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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 and www.icrc.org

LATEST EVENTS

The latest figures from UNHCR show that 662,000 refugees and displaced people have now returned to Kosovo, leaving just under 110,000 outside the province.

In Geneva, representatives of the governments involved met UNHCR and IOM officials to agree guidelines for the orderly repatriation of refugees from third countries. (These were then circulated to PERCO members.) IOM has since reported that the operation is on course to meet its target of 1000 repatriations a day some time next week.

As far as the general humanitarian situation in the Balkans is concerned, the following picture emerges from the latest feedback from delegations and UN agencies:

- * A WFP team which has just returned from Belgrade has provided these figures for people who need support in Serbia and Montenegro: 360,000 refugees, comprising the old case-load from previous conflicts in the Balkans; 120,000 IDPs from the recent conflict in Kosovo and its aftermath; 400,000 social cases unrelated to specific conflicts. (Total: 880,000.)
- * It is estimated by the various agencies that throughout the winter 25,000 refugees will need to be supported in Albania while in Macedonia there will be around 30,000 (including Roma and Serbs who are continuing to arrive).
- * UNHCR is particularly concerned about the situation of the Roma who are fleeing Kosovo to Macedonia and Montenegro.
- * The ethnic Albanian minority in Serbia is thought to number about 100,000, and there have been reports that some of them have started to move.

The airport at Pristina is now available for civil flight, but four days notice must be given.

Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia)

Overview: The torrential rains of the last few days have badly affected several areas of Serbia. Close to 3000 people had to be evacuated to temporary accommodation from several municipalities of Belgrade. In the municipalities of Smederevska Palanka, Velika Plana, Batocina,

Jagodina, Rekovac, Kragujevac and Knic some 15,000 houses were flooded and thousands of people had to be evacuated. In several cases, these collective shelters already housed refugees from Croatia and Bosnia, as well as IDPs from Kosovo.

In other instances, it was the collective centres themselves that were flooded. Additional problems include flooded roads, electricity and telephone lines cut, large-scale destruction of crops and livestock, disruption of water supply and flooding of Red Cross warehouses.

Meanwhile, according to reports from the Red Cross Joint Field Offices, by the end of last week there were over 103,000 IDPs from Kosovo in Serbia. (See also Latest Events.)

Relief: Red Cross teams provided relief in the form of food, beds, blankets, bed linen, clothing and hygiene items to the flood victims in the affected municipalities. They reported needs for water disinfectant, jerrycans, tinned food and nappies for babies. Soup kitchens, supplied with food by the Red Cross, are active in most of the affected places.

On 13 July, close to 55 MT of food were dispatched to the Subotica and Sombor Red Cross branches for their soup kitchens.

Kraljevo Red Cross has received 4000 individual food parcels, 1000 hygiene parcels, 300 baby kits and 360 mattresses for the displaced population.

Distribution of 143,750 ECHO-funded hygiene parcels to 225,500 refugees has started. 250 dressing kits for the Yugoslav Red Cross (YRC) first-aid teams were delivered to five regional centres (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kraljevo, Nis, Podgorica). 8100 baby kits have also been distributed.

Health: All the 27 water reservoirs with distribution systems and the two water treatment stations have now been installed by the Red Cross at Novi Sad on the bank of the Danube. The system will be officially handed over to the town authorities on 16 July. The total cost of this project is some 200,000 USD. About 90,000 inhabitants of the Petrovaradin side of the Vojvodina capital, cut off from the other side of the city by the destruction of the three bridges, were provided with drinking water by two water trucks set up by the ICRC in late April.

A survey of needs of water boards in the Nis region has been completed.

Works on latrines and showers in an IDP collective shelter in the southern Serbian town of Bujanovac are underway.

Deliveries of drugs to humanitarian pharmacies have continued this week.

Kosovo

Relief: Convoys from Skopje are still being used for direct deliveries. The ICRC has agreed to supply 500 MT of foodstuffs to the Pristina urban municipality over the next couple of weeks. This will allow the seven Mother Theresa charity branches in Pristina to assist the most vulnerable in their community. Ten distribution field trips have been carried out, taking a total of 271 MT of food to more than 103,000 people.

