

# 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

## TURKEY: AVIAN FLU

12 January 2006

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. 01/2006) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time. Discussions are underway to consider further action.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- Turkish Red Crescent Society: phone: 90 312 4302300; fax: 90 312 430 0175; email: [tkd@kizilay.org.tr](mailto:tkd@kizilay.org.tr)
- Stefan Seebacher, head of Federation's regional delegation in Ankara, phone: 90 312 441 42 92; fax: 90 312441 38 6; email: [ifrcr36@ifrc.org](mailto:ifrcr36@ifrc.org)
- Sylvie Chevalley, regional officer, Europe department, Federation, Geneva, phone: 41 22 730 4276; fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: [sylvie.chevalley@ifrc.org](mailto:sylvie.chevalley@ifrc.org)

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### The Situation

On Tuesday 11 January 2006 Turkish officials confirmed the fifteenth human case of the deadly avian influenza virus. Cases have been detected throughout the country, and do not follow any obvious patterns. A United Nations World Health Organization (WHO) team is presently in Turkey to investigate the outbreak.

The bird flu virus could become endemic in Turkey, and poses a serious risk to neighboring countries according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The rapid rise in cases -- with three children dead -- has put experts and neighboring nations on high alert.

### Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) plans to respond mainly in support of the country's Health Ministry which is coordinating the action, but the national society will also work to increase public awareness nationwide on efforts to prevent the disease.

TRCS health department officials said the Health Ministry took the lead to evaluate the situation in the region and would identify the roles and responsibilities of other organizations that could help. Ministry officials have been in the region for the past few days for assessments, and the TRCS was preparing to support these activities by providing health workers to continue to assess cases of infection once the ministry evaluations were complete.

The TRCS plans to publish and distribute hand-outs through its 586 branches and 41 health centers nationwide within the next two weeks to raise the awareness of the public on the prevention of the disease. Additionally, the national society will hold public meetings with the help of local municipalities for the same purpose. Internally,

the TRCS is also looking into issues such as whether it would need more Tamiflu stocks in the country or whether its staff should be vaccinated against the regular flu.

The International Federation's Regional Delegation for Turkey and Southern Caucasus is actively assisting National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Turkey, Armenia and Georgia and offered technical support in order to address community needs and to coordinate cross border issues. Further updates will be made available shortly.

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