

# DREF operation

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Lebanon: Internal Disturbance

DREF operation n° MDRLB001  
12 May 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

**CHF 100,000 (USD 94,525 or EUR 61,280) has been allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Lebanese Red Cross (Lebanese RC) in delivering its emergency assistance during the current internal disturbance in Lebanon. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

**Summary:** Lebanon has witnessed widespread civil unrest since 7 May, which up until 12 May has resulted in 36 dead and 75 wounded (based on cases dealt by the Lebanese RC). An initial strike called by the General Labour Confederation turned into violent clashes between rival sectarian groups in several areas of the country. While the strike was initially called to address the difficult social and economic situation in the country, it deteriorated into a militarised stand-off between rival political factions fuelled by a governmental decision to remove the head of security from the airport and initiate an investigation of communication networks. Clashes spread from Beirut to Mount Lebanon, the Bekaa valley and to the north of the country with access routes to the airport, sea and borders being blocked.



**Lebanese Red Cross Emergency Medical Services responding to emergency calls.**  
Source: Lebanese RC

The Lebanese RC Emergency Medical Service (EMS) has been on high alert since the clashes started, mobilising in total 450 volunteers and 110 ambulances to evacuate wounded and dead bodies from the affected areas. While there have been lulls in the confrontations, the lack of a solution to the political crisis is expected to cause a continuation of tense stand-off between the majority government and opposition factions. The EMS will remain on alert throughout in order to respond to the needs. The support provided by the DREF will be immediately dispatched to the affected EMS stations.

This operation is expected to be completed by 31 July, 2008. In line with International Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 31 October, 2008).

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## The situation

Throughout 2007 and into 2008, Lebanon has been punctuated with violent events not witnessed since the end of the civil war. Whether highlighted by indiscriminate bomb attacks, politically motivated assassinations and the conflict in the Nahr el Bared camp in the north of the country last year, there has been an extended period of insecurity and political void. The ultimate failure to elect a president at the end of 2007 and resolve the political impasse and paralysis in governmental decision-making has steadily intensified factional divisions, while the political void has allowed for an increased militarisation of militia groups and the country opening itself to becoming an arena where regional conflicts can fester.

On 7 May, the General Labour Confederation called for a strike in an attempt to pressurise the government to increase the minimum wage package and increase subsidies on fuel prices. However, the occasion was marked by clashes between rival factions additionally linked to a decision the previous day by the majority government to remove the head of security at the airport and investigate the legality of the Hezbollah (opposition) communication network. The immediate reaction of the Hezbollah-led opposition was the closure of access routes to the airport and the Syrian border.

The unrest continued on 8 May amid anti-government protests and clashes between rival supporters in Beirut. During an afternoon press conference, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah indicated that the situation would continue until the government revoked its earlier decisions and joined a round table for national dialogue. With little conciliatory action on either side, the fighting intensified during the night of 8 May and throughout the following days spread from western Beirut to the northern town of Tripoli, southern Mount Lebanon and into the Bekaa valley. Heavy clashes have continued since with the occasional lull in fighting. However, as Lebanon is now faced with a militarization of the political stand-off, it is difficult to foresee any solution to the crisis in the near future.

The clashes up until 12 May have resulted in 36 dead and 75 wounded, with most casualties linked directly to the fighting. The civilian population has been forced in the areas where fighting has taken place to remain in doors and in general the population throughout the country has been hesitant to move.

## Coordination and partnerships

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement response to the situation has been through the Lebanese RC EMSs department with the deployment of its ambulances to evacuate wounded and dead bodies. The International Federation and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) have been supporting the National Society activities where possible and closely coordinating the Movement response. The Lebanese RC is regularly issuing situation updates and distributing these to partners locally and internationally. In addition, partner National Societies (PNSs) in-country - Belgium, French, and Netherlands Red Cross Societies, Palestine Red Crescent Society Lebanon Branch, Turkish and Iranian Red Crescent Societies - have been provided with regular updates, including updated security guidelines, and have been requested to maintain a low profile for the time being. The Lebanese RC also maintains close contact with all relevant parties.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Lebanese RC EMS went on immediate alert following deterioration in the situation and mobilized its first aid teams in order to respond to the continuous blockades and armed clashes occurring in the country. Due to the increased demand in missions related to the current situation, and very heavy fighting in southern Mount Lebanon and the western Bekaa, by 11 May, the readiness was increased to 450 volunteers and 110 ambulances.

The number of wounded and dead evacuated by the Lebanese RC EMS has increased dramatically each day. During the night of 11 May, three stations in southern Mount Lebanon evacuated 26 wounded and 12 dead and responded to 16 emergency calls in the immediate vicinity of the disturbances.

**Total number of missions resulting from the conflict**  
7 May 2008 to 12 May 2008

Region	Wounded	Dead	Emergency Response & Transport	Transport of Civilian
Beirut & Mount Lebanon	55	24	160	5
North	18	12	0	64
Bekaa	2	0	49	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>75</b>

**These statistics include only the missions directly related to the ongoing internal troubles.**

**The EMS stations in the most affected areas:** Spears and Mreijeh (Western Beirut), Tripoli and Halba (North Lebanon), Aley, Bekaatah, Kabr Chmoun (Mount Lebanon), Kab Elias, Baalbeck, and Jeb Jennine (Western Bekaa).

## The needs

Emergency stocks of consumables (bandages, body bags, gloves, masks, disinfecting equipment, etc.) are being distributed to the 16 stations which are located in the areas that have witnessed the most severe clashes. These stocks are in the process of being replaced with the support of the ICRC. The Lebanese RC EMS has requested emergency funds from the International Federation for the 43 stations and operation rooms, which will be dedicated to additional fuel expenses resulting from the increase in missions and movement of ambulances, and to support the heightened state of alert in the stations.

## The proposed operation

### Emergency Health Services

**Objective: To assist and assure the capacity of the Lebanese RC Emergency Medical Services to respond to an increased number of emergency calls.**

#### Activities planned:

#### Emergency station allowance:

As every station is required to keep at least two teams on standby during the day and three to five teams during the night shifts, it is necessary to provide a minimal amount of funding to all stations for an initial one month period, with extra funding for the stations with the highest number of volunteers.

#### Emergency Station Allowance

Expenses	Details
Food	Food for the increased number of volunteers per shift
Drinking water	
Oxygen refills	Refill of fixed and portable pure oxygen canisters
Household products	Hygiene, cleaning, disinfection and laundry
Gas	Gas canisters for cooking
Stationary	Fax, printer, photocopies, pens, paper, etc.
Communications	SMS messages or cellular phone refills to alert volunteers and increase readiness
Generator fuel	To power the stations during frequent blackouts

#### Extra fuel expenditures:

As articulated in the situation report, the number of missions and the movement of ambulances are increasing significantly due to the rising demand. Consequently, the normal budget is not sufficient to cover the expenses of the stations involved. In the last six days, the total number of missions related to the internal troubles is 395 (excluding 32 miscellaneous missions such as blood transport, equipment and blood unit runs).

The estimated cost for the heightened state of alert and responding to emergencies resulting from the current situation is as follows:

Expense	Estimated Monthly Cost (USD)	Details
Emergency station allowance	40,000	For all stations and operation rooms (43 + 4)
Additional station allowance	20,000	For stations with highest readiness and number of missions (16)
Additional fuel expenditures	40,000	For all additional fuel usage
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,000</b>	

## 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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