Health: An additional 31 wells in Glogovac municipality have been cleaned and disinfected, bringing the total number of cleaned wells to date to 132. UNHCR convened a coordination meeting for town water supply rehabilitations. Oxfam were asked to do a rapid assessment of all major water supply and treatment systems on behalf of UNHCR. **Protection:** Four ICRC mobile units are in operation now, with 16 satellite phones -- two in Pristina and one each in Prizren and Pec. A total of 1786 have been made and 14 locations have been visited by protection teams.

PNS: There are currently 19 PNS with varying degrees of activity in Kosovo. On the 13 July the ICRC chaired a PNS coordination meeting in Pristina attended by 12 of them and the Federation. The need for a coordinated approach was encouraged, as was the need for PNS to have either a geographical or sector approach to their programmes. A summary of known PNS activities to date follows.

American Red Cross have a combination of staff-on-loan (tracing and water/sanitation) and programme funding. They are also examining programme options in agriculture and soup kitchens and may become involved in a water/sanitation programme.

Austrian Red Cross are planning to focus their attention on the Istok District. They are examining various options within the district, to include the following: the provision of food parcels, hygiene kits, medical supplies, seeds, construction materials, agricultural tools and reconstruction support in conjunction with other NGOs. The Austrian Red Cross Youth has also expressed an interest in the reconstruction of schools in the same area.

Belgian Red Cross trucks with supplies have already started arriving for the rehabilitation of private houses in the region of Suhareke and Orahovac. The two branches aim to assist in the reconstruction of 1000 houses in the region, and have chosen this area as many of the refugees assisted by the Belgian Red Cross in Dures were originally from this region of Kosovo and have now returned to their homes. They are also interested in a dispensary rehabilitation project.

British Red Cross are planning to rehabilitate schools, starting in the Djakovica region and extending into Milashevo and Glogovac. They have completed a comprehensive school survey in the region, identifying the importance of schools as the main community public utility. Schools can be used as centres for psycho-social assistance, distribution programmes and provide a venue for other uses during the winter months ahead. The programme will be one year in duration, with at least four expatriates, who start arriving next week, complemented by an airlift of vehicles and plant equipment arriving at Pristina airport on 24 July.

Canadian Red Cross are interested in a public kitchen and agricultural programme and will be taking things further next week when the Desk Officer visits the region.

Danish Red Cross are currently compiling a shelter needs assessment in the Vucitrn municipality and plan to start the rehabilitation of 1200 private houses, 10 primary schools and 10 clinics on 1 August. They are also researching a psycho-social programme in the same region.

Finnish Red Cross are organising the transfer of equipment from their basic health ERU currently on standby in Albania. The team have already started assisting the health centre in

Viti village, south of Gjilan. The health centre has already been reopened by the local community, with the Finnish team assisting with its rehabilitation, training of staff and provision of drugs. In the next few days the Finnish team will be providing medical and non-medical staff for the Gjilan hospital. They also have a reconstruction assessment team examining public buildings in the region, and may get involved in this type of rehabilitation programme.

French Red Cross started distributing food items last week in two villages in the Srbica municipality, to include distributions for the Mitrovica hospital, and plan to extend this programme assisting a total of 10,000 beneficiaries. Bulk food of 1500 MT is available for distribution. They are also examining programmes in the rehabilitation of private houses, psycho-social support, medical assistance and dispensary rehabilitation in the same region.

German Red Cross have already donated vehicles for the mobile tracing units and have provided a water and sanitation engineer for assessment purposes, with a mixture of goods in kind and cash contributions. They are currently distributing food rations to Serb communities in the municipality of Strpce and have established a kitchen programme between Pec and Djakovica, which will be operational from 19 July.

Italian Red Cross have plans to carry out a second medical assessment and are currently researching a field hospital in Srbica. They are also examining options for the reconstruction of dispensaries.

Japanese Red Cross have identified a health programme in the Decani area which will commence shortly. They plan to provide rehabilitation of medical facilities, drugs and emergency health kits and to train medical personnel.

Netherlands Red Cross will be carrying out an assessment next week, and are currently interested in public soup kitchen projects.

Norwegian Red Cross are planning to establish several programmes. Their management team arrived on 14 July to assist at the Mitrovica hospital and will rehabilitate agricultural machinery workshops in Srbica, Glogovac and Lipljan.

