

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Albania: Explosions

Information bulletin n° 01

16 March 2008

This bulletin is being issued for information only. Following a series of explosions near the Albanian capital of Tirana on 15 and 16 March, 296 people have been injured and the population of three villages (around 4,000 people) affected.

In response, and ahead of a more detailed assessment once the area is deemed safe enough for non police or military teams to enter, the Albanian Red Cross has mobilized its volunteer teams from Tirana and Durrës branches to assist the injured people and their families and provided light food and water to the members of the injured families, mostly in the hospitals. They have also released an appeal for voluntary blood donors.

The Albanian Red Cross, with the support of the International Federation, has determined that external assistance is not required at this time, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors.

[*<click here for detailed contact information>*](#)

The Situation

Massive explosions near the Albanian capital of Tirana on 15 March 2008, have badly affected three villages. According to information received from the local authorities a number of buildings, including homes, have been totally destroyed and 90 per cent of the population living in those villages have been evacuated and accommodated with relatives who live in the nearby area. Explosions continued for many hours until 14:00 on 16 March close to the village of Gerdec, 16 kilometres from Tirana.

The government has declared a state of emergency for this area and emergency commissions have been set up at central and local level.

Due to the ongoing high risk, it is not possible for anyone except the police and army special forces to go into the affected area. This means that efforts to make an assessment of what further action needs to be taken have thus far been thwarted. However, preliminary information concerning the impact of the explosion shows the following:

- 9 people are confirmed dead
- 12 people are considered as missing
- 296 people are injured, 16 very seriously. Four people have been transported to Greece and five to Italy for special medical treatment.
- There are 3 villages seriously affected, with a total population of 4,000 people; 90 per cent are evacuated and accommodated in 2 collective army residencies, one in Tirana and the other in Durres.
- 500 buildings closer to the area of explosion are damaged; 315 are seriously damaged and 6 schools are damaged.
- The electricity supply is cut in the whole affected area.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Albanian Red Cross has been following the situation closely, in coordination with the emergency governmental structure. Up to 16:00 on 16 March, the Albanian Red Cross has undertaken the following action:

- Set up an emergency management group lead by the secretary general
- Participated in the emergency commissions for managing the situation
- Mobilized volunteer teams from Tirana and Durres branches to assist the injured people and their families in hospitals. These teams have provided first aid and distributed information about missing persons.
- Provided light food and water to the members of the injured families mostly in the hospitals.
- Released an appeal for voluntary blood donors through the media for the communities and institutions at national level.
- Submitted a press release to the media.
- A fund-raising campaign is currently being prepared.

The German Red Cross has sent medical assistance to the Albanian Red Cross - 26 kg of dressing material and 2,000 bottles of Albumin (50 ml bottles), which has been immediately transferred to the hospitals in Tirana. The Austrian Red Cross has offered blood, medicines and ambulance staff if required. The Macedonian and the Montenegro Red Cross Societies offered help as well.

Based on the limited assessments of the evacuated population that have been possible, the following preliminary needs have been determined:

- Non-food items such as blankets, beds, mattresses, sheets and plastic sheeting
- Clothes and shoes for children and adults
- Household supplies
- Hygiene kits
- Basic food

On 17 March 2008, when the green-light for an assessment is received from the authorities, ten groups made up of experts from the government and the Albanian Red Cross- one in each group- will go to the affected areas. Following this assessment, the Albanian Red Cross may request an allocation from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) for an operation to support around 2,000 persons.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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