

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



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

## ALGERIA: EARTHQUAKE

26 May 2003

**Appeal No. 14/03; Operations Update no. 01**

**Appeal launched on 22 May 2003 for CHF 1,958,000 (USD 1,512,000 or EUR 1,293,000) in cash kind or services to assist 10,000-20,000 beneficiaries for three months.**

**Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 200,000.**

**Period covered: 23 to 25 May, 2003.**

*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 180 countries.*

*For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

### ***In Brief***

**Appeal coverage: 38.2%; for details please refer to the Contributions List available on the Federation's website; please note that pledges made over the weekend period are still being inserted into the Federation's system and will be reflected in the next Ops Update (no. 2) to be issued shortly; an updated mobilization table is also attached.**

**Outstanding needs: in view of the donor response to date this appeal is covered; a revised appeal and budget reflecting the latest needs (based on ongoing assessments) will be issued shortly, and donors are encouraged to respond in a similar timely fashion.**

#### **Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:**

**Operational Summary:** Despite significant logistical, communications, and operational constraints, the Algerian Red Crescent (ARC), supported by the Federation, has responded in a timely and effective way to this earthquake. Within a few hours of the earthquake the Federation's Disaster Management systems were activated and a smooth and timely mobilisation of Federation, PNS and other donor emergency response mechanisms began, involving Field Assessment and Coordination Teams (FACT), the Regional Delegation Office in Tunis, search and rescue dog teams, logistics and resource mobilisation, and Emergency Response Units (ERUs).



**At this moment, the teams are operational, start up funding has been delivered, donor support and contributions are being received, the logistics needs are well covered, and initial relief supplies are already in and being distributed while further supplies are in the pipeline. The emergency/search & rescue phase is drawing to an end and the ARC, with the support of the Federation FACT team, is planning the critical relief operation for the large homeless population. Based on further assessments and information on immediate and longer-term needs, a revised appeal is under preparation and will be issued shortly, including an amended Red Cross and Red Crescent Plan of Action.**

## **Operational developments**

While the search for survivors from the deadly earthquake continues, hope of finding people alive has diminished. The German Red Cross dog team dispatched early in the response returned on Sunday and the operational agencies confirm that no further search and rescue teams are required. The heat is creating operational challenges and difficulties. There is a need for transport and heavy equipment. The latest casualty figures (as of 12:00 hrs 25 May) are 2,046 dead and 8,626 injured, with well over 10,000 displaced and directly affected by the disaster. Damage is widespread but quite uneven, in some places several houses in a row have collapsed and falling debris from the houses is a problem, in some places only single houses collapsed. Based on its past operational experience in similar disasters, (Gujarat, India in 2001) the Federation has a well-founded concern regarding pockets of populations who may have been forgotten. The FACT will therefore as a matter of priority carry out a thorough field assessment to ensure that all affected populations are reached. In this respect, there are reports of damage further south of the immediate area of assistance, but there are also concerns that security may be a problem in this area.

- **Water:** water supply lines have been disrupted and the availability of water is very limited, particularly in Boumerdes where, according to Protection Civile, pipelines have been closed to avoid health risks. The ARC is distributing bottled water.
- **Electricity:** electric power is **erratic**, and the capital experienced a black out last night 25 May 2003).
- **Airport:** The situation at the international airport is busy but reasonably well under control but this could change as additional aid flights arrive after the weekend. The UN/UNDAC Team is located at the Airport along with the Federation /French Red Cross Logistics ERU.
- **Government coordination:** the Algerian government has set up Protection Civile coordination cells at their Direction general Offices, the airport and at Boumerdes the worst hit area. Details of UN, UNDAC/OSOCC and international support can be found on <http://www.reliefweb.int/>. The government has issued a list of priority needs that are posted on the Federation's DMIS "Algeria Special Focus" Web page and the UNDAC sites.
- **Health:** the health situation is reasonably well under control at this time despite the destruction of the hospital in Thenia. Patients, doctors, surgeons, nurses and staff from Thenia have been transported to Boumerdes, where the operating theatre has been operating nonstop during the past 48 hours. The weather is hot and there is growing concern around sanitation, refuse and general environmental issues. Psychological support is paramount and continuing aftershocks up to 4.0 on the Richter scale add to the fear and people are reluctant to return into those homes still standing.
- **Communications:** considerable difficulties are being experienced with communications (France telecom has indicated that the capacity of telecommunications lines between Europe and Algiers were "near zero"). It seems the earthquake ruptured all main undersea cables. Cell systems are still not functioning and satellite communications are the main method of phone contact. Landlines have slowly started to function but are overloaded.
- **Transport:** while roads are passable, the availability of transport is limited and a source of concern. This could become aggravated as the need to supply the displaced population increase.
- **Shelter:** teams noted a smaller number of people in the streets, an indication that some have moved away or are staying with relatives in safer locations.
- **Security:** while the general situation regarding Algeria is well known, there has been little overt reason for increased concern. However, the security situation could potentially deteriorate based on the local population's perception of a lack of Government action to respond adequately.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact**

