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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**

#### ***Federal Republic of Yugoslavia***

The Red Cross Joint Field Offices in Serbia continue to work with the displaced from Kosovo. In Kraljevo town there are 2,500 people in collective and 8,500 in private accommodation; Krusevac is hosting some 3-4,000 displaced, 978 of whom are in collective shelters. Other major centres in the region which have taken in displaced from Kosovo are Novi Pazar with 3,719, Vrnjacka Banja with over 1,350, Cacak and Gornji Milanovac with over 450 each. Another urban centre in central Serbia, Kragujevac, reports 6,000 registered displaced in the town, and 10,837 in the region. The Pozarevac area accommodates 5,000 people. Estimates from the Nis region indicate 20,000 displaced people.

In Montenegro returns are increasing daily, the UNHCR reports some 6,650 people returned to Kosovo between 21 and 23 June. In the same period 160 new displaced arrived in Montenegro from Kosovo, bringing the total number of people who fled in the last two weeks to 18,697.

Health: The survey of humanitarian pharmacies run by the Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) in Serbia has been completed, with the finding that there is a lack of drugs for chronic diseases. The ICRC made the first delivery of such drugs (value: 7,250 CHF) to the humanitarian pharmacy in Belgrade on 24 June.

Assessments of the health situation of displaced persons from Kosovo were made in Kraljevo, Krusevac and Novi Pazar. Surveys were also made at the hospital and institute for muscular dystrophy in Novi Pazar, which sustained structural damages.

Relief distributions: The Red Cross has provided collective shelters with food, mattresses and blankets. Distributions of food, hygiene parcels and blankets have also been made to displaced individuals. On 24 June four trucks with 5,184 individual food parcels and 600 mattresses were dispatched to Kraljevo. The YRC received a total of 31,400 cans of liver pate and tinned meat for 50,000 beneficiaries from the Red Cross.

Eight MT of diesel fuel for Red Cross operations were delivered to Kragujevac and Nis over the past two days.

A convoy of five trucks brought 80 MT of food (sugar, pasta, beans and yeast) and 4,800 individual food parcels from Belgrade to Podgorica.

Tracing: The ICRC in Kragujevac has made it possible for displaced from Kosovo to use telephone lines to try and establish contact with their families. Several hundred such calls have been made in the last few days.

Psycho-social programme: A burn-out syndrome prevention workshop for aid workers was held on 23 June at the Belgrade Red Cross branch, attended by 25 participants. This was the first workshop out of the total of 25 planned in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The programme is aimed at helping aid-workers, both professional and non-professional, cope with stress. The Red Cross psycho-social support team is currently visiting Montenegro in order to increase the scope of the programme targeted at accommodating needs of the displaced.

#### *Kosovo*

Relief distributions: A total of 140 MT of food has been delivered to Kosovska Mitrovica, Lebane, Vucitrn, Sajkovac, Potrec (Klina), Srbica, Zvecan and Ajvalija since the beginning of the week. The estimated number of beneficiaries (displaced, returnees and vulnerable local population) of the assistance distributed is 25,000.

Health: An assessment of hospitals has been carried out in Pristina, Prizren, Djakovica, Zvecan and Kosovska Mitrovica. The psychiatric hospital in Stimlje has been visited for the second time. Since the arrival of other NGOs covering the medical field, the priority is to ensure that there are no gaps in health care. The morgue in Pristina has been found to be in urgent need of rehabilitation.

A survey of the water/sanitation situation has been carried out in Pec, Djakovica, Prizren, Stimlje and Pristina. Staffing problems and lack of chemicals (chlorine) and spare parts have been observed, as well as effects of looting in laboratories and other water facilities. The programme for cleaning contaminated wells will start on 25 June.

Tracing: In the first three days of running the mobile unit for family communication, displaced, returnees and people who have remained in Kosovo throughout the conflict there have been some 750 successful phone calls from Malisevo, Urosevac, Djakovica and Gnjilane to relatives in FRY and other countries.

Delegations: The ICRC mine-awareness expert has arrived in Pristina. He has had a series of active discussions with other actors in the field on how best to address the problem of mine-awareness. The French Red Cross will be setting up a sub-delegation in Mitrovica to evaluate programme needs in Kosovo.

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

Returnees are leaving Macedonia in the tens of thousand; more are passing through the border at Jacince than Blace. As of 24 June, a total of 116,600 refugees have left Macedonia, bringing the estimated total refugee population from Kosovo to 123,100.

The areas of Pristina, Prizren and Urosevac have been deemed secure environments. The Humanitarian Evacuation Programme to third counties will end in July, except for special medical cases.

