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## **RED CROSS & RED CRESCENT INFORMATION**

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*This report is published twice-weekly as a general update on Red Cross Red Crescent activities during the Balkans crisis, targeting primarily the Movement's components and supporters. Today's text can also be found on the internet: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org) and [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)*

### **LATEST EVENTS**

The roads to and from Kosovo continue to be filled with refugees and displaced persons returning to and departing from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has been there providing support at key locations along the way.

#### ***Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia)***

The Federation has re-established its presence in Kosovo with Monday's arrival of the Belgrade based Head of Delegation plus two other delegates.

During the week of 11 to 19 June, displaced from Kosovo have migrated towards southern Serbia. The Red Cross Nis Joint Field Office estimates that about 20,000 displaced have arrived in the region during the past week. Some 8,700 people passed through the four reception centres in the area (Kursumlija 4,000, Nis 3,000, Vranje 620 and Beloljin in Prokuplje). The Kraljevo Field Office, reports some 5,000 displaced were in Kraljevo town; while 4,500 people transited through Krusevac and up to 10,000 people were on the road between Blace and Krusevac. Another major concentration of displaced persons in Novi Pazar, with between 1,000 and 4,000 displaced. Red Cross branches in Pozarevac and Kragujevac reported the new arrivals as 3,297 and 9,895 respectively.

Relief distributions: The Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) has been distributing food parcels and canned food, as well as non-food assistance such as hygiene items and plastic sheeting and tarpaulin. Tinned food has been purchased at the local market and delivered directly to Red Cross branches in the affected areas (Kraljevo, Ribarici near Novi Pazar). The Nis Red Cross received 2,000 individual food parcels and hygiene parcels, and ten trucks have been sent directly to Kursumlija.

On Saturday, 19 June, 1,350 individual food parcels, 1,150 blankets, 150 mattresses, 600 hygiene parcels, 400 baby hygiene sets, 350 kitchen sets, 11,300 m<sup>2</sup> of plastic sheeting and 10 dressing sets were sent from Belgrade to Jagodina, Rekač, Smederevo and Pozarevac.

On the same day, 6,500 food parcels and 80 MT of bulk food were dispatched to Nis destined for Kosovo. This shipment was accompanied by a consignment of non-food items for the same destination: 5,000 hygiene parcels, 2,000 blankets and 200 mattresses.

Health: A Red Cross medical delegate carried out a health assessment of mainly displaced in Kraljevo and Vranje. According to the assessment, the situation is stable.

The water/sanitation team made an assessment of the water supply in the Nis region, reporting needs for spare parts, pumps, chlorinators and chlorine. Water disinfectant was provided to the displaced reception centre in Beloljin and a refugee camp in the area.

The first ten of a total of 27 water reservoirs planned for the left bank of the Danube in Novi Sad were installed last week.

External Relations, information and publicity: Red Cross distributions, family reunions and tracing actions were covered by international television stations. A large number of interviews were given to the media concerning the situation and action in Kosovo and Red Cross water assistance in Novi Sad.

*(Kosovo)*

Tracing: ICRC protection teams in the Balkans met to define the action in the next period. The plan will focus on the re-establishment of family links (through mobile units equipped with satellite phones in addition to the already existing means of broadcasting names on radios and putting Red Cross messages on the Website), setting up counselling six centres in Kosovo to deal with protection issues, and detention matters. The first use of mobile units with satellite phones took place on 21 June, in Malisevo. On 19 June the ICRC carried out two family reunions (babies from the hospital maternity ward) from Pristina to Skopje. During the last week, a total of 173 names were collected for broadcasting, while 750 telephone messages were made.

Relief distributions: Throughout the week, the ICRC distributed food to displaced and returnees in different parts of Kosovo. The area of Sedlare, where the population increased by some 7,000 people over five days, received two distributions totalling 50 MT of food. On Wednesday, 16 June, 50 MT of food was delivered to Srbica, Donja Klina and Metohija. On Friday, 18 June, the Red Cross delivered three truckloads of relief (30 MT) to the local Mother Theresa organization for distribution in the Malisevo area (on that day, an estimated 25,000 people were in the municipality). Orahovac, with 12,000 people, and Magura, with some 7,000 present, received 30 and 20 MT respectively. The total amount of food delivered last week by the Red Cross in Kosovo was 200 MT.