**Objective: Effective Disaster Management & Relief Coordination:**

**Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)**

**The Algerian Red Crescent:** The ARC is managing this operation and has requested Federation support. The ARC continues to participate in search and rescue operations and has been distributing food and non-food relief supplies and water. It is resourcing bottled water and is receiving and managing public donations of food and non-food items. Full details on the immediate assistance delivered is unavailable due to communications difficulties, but will be reflected in later updates.

**The Federation:** From the early hours of Friday morning and through the weekend, the Federation's Disaster Management and Coordination (DMC) Division and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Department, in coordination with PNS and UN and government donor agencies, has mobilized a number of disaster response resources. The CHF 200,000 allocated from the Federation's DREF has enabled the start of the initial response. DMIS reports were issued, followed by Information Bulletin no. 1 on Friday morning, and the launch of Appeal no. 14/01 for an initial CHF 1.9 million. The Federation/ICRC participating national societies (PNS) and MENA Consortium meetings, which took place last week, presented an opportunity to update donors on the Federation response to this disaster. The ARC President will visit the Secretariat on Monday 26, May.

**Secretariat:**

**Regional Delegation /Tunis Office:** The Tunis Office has played a critical and supportive role in coordinating the reception, preparation briefing and documentation for FACT and other Red Cross delegates en route to the disaster zone. The Representative, with her Programmed Coordinator, is the main interface with the ARC to coordinate relations, manage political and administrative issues and agree the longer-term response. The Regional delegation in Amman is providing additional staffing as needed.

**DMC/MENA:** The two Secretariat departments quickly agreed the division of roles. DMC will lead the Task Force and coordinate the response initiatives, with the MENA department providing financial, relationship and Task Force staffing from the Head of Department and the desk officers. Security support comes from the C&D Security Unit.

**FACT:** A Franco-Arabic speaking FACT team was rapidly mobilized on Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> the morning after the earthquake hit. The team consists of a British Red Cross Team leader supported by four FACT members from the French, German, and Spanish Red Cross. Two staff members from the Swiss Red Cross who arrived in Algeria as part of the Swiss Rescue Chain have been seconded to the UNDAC team and have been providing temporary liaison and logistics support to the FACT from the UNDAC airport office reception cell. Furthermore, the team has an information delegate seconded from the regional delegation in Amman and a photographer/media expert from the Secretariat in Geneva. The Federation Tunis Office Programme Coordinator is the ARC/Federation Liaison officer to the FACT. The first FACT members arrived in Algiers on Friday afternoon from Paris and Frankfurt, and the full team is on site and fully operational with the ARC in Algiers, Boumerdes and Thénia.

**ERU:** Late Friday and into the early hours of Saturday morning the DMC/ERU Officer alerted Water, Logistics and Basic Health Care ERU's. On Saturday the first two, a French RC Wat/San and Logistics ERU were deployed and are they are both now operational in Algiers and Boumerdes. Early Sunday (25<sup>th</sup>) morning a Spanish RC BHC ERU with additional French members was deployed and is en route to Algiers today and will deploy in Thénia to support the health sector where the hospital was destroyed. The ERU alert remains pending assessments to determine if there are additional needs.

