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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, primarily for the Movement's components and supporters. Today's text can also be found on the Internet at [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org) and [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org)*

### **LATEST EVENTS**

More than 660,000 refugees and displaced people have now returned to Kosovo, leaving 125,900 people in the neighbouring states and republics, according to UNHCR. In addition, this week UNHCR and IOM, in conjunction with the government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, will start the coordinated return to Kosovo of refugees from third countries who wish to return immediately.

The situation of non-Albanian ethnic minorities in Kosovo continues to be a "prime concern," according to UNHCR. The ICRC is providing tracing services to these minorities as well food assistance, and is endeavouring to bring their plight to the attention of KFOR and the UN Civil Administration.

The recent heavy rain which affected the region has caused serious problems, in Serbia especially.

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

Overview: The heavy rains that struck a large part of Serbia on Friday and Saturday caused severe flooding in which three people were killed and three more were missing. The floods further compounded the humanitarian problems in many areas already affected by the air-strikes and influx of IDPs from Kosovo.

Relief: Responding to the new emergency needs caused by the flooding, over the weekend the ICRC and the Federation made on-the-spot assessments and released to the Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) 15,000 meals-ready-to-eat, 1500 jerry cans, 500 hygiene kits and 300 mattresses. The YRC dispatched to the affected municipalities of Rakovica, Smederevska Palanka and Kragujevac quantities of canned food, baby food, baby diapers, beds, blankets and hygiene items.

Beneficiary figures for soup kitchens have been finalized, placing the number for this programme at 89,000 in Serbia and 10,000 in Montenegro. It has also been established that

45% of the beneficiaries will be receiving their monthly rations in the dry food form, due to difficulties in reaching the soup kitchens.

At the same time, other forms of assistance to IDPs continue. On 12 July 1500 food parcels, 250 mattresses and 300 baby parcels have been sent to Jagodina. During last week, the Smederevo Red Cross was assisted with food, hygiene parcels and blankets for 3788 IDPs, while the Belgrade Red Cross, which hosts some 13,000 IDPs in 16 municipalities, received food, baby kits, children's clothes, blankets and plastic sheeting.

Relief goods continue to arrive in the country. Close to 100 MT of wheat flour, 37 MT of vegetable oil, 10,560 hygiene parcels, and 20,000 blankets arrived at the ICRC Belgrade offices from Zagreb last week. The German Red Cross donation of 1000 MT of wheat flour, 160 MT of sugar and 100,000 hygiene parcels started arriving on 6 July.

Protection: A list with some 1500 names of people held in places of detention in Serbia was last week submitted to the ICRC by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia. That was in addition to some 500 names forwarded previously. Detention visits are planned for Prokuplje, Zajecar, Pozarevac, Nis, Leskovac, Vranje and Novi Pazar.

#### *Kosovo*

Relief: Direct deliveries from Skopje started this last week, which allowed larger volumes of aid to be delivered to the towns of Suva Reka and Vuciturn. Further needs have been discovered in areas thought to be previously covered. Consequently, deliveries are planned for Pristina city, Lipljan and Prizren area. In the last five days, 304 MT of food have been distributed to over 60,000 people in Kosovo.

Health: There are ongoing assessments of health facilities to assist National Societies with selection of possible projects in Kosovo. Throughout the week, ICRC health delegates accompanied detention teams on visits to people detained by KFOR. Collection of data on mine injuries continued in the various medical facilities.

Protection: Currently there are four mobile tracing units operating with 16 satellite telephones. These mobile units are operational in the regions of Pristina, Prizren and Pec. Some 1500 people were able to contact their relatives in the past five days. In addition, visits by the ICRC were carried out to 59 people detained by KFOR.

PNS: The German Red Cross have identified four localities in Pec where mobile soup kitchens could be operated. The Japanese Red Cross have made an assessment in the Decan municipality for a medical project.

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

Overview: The rate of spontaneous return of ethnic Albanian IDPs to Kosovo has dropped sharply in the past week. Collective centres and tent camps have witnessed further depletion, with some 100 people remaining in the collective centres in Rozaje and just over 500 remaining in two tent camps in Ulcinj. The ICRC-built Pine Tree III camp has now closed. On the other hand, the figure of Serb, Montenegrin, Roma and Muslim IDPs from Kosovo increased by 1300 in the course of last week.

Relief: The situation for shelter for the arriving IDPs is particularly serious in Kolasin, and the local Red Cross is considering re-opening a collective centre formerly used by refugees from Bosnia. Assistance consisting of 90 blankets, 35 mattresses, 5 rolls of plastic sheeting and 27 hygiene kits was delivered to this branch.

In Berane, food deliveries to collective centres started last week: the ICRC provides food to a central kitchen where it is prepared for some 800 IDPs living in six collective shelters. In addition to this, 1000 hygiene parcels were released to Berane Red Cross. The local Red Cross in Tivat, where 1000 IDPs have arrived since 10 June, has received blankets and mattresses.

Protection: A first survey of tracing needs of the newly arrived IDPs has been carried out in the coastal towns of Herceg Novi, Kotor, Tivat, Budva and Bar. A total of 1371 phone calls were last week made from ICRC offices by IDPs seeking to contact their relatives.

