed. The main injuries the volunteers have treated are head injuries, bleeding, gun-shot wounds, fractures, dislocations and scratches.

The NRCS volunteer teams are equipped with first aid kits, required medicine, suitable clothing, helmets and communication equipments. The first aid command post located at the national headquarters has been coordinating all the teams in the field. During the curfew, all Red Cross vehicles have generally been provided with curfew passes by security forces, facilitating their movement. On 21st April, however, no curfew pass was issued, and made operations significantly more difficult. However, the teams stationed at strategic locations were able to continue their work, and ambulance vehicles could continue some transportation of equipments, volunteers and patients. However, vehicles of the Nepal Red Cross are allowed to move unhindered if curfew is not enforced.

The impartial service of the Nepal Red Cross has been appreciated by all the parties to the conflict. The Red Cross is given access to all the areas and service is being provided without discrimination.

The King's address to the nation on the 21st promising to restore multi-party democracy has not been accepted as sufficient by the seven party alliance. The alliance statement that protests will continue has been followed by further demonstrations and clashes, in-spite of the day long curfew orders. Therefore the NRCS volunteers are still on the streets, fulfilling their challenging task of effectively providing emergency first aid services to the wounded.

The situation has also provided the opportunity to promote the image and services of the Nepal Red Cross, and to enhance the image of the whole Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. It has helped in promoting understanding of the Red Cross emblem and also increased its visibility. The general public have witnessed the Red Cross helping others on the streets everyday since the demonstrations began.

Coordination

The NRCS has been coordinating with the government authorities, the political parties, the Federation and the ICRC for the smooth running of the service. The government authority has been providing curfew passes for first aid team vehicles (except on the 21st). The NRCS has so far been providing the services through its own volunteers and resources but tangible support from our sister societies and the Federation may be needed in the days to come.

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