**DMIS:** On Friday a Special Algeria Earthquake Focus page was launched on DMIS with full reporting from Geneva, the field, PNS, UN and donor information and reports will appear as well as a real time operational traffic section.

**DMC/ Logistics & Resource Mobilization:** On Friday the Federation's Logistics Department prepared a Logistics Mobilization Table (LMT) for 10,000 persons for the preliminary appeal and over the weekend has covered over 100% of the initial needs. The LMT has now been amended to reflect the needs for 15,000 persons. The LMT is attached but as it is constantly changing it is posted on DMIS and regularly updated and sent to PNS and donor

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Logistics departments. Red Cross airlift flights from Belgium, UK, Germany, Spain, France, Switzerland, Iran, and Turkey have been coordinated.

**Health:** Psychological Support Materials in Arabic have been sent from the Federation Turkey Operation.

**Ericsson:** have made their Algiers office facilities available for support.

**Participating National Societies (PNS)** (Details at the time of reporting. PNS donations will appear on the LMT and in future updates):

**Austrian Red Cross:** provided a dog search team.

**German Red Cross (GRC):** the GRC coordinated the deployment of their Search & Rescue Dog team with DMC Operations team in Geneva and operated search activities in Boumerdes, Thenia and Zemmouri until late Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> when the search phase started to end. The team will return to Germany tonight. The GRC coordinated the provision of a BHC/ERU but in consultation with the Secretariat operations and the German government changed these to essential surgical renewable supplies and medicines, tents and a vehicle.

**French Red Cross:** provided a Wat/San and Logistics ERU; the teams are in place and the airport logistics unit has started to coordinate arriving relief flights with the ARC/government and UNDAC. The Wat/San unit is deployed to Boumerdes. A French Red Cross nurse with extensive experience in Algeria has been seconded to the FACT pending the arrival of the Basic Health Care (BHC) ERU.

**Spanish Red Cross:** mobilized a BHC ERU, which will arrive in Algiers evening of the Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>. Four Spanish RC delegates who arrived in a convoy to Algiers from Oran with additional emergency relief non-food items and vehicles will join the ERU.

**British Red Cross:** mobilized a relief flight (due 26 May) with tents, blankets, kitchen kits and other relief items from the appeal.

**Iranian Red Crescent:** coordinated a flight with the logistics unit containing appeal relief items.

**Turkish Red Crescent/Kisilay:** sent a flight of mixed relief goods that arrived in Algiers on Saturday.

**Saudi Red Crescent:** sent in a flight on the 24<sup>th</sup> to Algiers with tents, Blankets and bedding.

**UAE Red Crescent:** is coordinating a flight with the Federation's Logistics Department (to depart early next week).

**American Red Cross:** providing 20,000 hygiene kits for both the Algeria and Sri Lanka appeals.

**Hellenic Red Cross:** offered a Red Cross search and rescue team (on standby pending additional needs), as well as coordinating with logistics to provide blankets.

**Slovenia Red Cross:** is coordinating with Logistics to provide relief supplies.

**Belgian Red Cross:** coordinated the delivery of WHO/NEHK kits from the appeal and these were delivered on Friday on a Belgian flight, along with tents and blankets.

**Swiss Red Cross:** provided kitchen sets, tents and will also truck generators.

**The ICRC:** was contacted early in the operation and has provided advice on the many tracing and family re-unification enquiries that have been arriving at the Operations center.

## **Impact**

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The ARC has now additional support and coordination assistance to meet the ongoing responsibilities and to carry out the upcoming challenges, to plan the operation, and have re-supplied their diminished stocks. The Federation with the PNS ERU, FACT team and logistics support and relief deliveries has taken a significant support position in the post-search and rescue phase, and with continued support from PNS and donors can maintain the momentum established in the first hours of Red Cross and Red Crescent action.

### **Constraints**

With damage to the infrastructure within the country, communications has been a critical operational constraint. There is also a need to ensure a more standard sat phone system within Federation Response teams indicate the Iridium phones performed poorly compared to the mini-M Inmarsats which, once arrived and set up, have operated exceptionally well.