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

Overview: A number of refugees who had gone back to Kosovo are believed to have returned to Macedonia, either to pick up their families or to remain because they have no homes to return to in Kosovo. 78 Roma people arrived at the Macedonian border crossing at Blace on 8 July after fleeing from Lipljan and other nearby areas south of Pristina. The UNHCR opened two new offices in Tetevo and Kumanovo to organise repatriation of refugees living with host families.

According to local media reports the Macedonian government decided to extend the legal status of registered refugees for another three months. The interior ministry estimates there were about 15,000 unregistered people from Kosovo. At the end of the summer, the police will start expelling both registered and unregistered refugees, according to official statements.

The UNHCR is planning to use Cegrane as the consolidation camp where remaining refugees from the other camps will live. Refugees in Stenkovec II and Neprosteno have demonstrated against the planned move as they are hoping to be sent to third countries. The remaining refugees include the elderly and sick, those who are too fearful to return, those whose homes in Kosovo were destroyed, ethnic Albanians from Serbia, Roma, and those waiting to see if they will be able to go to third countries.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and the WFP have just issued a report on the impact of the crisis on Macedonia, based on a survey in mid-June. There was no evidence of food shortages as international agencies and NGOs imported most of the relief goods and emergency supplies. However, the crisis has undoubtedly aggravated the general economic instability already being experienced by the country, and the commission noted a significant increase in poverty levels. Some households are having increasing difficulty meeting everyday expenses.

The major factor has been the collapse of trade with FRY, one of Macedonia's most important export markets and a vital source of raw materials. Non-agricultural households are affected as the interruption in the supply of raw materials for manufacturing industry has increased unemployment. The loss of the important fruit and vegetable market in particular was reflected in lower producer prices and farmers' financial situation deteriorated. According to local media reports, retail prices of fruit and vegetables have recently increased because of the food being transported to Kosovo.

At a recent meeting between major agencies and institutions active in Macedonia, European Union representatives said the EU was committed to carry on a long-term development support to Macedonia.

Relief: The expanded programme of relief distribution to social cases is underway with the goal of assisting 225,000 persons living in 65,000 families throughout the country.

#### Logistics/Relief Distribution 8-11 July

SUPPLIES	Received	Distributed to social cases
Hygiene parcels (Netherlands RC)	-	662
Hygiene parcels (French RC)	48	7,506
Sets of clothing (German RC)	6,547	-
Used clothing (French RC)	275	-
Sugar (1 kg packs)	-	545

For the week ending 11 July, the ICRC dispatched the following relief goods to Kosovo from the Skopje warehouse: 11,232 1.5-litre bottles of water to Mitrovica Hospital in Kosovo; 200 MT of wheat flour (one distribution to Vuciturn, two to Suvareka); 20,000 individual food parcels. (Each individual food parcel contains enough food for one person for two months -- cooking oil, canned vegetables, macaroni, yeast supplemented with 1 kg wheat flour.) Donated to the Demir Hisar psychiatric hospital were the following goods: 73 cans of food (from the Bulgarian Red Cross), 65 kg rice, four 50-kg bags of rice.

Health: The Norwegian Red Cross hospital is planning to continue medical care until 1 August. Some parts of the hospital have already been dismantled for packing. About 3000 refugees will be transferred from other camps next week to Cegrane. The activity at the hospital has been reduced dramatically in recent weeks, but may increase slightly with these new refugees. For the week to 8 July, there were 34 admissions, an average of 26 in-patients and 439 out-patients, one major operation and 20 minor ones, and no births. The transfer of critically ill patients by ambulance to Pristina hospital continues on a daily basis.

ONS: The Macedonian Red Cross has opened a new central warehouse for Kumanovo and standard procedures have been implemented. The warehouse supports seven distribution points in various villages and in Kumanovo for refugees, host families and social cases.

PNS: One of the American Red Cross tracing specialists has transferred from the Family Links programme in Macedonia to the ICRC tracing programme in Kosovo -- the first of two specialists who will be working in the ICRC mobile units throughout Kosovo with the possibility of more to follow. The American Red Cross is continuing assistance to the Macedonian Red Cross for relief distributions in the outlying branches, along with logistical support for the ICRC's Kosovo relief programme (the funding of warehouse space in Skopje and the purchase of four forklift trucks).

The German Red Cross (GRC) is sending four field kitchens from Skopje to the city of Pec in Kosovo. The kitchens will provide hot meals daily to 6000 people, starting in mid-July and continuing over the next six months. The GRC is expecting a sharp increase in the number of beneficiaries when winter weather sets in, and will be considering other locations for additional food kitchens. The food for the programme will be purchased in Macedonia. The bread will be baked in local bakeries in Pec.

### *Albania*

Overview: The pace of return of refugees to Kosovo has slowed with the majority of those that were able to leave by private transport having done so already. As a result of recent shooting incidents, the security situation has worsened and the Red Cross is now discouraging unnecessary movement by delegates.