For the first time, the ICRC sent a relief convoy of three trucks/trailers, with some 13,000 individual food parcels, from Skopje to Kosovo.

Health: Health assessments were carried out in Malisevo and Orahovac.

Participating National Societies: The French Red Cross will provide 180,000 food packs to the ICRC to distribute to the most vulnerable in Kosovo. Each food pack contains: 1 kg sugar, one kg pasta, one kg rice, three cans vegetables, three cans fish, two bars of soap, 500 g dried fruit.

### ***Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Montenegro)***

During the week of 13 to 19 June, there were very few returns to Kosovo of Albanian displaced in Montenegro. There was minimal movement from Rozaje to Ulcinj. However, some

18,000 newly displaced persons, comprised mainly of Serbs and Montenegrins, entered Montenegro from Kosovo, from Pec, Decani, Prizren and Djakovica. Roughly half of them stayed in Montenegro and were accommodated with families and friends, while the others proceeded to Serbia. The town of Berane received the greatest influx, with the arrival of close to 4,000 displaced.

Tracing: During the third week of June, the ICRC reunited 10 children with their parents (9 to Albania and 1 from Albania).

Displaced in Montenegro used the telephone lines provided by the Red Cross to make 37,227 telephone calls, while 55 persons gave their names and locations for broadcasting on world services. Nine Red Cross messages were received via the website, eight of which were for Kosovo.

Relief distributions: The Red Cross dispatched some 6,000 individual parcels to nine different branches of the Montenegrin Red Cross. On Friday, 18 June, 7,000 individual food parcels, 30 MT of sugar, 38 MT of pasta, 20 MT of salt and 8.4 MT of yeast were transported by six Red Cross trucks from Belgrade to Podgorica.

Shelter: Construction has continued on the Pine Tree III camp at Ulcinj where 120 tents were erected, 50 of which were supplied with timber flooring. The construction of 20 latrines, 10 showers, 1 kitchen and a warehouse has been completed. The Ulcinj water supply was connected to the camp delivering 120 litres of water per minute. Work has commenced on a second kitchen.

The first group of displaced arrived at the camp on 18 June. Most of them came from the bus station and from other overcrowded camps. By 19 June, some 170 displaced had moved into the camp.

Health: The health situation in Ulcinj remains stable. The Red Cross has continued to receive requests for transfers abroad for medical reasons. So far, 13 vulnerable medical cases have been registered in Ulcinj.

### ***Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia***

According to the UNHCR, the return of refugees to Kosovo is gathering momentum. About 14,700 people left Macedonia on Sunday (20 June), bringing the total number of returnees to almost 50,000, with 39,900 from host families and 9,600 from camps

A survey conducted by the International Organisation for Migration on Friday at Stenkovec I & II and Cegrane camps showed that 59% of the refugees acknowledged the dangers of land mines and unexploded ordinance in Kosovo. Forty-five percent of refugees in these camps said they want to go home immediately, the remainder stated that they wanted to wait until security was assured.

Relief distributions: The latest figures from the Macedonian Red Cross: 161,540 refugees are now registered in 29,286 host families as of 21 June, including about 100 refugees who are ethnic Serbs from Kosovo.

(Logistics/Relief/Disaster Relief/Relief Supplies 7-20 June)	Total Received	Total Distributed
Mattresses	156	
Mattresses (German RC)	2,569	714
Blankets		8,000
Blankets (American RC)	1,219	5,040
Hygiene parcels (Netherlands)	104	4,160
Hygiene parcels (IFRC)	3,591	7,215
Hygiene parcels (American RC)	11,013	399
Baby parcels (Swedish RC)	6,656	3,328

Stores of perishable food and non-standard goods have been donated to local charitable and non-profit organisations, including: 1,000 kg flour, 1,250 cans fish, 2,475 cans of chicken paste, 1,290 biscuits, 12,306 kg sugar, 7,200 cans vegetables, 2,396 cans vegetables (Bulgarian Red Cross), 3,423 single litre bottles of cooking oil, 6,870 kg pasta, various juices, 3,262 washing powder, various clothing.

Health: Both the German Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross hospitals have received war wounded from Kosovo in the past week. Four patients were taken by ambulance to the GRC hospital, and one victim of a mine explosion was evacuated by helicopter to the NRC hospital in Cegrane camp.