### **Objective: Effective, appropriate delivery of relief and shelter.**

With the end of the S&R phase the ARC/Federation have started to move into the critical issue of the humanitarian assistance to the thousands of homeless needing assistance. The FACT team has assigned roles and responsibilities with ARC counterparts who have effectively moved into the assessment, coordination and the preparation of an amended appeal and plan of action.

### **Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)**

The president of the ARC convened two meetings and the following action has been initiated:

- Abed Khoudmi (President of the Oran branch) was designated as the National Operations Coordinator.
- Agreement on the Preliminary Appeal to cover emergency relief needs of target population of 10,000/20,000 people.
- The ARC agreed to plans to establish regional relief committees in the following 6 strategic localities: Alger, Rouiba, Bordj Menäiel, Boumerdes, Thenia, Reghaia.

An additional 5 sites have yet to be identified. Each regional ARC centre will be autonomous and cover wider area including a range of sub-centres in affected localities; trained Chefs d'Interventions will manage operations at branch levels and report to branch presidents for coordination with national headquarters. Volunteers will come from the entire country. Assistance provided will include food parcels and kitchen sets, shelter, emergency relief, basic health with referral of casualties to nearest functioning health facility (Ministry of Health). The Federation will provide technical and coordination support and assist in the production of a Plan of Action. A coordination meeting was held with local branch presidents to update them on the situation in respective localities and anticipated needs. Presidents were briefed by FACT on the international Red Cross and Red Crescent response to date, including agreement on the dispatch of a French Red Cross Watsan ERU to Boumerdes.

The ARC, at the request of the Government, will be involved in the management of initially eleven (but possible total of 36) tented sites for a minimum period of three months.

### **Communications, media, and public information:**

#### **Media:**

Many interviews have been given in Geneva, Tunis and in Algeria to a wide range of radio and TV sources (local and international), including BBC World, CNN, Reuters Algiers, Canadian (CBC) Radio, Australian (ABC), New Zealand (NZBC), and the Voice of America.

#### **UN:**

UNDAC (7 people) arrived in country with a Swiss Government Flight May 22 and have established a centre at the airport (with French Red Cross logistics ERU) to coordinate incoming assistance.

**Funding (see attached appendix. A):** Early cash donations have been received from the Canadian Red Cross/CIDA (CHF 100,000), OPEC (USD 500,000), and the Croatian Red Cross (EUR 15,000); others are expected in the coming days. An American-Algerian oil company, Amerada Hess (GEA) Limited, has donated USD 25,000 with offers to provide additional office and administrative services and an introduction to a transport company to assist with logistics needs. After seeing and reading about the Red Cross and Red Crescent activities, the Federation's Operations Centre received many calls and e-mails from Algerians and others living in Europe,

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the US, and elsewhere. These have been directed to the Federation's Website for on-line or direct donations. The Chinese Embassy also donated USD 50,000 to the ARC.

### **Outstanding needs.**

The initial Appeal has been covered, and a revised appeal and budget will be issued to reflect the evolving nature of the operation and the outstanding needs. It is anticipated that relief items such as hygiene kits, imarsat units, and an additional Watsan ERU will be needed. A telecoms specialist may also be needed for the radio/communications network, as well as an additional NEHK kit.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives**

The Federation response will be carried out in a manner governed by the Principals of the Movement, the Principals and Rules of Disaster Response and the Code of Conduct. Wherever possible SPHERE Guidelines will be respected.

### **National Society Capacity Building**

The ARC has had recent training in relief and regional disaster response training (RDRT). The floods last year provided valuable lessons, and the ARC's disaster response capacity has improved. RDRT training in the region has contributed to the ARC being in a position to effectively respond.

### **Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

The Federation human resources currently in the region will be able to deliver immediate support in communications and reporting through the presence of information and reporting delegates to assist the ARC. The DMC's DMIS system has been fully mobilized and will continue to supply daily updates and information on the disaster and the response by the ARC and Federation staff and resources. Images and additional technical capacity is provided from the Federation's media officer in the field. The FACT team will be able to provide technical support to reinforce advocacy for the homeless in the areas of beneficiary identification, distribution methodology, social protection and other relief issues.

### **For further information please contact:**

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