Relief distributions: According to UNHCR estimates, 40% of refugees living in host families have returned to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The planning figure for relief distribution has been reduced accordingly. Many of the refugees have been receiving a last distribution of food and a hygiene parcel to take home to Kosovo with them. Distribution is underway in the largest branches (Skopje, Kumanavo, Tetevo), where there are an estimated 93,000 refugee beneficiaries. Refugee families receive food, hygiene parcels and those with children under 2.5 years will get a baby kit (donated by the British Red Cross) containing a baby blanket, three kg washing powder, two pcs. baby soap, 200 ml shampoo, 300 g baby lotion, 100 g baby powder, 12 washable diapers and one medical thermometer.

June assistance to social cases started 24 June, with food and hygiene parcels delivered to 1,168 families. This is the first stage of a programme to assist the most vulnerable. The second stage of distribution of food and hygiene parcels to 280,000 persons in 65,000 social case families begins in July.

Logistics/Relief Distribution (21-23 June)	Received:	Distributed to:	Distributed to:
RELIEF SUPPLIES		Refugees	Host families
Blankets (American RC)		5,000	-
Hygiene parcels (Red Cross)	2,079	-	1,168
Hygiene parcels (American RC)	4,791	5,337	-
Hygiene parcels (French RC)	2,484	-	-
Sugar (1 kg packs)	112,364	-	-

In addition, 24 pallets of assorted new clothing and three pallets of blankets were received from the Norwegian Red Cross. Some 10,764 1.5 litre bottles of mineral water were dispatched to the Blace, Jazince, Jankovic border areas for distribution to returning refugees.

The Bardovci Psychiatric Hospital in Skopje was given 12 mattresses, 60 blankets, 25 boxes of new clothes and 1,100 kg of sugar. Stores of perishable food and non-standard goods have been donated to local charitable and non-profit organisations, including: 3,698 canned vegetables, 112 kg rice, 1,000 cans fish, 30 packets baby food, 18,776 kg beans, 3,107 kg pasta, and 5,000 kg flour.

Health: Most of the medical staff from Kosovo at the Norwegian Red Cross (NRC) hospital in Cegrane have been leaving to return home. The expatriate staff are able to maintain services as the camp population reduces each day. In spite of their own very difficult situation, the staff from Kosovo participated in the work with skill and compassion.

The NRC have established good contact with the epidemiology department at the Gostivar hospital. Two representatives visit the Cegrane NRC hospital several times a week to discuss current medical problems. There has not been a satisfactory resolution for treatment of TB patients. The NRC hospital has registered about 30 cases and only two have been admitted to the sanatorium in Tetevo (both cases of miliar tuberculosis). The NRC is waiting to receive diagnostic kits and drugs from WHO, so treatment can begin for other TB patients.

Shelter: The German Red Cross is planning to leave Stenkovec I/Brazda camp in mid-July, if not before. The population at the camp has dropped below ten thousand, from a high of thirty thousand. It is expected the Cegrane camp will be almost empty by mid-August. As the camp is not fit for habitation in winter weather, the small numbers of refugees who remain (old, sick, others with no homes to return to) will go to collective centres or be placed in host families.

Psycho-social programme: A representative from the British Red Cross will arrive on Monday to assess potential aid for education and recreation.

Tracing: Since the beginning of the crisis, the ICRC Tracing Agency has received 1,670 tracing requests and registered 1,760 vulnerable people (the majority of which are unaccompanied children, but also include elderly, physically and mentally disabled persons). As of 24 June: 734 families have been reunited. For the week ending 24 June tracing offices in Skopje, Tetevo and seven camps have received 2,975 visitors and 519 phone calls, and 167 names were given for broadcast. There were 251 registrations on the ICRC website (<http://www.familylinks.icrc.org>); which generated ten Red Cross messages received and two sent out. For the entire month of June, there were 1,828 names listed on the familylinks website; 17,233 visitors and 2,130 phone calls.

As a result of American Red Cross technical assistance, six of the tracing centres in the camps now have laptop PCs with GSM links to the internet and the familylinks website. This has quickened up the process for many to find family members all over the world.

A British Red Cross international press officer is producing video footage of an ICRC tracing delegate (from the British RC) working at the ICRC tracing centre tent at the Cegrane refugee camp. The video clips will be available for broadcast by media based in the UK.

Delegations: A Red Cross mine awareness delegate arrives today in Skopje to begin work on a regional mine awareness programme.