Spanish Red Cross are carrying out their second assessment in the Istok area, evaluating rehabilitation needs in schools and health centres. They are hoping to rehabilitate and furnish schools, equipping the Istok health clinic and dispensaries in the area with further medical machinery. An architect will shortly be joining their assessment team.

Swedish Red Cross are interesting in a water and sanitation project and are currently examining options for an assessment mission.

Swiss Red Cross primarily wish to establish a psycho-social programme in conjunction with the Red Cross Community Service Centres, and are interested in a psycho-social support project. They are also examining options in rehabilitation, water and sanitation, agricultural and health programmes within a specific region.

United Arab Emirates Red Crescent have been running a bread supply programme since 1 July in the Djakovica region, in conjunction with the WFP and the Mother Teresa charity. The UAE team have furnished the bakery with petrol, sugar, salt, flavouring and additives. They

have also distributed food and non-food items to 860 families and will shortly extend their programme to include the rehabilitation of 50 houses in the same region.

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Overview: The UNHCR has issued revised estimates of Kosovo refugees still living in Macedonia to 30,300 to take account of people staying with host families. As border traffic returns to normal and Kosovars travel back and forth along with other FRY residents, it has become difficult to get an accurate count of refugees returning.

The Macedonian Red Cross (MRC) Skopje branch is reporting up to 50 ethnic Serb refugees registering for relief assistance each day.

Relief: Some relief goods originally designated for Albania are being redirected to Skopje. However, logistics is having some problems identifying additional warehouse space as most NGOs are using Macedonia for logistics support to operations in Kosovo.

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.

Relief Distribution 12-13 July

Supplies	Received	Distributed to social cases
Hygiene parcels (Netherlands RC)	-	96
Hygiene parcels (French RC)	2,967	3,037
Sugar (1 kg packs)	-	1,865
Underwear (German RC)	5,846	-

ONS: The Macedonian Red Cross is preparing for a nationwide blood donation campaign and the information department of the Federation is looking for ways to support them in publicising it.

Albania

Overview: The return of refugees to Kosovo has become a relative trickle; for the first time since the spontaneous movement started, there were fewer than 5000 returns in a day.

Security remains difficult. Aside from the looting which causes severe concerns for agencies running camps, several aid workers have received extortion threats in the last week. Police forces across the country lack resources to improve the situation.

Relief: Despatch has been very limited this week. Tirana region requested 1467 British Red Cross clockwork radios and 6603 individual ECHO hygiene parcels. The relief pipeline continues to bring surplus goods into Albania, and though there are no difficulties in bringing aid in the problem lies with moving goods back out through the customs. There is a lack of clarity on the export rules.

Health: Inventories of medical supplies and a reorganisation of the medical warehouse in Shkoder were performed during the past three days. People that had been evacuated from the north for medical reasons were taken back.

Planning has begun for the establishment of medical emergency stocks for the Albanian Red Cross. Together with the Relief Department, criteria are being created for the assessment of social cases in Albania.

The regional psycho-social delegate and one other delegate are travelling to Kosovo to establish a programme there.

Shelter: Thirty-four priority collective centres have been identified by the Emergency Management Group (EMG), the Albanian Ministry for Local Government and the UNHCR for use as winter accommodation for the residual caseload. The minimum capacity of these camps is 18,000. Winterisation guidelines for donors, NGOs and local authorities are being drafted.

Protection: In the last couple of days, 49 visits were made to the offices of the ICRC's Tracing Department. Another four tracing cases were closed and three more family reunions took place. This brought the figures since the start of the operation to 6693 visits, 38,371 telephone messages made, 29,076 radio messages broadcast, 281 unaccompanied elderly, 54 tracing cases opened and 29 closed, 151 parents having lost children, 204 children were separated from their parents, 481 family reunion cases were opened and 95 were closed.

ONS: Plans are still being drafted by the Albanian Red Cross for the distribution of the French Red Cross food parcels to the most vulnerable social cases in the country.

PNS: PNS continue to await authorisation from the government to ship goods from Albania into Kosovo.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Relief: The Red Cross of the Bosnian Serb entity is distributing 5400 hygiene parcels and 1500 diapers donated by Save the Children. The Red Cross of Bosnia-Herzegovina has just finished the distribution of 15,000 jars of baby food donated by the Japanese humanitarian organisation Association to Aid Refugees.

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