Tracing: On Saturday (18 June), the ICRC brought two infants across the border at Blace to be reunited with their parents. The infants had been in a Pristina hospital, but were not able to accompany their parents who had come to Macedonia as refugees in April. For the past two months, ICRC tracing delegates tried to track the whereabouts of the babies, while communicating with and comforting the parents on almost a daily basis. The emotional reunion took place as thousands of returnees were lined up at the Blace border crossing point.

External Relations, information and publicity: An international press officer for the British Red Cross will be in Macedonia and Albania for seven days, visiting Red Cross beneficiaries of relief programmes and preparing a videotape report about ICRC tracing activities.

International Red Cross and Red Crescent delegates conducted interviews with the following media on Friday-Monday (18-21 June): Macedonian Radio, BBC, *The New Yorker* magazine, the *Los Angeles Times*.

### ***Albania***

The situation in Albania is in great flux. The constant movement of refugees has made it difficult to ascertain concrete figures but that between 110,000 to 140,000 refugees have left Albania. The Emergency Management Group (EMG) reports that the number of returnees to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) has been in excess of 60,000 people. A variety of modes of transportation including horse and cart are being used for the journey home. Refugees have also commenced using privately hired buses and vans to travel back.

The current count of refugees returning to Kukes from the south, and crossing the Morini Border into Kosovo are as follows:

Date:	Refugees arriving from South	Refugees crossing border into Kosovo
16.6.99	No data	14,000
17.6.99	7,000	14,000-25,000
18.6.99	8,500	14,500
19.6.99	18,400	13,000
20.6.99	14,400	7,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,300</b>	<b>63,000-74,000</b>

#### Government and UNHCR figures

The Emergency Management Group (EMG) estimates that the number of refugees remaining in tented camps and collective centres is 86,930 and 95,542, respectively. There are currently 340,000 refugees living with host families.

Relief distributions: The following items were dispatched over the weekend 800 litres of oil and 42.2 MT of wheat flour to Tirana; 2,000 kg of sugar, 23 MT of wheat flour, 16,000 Swedish Red Cross food parcels, and 2,000 litres of oil to Shkoder; and 3,600 Swedish Red Cross food parcels to Durres.

These shipments are sent to the regional warehouses in order to maintain the stock levels, thereby allowing the Red Cross Red Crescent operation to meet the monthly needs of the beneficiaries in each of the regions. Stocks are high in all warehouses, and the pipeline has been functioning very well, allowing the operation to fully meet the caseload requirements.

In the Durres region, the monthly rotation of food parcel distribution is going well and should be completed prior to the beginning of next week. Distribution in the town of Elbasan began slowly (as a result of the change in the distribution site), but in the end, more than 1,500 refugees per day received their rations, which was satisfactory. The Elbasan regional office reports that there are 24,318 beneficiaries (21,298 refugees and 3,020 refugees with host families) in the area.

During the past four days the food pipeline has been fully operational, with trucks arriving with supplies. In total 318 MT of wheat flour, 117.4 MT of Swedish Red Cross food parcels, 29.3 MT of French Red Cross food parcels and 2,682 hygiene kits were delivered from Tirana to the Kukes Sub-delegation. Food items are currently being trucked to Krume in preparation for the next food distribution, which will commence on 23 June.

The Kukes Town distribution was moved up to 18 June in order to ensure that departing refugees received their Red Cross Red Crescent food parcel and wheat flour before departing for Kosovo. A full one month food ration is currently being distributed, and this round of distribution is due to finish on 21 June. Many of the refugees have been waiting for this distribution prior to departing for Kosovo.

Swedish Red Cross food parcels and 166.25 MT of wheat flour were distributed to approximately 19,5171 refugees residing with host families in Kukes town and 1,264 host families.

The WFP has set up a distribution point on the Morini border road, opposite the Kukes I Italian Red Cross Camp, with the intention of providing a one month food supply to each refugee.

In an interesting development of the return process; refugees that have gone back to their homes in the Prizren area of Kosovo are still travelling back to Kukes in Albania to pick up monthly food rations.

In the last week, there have been four crossings of Red Cross ferries between Italy and Durres carrying food parcels (French and Swedish Red Cross), hygiene kits (including British Red Cross), medical equipment, wheat flour and supplied British Red Cross "clockwork" radios.