External Relations, information and publicity: Earlier this week International Red Cross and Red Crescent delegates conducted interviews with: Finland's *Aamulehti* newspaper, German Phoenix TV, *L'Humanite*, AFP.

### ***Albania***

Throughout the country, the situation remains in a state of rapid change-with large population movements taking place spontaneously despite calls from the international community for refugees to remain until it is deemed safe to return.

Large numbers of people have been moving back across the border. From 21-23 June approximately 175,800 refugees returned to Kukes from the south and crossed the Morini and Qafe Prushit border points into Kosovo. Since 15 June, the UNCHR estimates that 30% of departing refugees were based in Kukes, 23% in Tirana and 19% in Durrës. However, the Kukes percentage is far higher as the Kukes refugees were the first to leave for Kosovo and started departing on 13 June.

During the Kukes town relief distribution, completed on 23 June, information gathered led the Red Cross Red Crescent operation to conclude that there are less than five percent of refugees remaining in host families served by the Kukes sub-delegation. People that have remained behind are largely those that are considered most vulnerable (such as the elderly and the disabled, unaccompanied minors and the poor who do not have the financial means to travel).

Further landmine incidents have been reported on the border area despite warnings. Meetings with UNICEF (mine awareness lead agency), CARE (mine awareness training) and various other NGOs have taken place to ensure a co-ordinated mine awareness approach is adopted and that the distribution of posters, leaflets and other materials covers all areas of need.

Relief distributions: As indicated earlier in this report, massive returns to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have already taken place. Many of these have been "permanent" meaning that the returnees are intent on remaining there. However, many heads of household are travelling to their former homes to assess the situation prior to bringing their families back. This causes some difficulties for the distribution as heads of household are required to come to the distribution points to pick up the monthly rations. It is necessary, in this rapidly-changing situation, to be flexible.

Dispatch over the last three days have been as follows: 96.5 MT of wheat flour, 6,384 hygiene parcels, 2,850 litres of oil to Tirana, 1,960 Swedish Red Cross food parcels and 1,638 hygiene parcels to Fier; 46.1 MT of wheat flour, 3,920 Swedish Red Cross food parcels, 3,920 individual food parcels and 3,744 hygiene parcels to Elbasan; and 3,440 individual food parcels to Durres.

The despatched totals have been requested by the regional relief delegates in order to ensure that there are the required quantities of items for distribution to the beneficiaries. The Red Cross Red Crescent operation is fully meeting the needs of the remaining beneficiaries.

Given the fact that the majority of refugees assisted in the Kukës region have departed for Kosovo, the need for bulk food and food parcel deliveries by truck from Tirana has diminished substantially. As such, only 28.6 MT of Swedish Red Cross food parcels, 18 MT of wheat flour and 70 hygiene kits were delivered to Kukës during the past three days. The last relief distribution of its type in Kukës town was drawn to a close on 23 June, in which a one month supply of food items was distributed to beneficiaries. In Kukës, this distribution began earlier to ensure that departing refugees received a full ration before returning to Kosovo. Indeed, once in receipt of their parcels, many of the refugees left immediately.

All six Red Cross Red Crescent regional centres have been requested to provide estimates of the latest needs. The Kukës sub-delegation provided planning figures as follows: 5,000 refugees; 1,000 host families; 10,000 internally displaced persons (from areas following cross border violence; and 10,000 social cases. In total, the Kukës planning figure is now at 26,000.

During the reporting period, two Red Cross ferry crossings took place. The shipments included hygiene parcels (more than 20,000), individual parcels (20,000), wheat flour (152.3 MT), wool blankets (9,300), jerry cans (17,000), forklifts and pallet jacks, telecommunications equipment, and flags and stickers. On these sailings, there were also 36,720 food parcels and 5,500 jerry cans to be forwarded on to Macedonia.

Health: The health facilities established to assist the refugee population in the Kukës area are extremely quiet. During the past three days, the Finnish Red Cross Basic Health Centre treated 75 patients and the Italian Red Cross field hospital treated a further 89 patients and currently has two in-patients.

The Finnish Red Cross BHC's vaccination campaign has been officially drawn to a close. The campaign has been extremely successful. Indeed, between 23 April and 23 June, 4,612 children were vaccinated against measles and 2,755 against polio, bringing the total number to 7,367.

Shelter: Less than two weeks ago, it was estimated that 32,000 refugees were sheltered in Kukës camps and collective centres. It is now estimated that less than 300 refugees remain in Kukës in this type of shelter.

