

Lebanon: support to social, medical and first aid services in the south

*Appeal no 14/2000
5 June 2000*

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 977,528
IN CASH and KIND***

to support social, medical and first aid services in south Lebanon

Summary

On 24 May, after 22 years of occupation, the Israeli Army completed its withdrawal from the South of Lebanon, over one month ahead of the Israeli government's self-imposed deadline. The withdrawal led to the collapse of the SLA (South Lebanon Army) and subsequently to uncertainty in the area. The zone represents 15% of Lebanon's territory.

The Federation, in co-operation with the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) and in co-ordination with the ICRC carried out an immediate assessment of the situation and of the needs of the Lebanese Red Cross. Medical and relief support to the vulnerable and hospitals and other medical centres in the South of Lebanon were identified as priorities for action.

This appeal seeks to provide emergency relief items and medical supplies to the Lebanese Red Cross to enable the National Society to reinforce its social, medical and first aid services in southern Lebanon.

The Disaster

Soon after the withdrawal, tens of thousands of people from South Lebanon who had left the area 22 years ago started to go back home. Moreover, a lot of unexploded ordinance remains in the area. These various developments have put extra strain on health care services that were already under-resourced. Finally, depending on developments in the area, support to the medical centres may have to be expanded, in co-ordination with the ICRC.

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The Response so far

Government Action

The government of Lebanon, with the support of various political factions, is working to stabilise the situation and to facilitate the smooth movement of the returning population, with the assistance of the UN mission in the south (UNIFIL).

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Lebanese Red Cross is the main provider of first aid and ambulance services in Lebanon. It remained operational throughout the country during the civil war and in the post-war period. The LRC first aid service, staffed by experienced and qualified volunteers, covers most parts of the country.

Since the withdrawal, the LRC carried out the following emergency services in the area:

A total of 2,009 medical and social interventions in 36 villages including general consultations, cardiograms, dressing of wounds, drug administration, blood pressure checks.

Information about land mines was given to students in the following places: Haula: 381 students; Taubi: 818 students; Arab Salim: 400 students.

Interventions carried out by the LRC first aid department (including the ambulance service department):

- Wounded people: 25 missions
 - Emergencies: 113
 - Transportation of sick people: 88
 - Transportation of the dead: 5
 - Transportation of blood units: 12
 - Transportation of civilians: 27
 - First aid at home: 17
 - First aid at LRC centres: 323
- Total: 610 interventions

Moreover, the LRC has offered medical back-up for 7 detained persons, for convoys from Khyam camp as well as for prisoners of the South Lebanon Army.

The interventions have been carried out by 700 first aiders using 91 ambulances and based in 25 LRC centres.

Since the start of the crisis, the Federation Delegation in Lebanon has been in close contact with the LRC and the ICRC. The LRC, the Federation and the ICRC have held two co-ordination meetings both in Lebanon and in Geneva and have drawn up a co-ordinated plan of action for response to the crisis.

The ICRC, which has been present in South Lebanon over the past two decades, continues its support to the civilian population and provided assistance to people released from Khyam camp. Moreover, the ICRC is planning to support two hospitals in the previously occupied areas and provide some mobile clinics with medical equipment.

Other Agencies' Action

The Lebanese government is emphasizing co-operation with the UN and the United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) is expanding its presence in South Lebanon to the newly released areas. The UN may increase the size of its peace keeping forces in South Lebanon.

Co-ordination

The Federation has been co-ordinating fully with the ICRC and the LRC since the beginning of the crisis for the planning and implementation of support programmes in South Lebanon.

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The Intended Operation

The LRC maintained services in the area throughout the occupation, but these were provided chiefly by its mobile health units. The Society is now preparing to reinforce its presence in the area and to develop its health care services by building up and equipping its health centres and increasing the number of its ambulances. The appeal seeks to support the LRC in providing medical and relief items to people in the area. (Although ambulances are also sought in the Appeal 2000, the developments in the south make an increase in the number necessary.)

The LRC through its network has the capacity to implement the operation and provide the services.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

Based on a plan of action and a request prepared by the LRC, the required relief and medical items will be purchased in the country or region and the LRC will undertake implementation of the plan, with Federation support. The plan of action also has a training component for new volunteers in the South, designed to strengthen the Society's capacity to respond to any new crisis or disasters.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

This programme will support the LRC in providing needed assistance to the affected and is the first step toward responding to the recent crisis in South Lebanon. As the situation has not yet stabilised, further assessments will be carried out and consequently this appeal may be revised.

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Acting Under Secretary General,
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

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