Health: More than 169,500 litres of potable water were delivered last week to the town of Golem and the village of Querret in Albania. Potable water will continue to be supplied to the village of Querret throughout the summer. Orders were placed for water sanitation materials to improve water storage, distribution and hygiene conditions in the regions of Vlore, Elbasan and Fier.

Over the weekend a medical assessment was carried out in the Kukes region. The findings were positive. There are no outbreaks of epidemics and the most common diseases are still limited to upper respiratory infections, diarrhoea and cardio-vascular diseases. The Finnish Red Cross basic health clinic in Kukes Town is also currently available for refugees requiring medical assistance whilst in transit in the town. An assessment to determine the need for additional medical stocks at Kukes Hospital will be conducted shortly.

Over the weekend, the number of patients in the Finnish Red Cross basic clinic dropped dramatically, and in total the clinic treated 251 patients from 17 to 20 June. As of June 20 the clinic's staff have treated over 18,000 patients.

Similarly, the Italian Red Cross field hospital was very quiet over the weekend. As of 21 June, the camp had 500 refugees remaining, however it is also a referral hospital, dealing with landmine victims. From 17 to 19 June the facility treated 231 patients in total and the medical evacuation of three patients.

Health support during the return of refugees will be the main topic of discussion at the PNS meeting on 22 June.

The French Red Cross medical team was asked to set up operations at the train station at Mjede (the terminal for all trains as per the UNHCR return plan) to provide first aid and basic health care, if necessary. The Finnish Red Cross ERU (in nearby Shkoder) would act as a back-up in serious cases.

Shelter: Combined, the camps in Kukes have fewer than 2,000 refugees remaining. This number is likely to decrease in the near future. The UNHCR reported that four of nine camps in Kukes had been closed down, while all remaining refugees are being relocated into three

camps. It is often the more vulnerable who are left in the camps, those who are sick or disabled, or do not have the financial means to get transport into Kosovo. Looting in the camps is a major concern, resulting in the remaining refugees feeling very insecure. Action is being taken to overcome this problem, and the remaining refugees have been moved into one secure sector in each camp.

Psycho-social programme: Last week, the Secretary General of the Albanian Red Cross met with the Federation's Head of the Psycho-Social department where discussions focused on developing programmes involving social welfare, youth and health.

Tracing: One satellite phone has been installed along the Morini Border Road, between Kukes and Morini. The number of calls being made has increased due to the greater visibility of the service and the Satellite Telephone office in Kukes town is still busy. People from Kosovo are increasingly travelling from Prizren to Kukes to make satellite calls to their relatives overseas and want to know when a Satellite office will be established in Prizren.

New categories of cases are being opened by the ICRC Protection/Tracing team in Kukes. Refugees, who remained in Kosovo throughout the conflict, are now crossing the border, trying to trace their relatives believed to be refugees in Albania. Many are asking for financial assistance to travel south or west to trace their relatives, as the free government transport no longer exists. Despite the inadequacies of the system, increasing numbers of people are consulting the refugee lists, with as high as a 40% success rate noted on several days last week.

There are also increasing numbers of registered unaccompanied minors, who were previously being looked after by families in the camps, however, the families are returning to Kosovo, and are reluctant to take the unaccompanied minors back with them.

Participating National Societies: The UAE Red Crescent is currently establishing an Information Centre some five kilometres outside of Kukes Town for refugees en route to Kosovo passing through Kukes. They will be providing maps and advice on available humanitarian assistance to them during their transit stay in Kukes. The Information Centre is expected to open 23 June, and will be staffed on a 24 hour basis by six people.

External relations, information and publicity: The Kukes-based media has moved en masse into Kosovo. Only a few journalists are still passing through the town on their way to the border. The UNHCR daily press briefings are being held in Prizren. Contacts were made with BBC TV, concerning mines awareness, *Agence France Press* and a Korean journalist heading for Kosovo.

The Kukes sub-delegation will support the co-ordinated mine awareness campaign which is being spearheaded by UNICEF for refugees, internally displaced persons and aid workers. Some 8,000 Red Cross Red Crescent mine awareness brochures have been printed for distribution in Kukes. They have already been dispatched to the Italian Red Cross Camp, the Red Cross Red Crescent food distribution points and the Finnish Red Cross ERU clinic in Kukes town.

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