Relief: Despatch was limited to a shipment of 836 family hygiene parcels to the Durres region. The warehouses remain full across the country and the Red Cross operation is able to meet the needs of the beneficiaries.

The approved distribution programme for up to 26,000 beneficiaries (including refugees remaining, people from the Has district avoiding unexploded bombs, vulnerable people and social cases) will be used extensively to train the local Red Cross branches of Kukes and Krume in all aspects of Red Cross activities.

Three distribution areas were taken over from the NGO Concern as this organisation prepares to leave Kukes. After careful verification of the areas, distribution of food rations to war-affected people began. These internally displaced people left their villages along the border and are living temporarily with host families and in shelters in the Krume district.

The Albanian government has not given a clear indication of whether or not goods that had been imported for the refugees can be re-exported to FRY, which has caused some difficulties for the PNSs.

Health: The Shkoder-based Emergency Response Unit (ERU) camp was damaged during a lightning and thunderstorm at the weekend. Soon afterwards about a fifth of its supplies were stolen by looters. The Kukes-based ERU (which was closed a couple of weeks ago) provided statistics for its patient caseload during its eight weeks of operation and concluded that respiratory infections (both upper and lower) were far the most common affliction in all age ranges. Also high on the list of ailments were psychological problems and diarrhoea. No deaths were recorded by the ERU.

The French Red Cross First Aid post in Mjede was closed down on the weekend.

UNHCR has transferred the remaining elderly, mentally and/or physically disabled and abandoned refugees registered in the United Arab Emirates hospital from Kukes I back to Kosovo.

PNS health activities in Albania now include the following: the German Red Cross is assessing a rehabilitation project for the paediatric department of Korce hospital; the Belgian and Spanish Red Cross are rehabilitating the infectious disease ward at Durres hospital; the Netherlands Red Cross has given medical supplies to Vlore hospital.

Shelter: Kukes I and II camps and the Italian camp are still operating as transit camps.

Protection: Two disabled children were reunited with their parents and were flown to Kukes for transport back to Kosovo.

In the Kukes area, the satellite telephone office is not easily accessible to returning refugees, but the number of telephone calls made remains significant with up to 290 calls a day. On weekends, many Kosovars come from Prizren and Djakova, and even as far away as Suva Reka and Malishevo, to make the calls.

#### Satellite telephone calls at Kukes

	8 July		9 July		10 July		11 July	
	calls	people	calls	people	calls	people	calls	people
ICRC Kukes	160	234	188	270	291	591	327	459
Morini road	17	100	22	185	-	-	-	-
Kukes II camp	74	460	51	309	62	390	66	398
<b>Totals</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>981</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>859</b>

A total of 47 visits were recorded by the Tracing Department from 8-12 July, during which time 142 telephone calls were made and two family reunions happened. Overall, there have been 6617 visits made by refugees, 37,086 telephone calls have been made, 29,076 radio messages have been aired, 281 cases of unaccompanied vulnerable have been recorded, 54 tracing cases have been opened and 25 closed, 151 parents have reported separation from their children, 204 children have been recorded as having become separated from their parents, 481 family reunion cases were opened and 92 were closed.

ONS: The Albanian Red Cross is planning on restarting its ongoing programmes, which had to be suspended because of the refugee crisis.

PNS: The role of the PNS is decreasing in Albania as the movement of people back to FRY continues. Most PNS have closed down their camps around the country. The Belgian Red Cross still has some beneficiaries, but the number is not significant. As well, the Austrian Red Cross camp -- which was the last of the PNS camps to experience outflux -- is now emptying quickly. The Austrian Red Cross has made a donation of foodstuffs to the Albanian Red Cross.

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The activities of the Japanese Red Cross will continue to the end of August. The medical dispensaries and mobile teams are still needed -- refugees often receive their final health checks from the Japanese Red Cross before returning.

(See also Health above.)

***Bosnia-Herzegovina***

**Relief:** The local Red Cross in both Bosnian entities finished the distribution of items donated by the Red Cross of Czech Republic. The donation included: 28 palettes of mineral water, seven palettes of instant soup, two palettes of biscuits, 14 palettes of toilet paper, one palette of toilet soap, three palettes of paper handkerchiefs, two palettes of bandage, five palettes of sanitary napkins, one palette of baby diapers and one palette of shirts.

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*Logistics cell contacts are Goran Zuber, Federation, and John Wert, ICRC -- tel: 4122 730 2143 or 4122 730 2204; fax: 4122 730 2876; email: **fedicrbalkanlog.gva@icrc.org***

*For further information from the International Federation, please contact Martin Faller for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia & Herzegovina -- tel: 4122 730 4439; email: **faller@ifrc.org** and Penny Elghady for Albania and Macedonia -- tel: 4122 730 4319; email: **elghady@ifrc.org***

*For further information from the ICRC, contact External Resources Department -- tel: 4122 734 6001 or Pierre Kraehenbuehl -- tel : 4122 730 2256; email: **pkraehenbuehl.gva@icrc.org***

Renny Nancholas

Director  
Europe Department  
International Federation of Red  
Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Angelo Gnaedinger

Delegate General for Europe,  
Middle East, and North America  
ICRC