There are three camps remaining in Kukes and Krume (the Italian Red Cross, the United Arab Emirates and Kukes II), with a total maximum of 250 refugees on 23 June. Refugees in the three remaining collective centres (two in Kukes, one in Krume) have been informed that no further assistance is available in the centres, and the refugees are being encouraged to move to the remaining camps in Kukes.

Psycho social programme: The leaflets for the psycho-social programme have been finalised. The first leaflet is for parents with children that have been traumatised--it provides tips on how to help the children. The second is for adults that have suffered through traumatic stress. With these leaflets, the message that has been attempted to bring across is that the reactions that these people have had are normal reactions to abnormal experiences. Additionally, the information provided will allow them to build coping mechanisms for that which still lies ahead. Visits with people and categories that are receiving little to no attention, but that are very much in need of it.

Tracing: The ICRC Protection/Tracing Team based in Kukes has been busy during the past few days trying to locate people previously registering for tracing and family reunification during the crisis. The team visited the remaining camps and/or made contact with relatives abroad. The vast majority of registered cases has returned to Kosovo, as such the process of closing the cases and transferring the information to the appropriate teams elsewhere is in progress. However, there are still many cases involving vulnerable people in the camps.

Photographs of two registered Unaccompanied Minors have been produced to poster size and displayed in and around Kukes, on the Morin border road, at the border itself and on 50 buses.

Increasing numbers of people are fighting the traffic and coming from Prizren to Kukes to trace their relatives. They make international calls on the satellite telephones and consult the Refugee Lists.

The rapid departure of refugees from Albania is noticeable in the numbers of people that are using the services of the tracing department. From 21-23 June, there were 69 recorded visits (since the beginning of the operation there have been 5988 visits), 192 telephone calls to relatives were made (31,994), 630 radio messages were prepared for broadcast (28,456), 34 recorded cases of unaccompanied vulnerable (281), 1 case of parents having lost children (149), 13 cases of unaccompanied children (202), 2 family cases were opened (475) and 3 others were closed (75). Tracing services are already being scaled down as the exodus continues. To further illustrate the decrease in the demand for tracing services, in the week prior to this reporting period, the average number of recorded visits was 476.

Albanian Red Cross: Distribution of the mine awareness leaflets has been conducted by the Albanian Red Cross volunteers at fuel stations, distribution points and at the entrance to Kukes town for those families arriving from the south.

Participating National Societies: The vice-president of the Japanese Red Cross (JRC) arrived in Albania to visit the JRC delegates that are implementing the Memorandum of Understanding and view the operation.

The British Red Cross (BRC) will be supporting the Red Cross Red Crescent operation's psycho-social programme in Albania and in Macedonia. In the coming weeks, the BRC will be providing a delegate to the area who will perform a needs assessment of children in the countries, upon which a distribution plan for various kits will be created. All kits are designed

specifically for this part of the continent. Three types of kits will be distributed (quantities per country in parentheses/numbers of children benefitting): Educational kits (1,200/48,000); Teacher's kits (300/24,000); and Recreational kits (300/24,000).

Educational kits are intended to be used by the children to do their schoolwork and contain items such as exercise books, pencils and pens and pencil sharpeners. Teacher's kits consist of duffle bags, pencils and pens, chalkboards and chalk, wooden clocks and tape measures, while the Recreational kits are made up of instructor's guides, referee whistles, musical instruments, arts and crafts supplies, and sports equipment.

From the beginning of the operation, the British Red Cross has been one of the most active National Societies in the support of the Red Cross Red Crescent operation in Albania, responding immediately with standardised food parcels and blankets which allowed the operation to meet the needs of the refugees. More than 44,500 food parcels have been distributed in the early phase of the operation, 34,000 blankets have been received (9,000 have been despatched to this point), and 5,000 (of 21,120 received) tinned Meals Ready to Eat have been distributed. The British Red Cross has shipped "clockwork" radios, sleeping bags (3,624 units), hygiene kits (9,984 have been despatched) and baby parcels to the delegation.

External relations, information and publicity: Coverage was provided from BBC World, which featured the plight of refugees that had remained in Kukes, with little possibility to return to their homes in Kosovo. Interviews took place with two disabled persons, for whom the Protection/Tracing department is trying to find their relatives.

Representatives of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry were taken to visit a host family. A press officer from the British Red Cross arrived on 24 June.

Outstanding needs: A truck for relief distributions should have reached Fier at the end of May, but it has not arrived. With the bulk distribution beginning in little more than a month, a truck is an absolute necessity. The regional offices report that there is a great need for fresh vegetables and other supplemental items in the regions.

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