

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

CHF 48,087,000

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Co-ordination

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's Integrated Appeal and management structure for the Balkans Crisis will end on 31 December 1999. However, the International Federation and ICRC will maintain a coordinated approach with their respective operations in the region in 2000, ensuring coherent, comprehensive and mutually reinforcing programmes which will cover a vast range of the ongoing humanitarian needs in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

National Context

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) consists of two republics, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro, with a combined population of 10.4 million. They are the only remaining parts of the former Yugoslavia, following the independence of the other republics of Slovenia, Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The conflict which accompanied this break up caused enormous social and economic dislocation. In addition, the costs of the war and the failure of the FRY government to begin far-reaching market-oriented reforms left the economy even more vulnerable. The international sanctions imposed in 1992 further isolated the country, and the government's monetary policy response led to hyper-inflation the following year which destroyed the population's savings and threw hundreds of thousands of people into poverty. Another 600,000 impoverished refugees also arrived in FR Yugoslavia between 1992-98 from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. This placed further strain on the country's social welfare and medical systems, which were already suffering from insufficient resources and inadequate investment.

Though the signing of the Dayton agreement in 1995 brought a period of apparent stability, but little economic progress, a new crisis broke out in March 1998 in the Serbian republic's ethnically-divided southern province of Kosovo. Years of tension turned into open conflict, and following the failure of the Rambouillet peace accords in February 1999, Serb military action resulted in an exodus of more than 800,000 ethnic Albanians into neighbouring countries between March and June 1999, and from 24 March 1999 NATO launched a 78 day long air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Following the passage of UN Security Council resolution 1244 and the related military-technical agreement which brought the conflict to an end, a NATO-led international military force (KFOR) entered Kosovo in mid-June while the Yugoslav army and Serbian security forces simultaneously withdrew from the province. Ethnic Albanian refugees and IDPs started to return to their homes in Kosovo, but fearful of reprisals Serbs,

Montenegrians and Romas in turn began fleeing. The situation in Kosovo remains tense and volatile, with the few remaining pockets of Serb civilians under sustained pressure from Albanian radicals trying to force them out of Kosovo, despite attempts by KFOR and the new police authority to create a secure environment.

Meanwhile, relations between the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro have become increasingly tense and the Montenegrin government has threatened to hold a referendum in November on independence for Montenegro if these are not accepted.

The failing Yugoslav economy is now facing further constraints with the heightened international isolation and tightening of sanctions against the country. At present, both FRY republics (Kosovo excluded) do not have access to international reconstruction/ rehabilitation or development funds. According to UNHCR, the Federal Republic is currently hosting more than 527,000 refugees from the 1991-1995 war in the former-Yugoslavia and 240,000 IDPs from the current crisis in Kosovo.

The Federal Republic has the highest official rate of unemployment in Europe with two million people out of work and more than three million Yugoslavs living below the poverty line. According to official Yugoslav sources, social benefit payments and entitlements for some 300,000 beneficiaries are almost a year in arrears while pensions to 1.5 million pensioners are delayed for several months. The government has proposed paying back pensions in the form of coupons redeemable for electricity and other public services, but with winter approaching it is not clear whether electricity supplies will be able to meet demand.

FR Yugoslavia is therefore experiencing an acute political, economic and social situation whose impact on the situation of vulnerable members of the population is certain to be profound.

Country Assistance Strategy

The main thrust of the Federation's 2000 - 2001 strategy for FR Yugoslavia is twofold. First, to assist, in co-operation and co-ordination with the Yugoslav Red Cross and ICRC, the most vulnerable sections of the estimated 700,000 refugees and IDPs in Serbia (excluding Kosovo) and Montenegro – and the poorest sections of the ordinary population if necessary – through the provision and distribution of food, hygiene supplies and other basic goods. Second, to assist the Yugoslav Red Cross through programmes of long-term capacity building. This second objective will involve:

- support for the institutional and resource development of the YRC network in order for the Society to increase its effectiveness and efficiency as the prime channel of domestic and international assistance to vulnerable people in FRY.
- support to the YRC's traditional health programmes, such as health education and preventive health, first aid and voluntary blood donations, to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals.
- strengthening the Red Cross Youth Programme through support to youth training programmes and international exchanges.
- support in the development of Red Cross structures and programmes in Kosovo which will enjoy the support of all groups in the province and position the local Red Cross as an important contributor to the development of civil society. This will include a psycho-social support programme.

The Federation will seek to achieve these objectives through the active support of its country delegation to the YRC. Specialised delegates and local staff in the fields of relief, logistics, finance/administration, information, reporting, health, youth and social welfare will be based in Belgrade. In other parts of Serbia monitoring and liaison will be carried out through five field offices (run jointly with the ICRC and the YRC). The Federation will maintain a subdelegation in Montenegro with management, development and relief capacities. In Kosovo, the local Red Cross structures will be supported by a sub-delegation with management, development and psycho-social expertise.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

The International Federation and Yugoslav Red Cross's disaster response programmes in FRY are a part of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement's Consolidated Operations in Serbia and Montenegro which also involve the ICRC and Participating National Societies. These programmes cover a large part of the present and future needs of all the vulnerable categories of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the poorest section of the general population (referred to as 'social cases'). Federation/WFP/YRC/ICRC food relief programmes will remain essential for the coming two years in view of the current social and economic crisis in FRY and these will be constantly re-assessed to ensure they continually target the changing ranks of the most vulnerable. The Federation and the larger Red Cross Movement's relief response programmes aim to ensure a minimum standard of living and dignity for this 'most vulnerable' category of the population, which in the coming years is expected to encompass the poorest refugees from Croatia/Bosnia and Herzegovina; IDPs from Kosovo; and social cases from the ordinary population. Programme criteria which aim to assist only one part of this group ('only refugees' or 'only IDPs') are likely to become impossible to maintain as rapidly deteriorating socio-economic conditions leave large numbers of other people equally vulnerable.

The Federation, in collaboration with the YRC, therefore plans to make a vulnerability assessment in summer 2000, to help refocus programmes in the light of new vulnerabilities exposed during the 1999-2000 winter. Until then, the Federation will focus its emergency relief programmes – with the YRC – on the following areas: supplementary food distributions for approximately 360,000 refugees; provision of essential hygiene sets for 225,500 refugees; provision of baby hygiene parcels for 8,100 refugee mothers with new born babies; provision of Basic Cleaning Kits for 780 Collective Centres accommodating approximately 42,000 refugees/IDPs. This complements the assistance provided in the ICRC/YRC implemented programme.

Disaster Preparedness

As the FRY is prone to natural disasters, in particular earthquakes and floods, and is still at risk of potential conflict situations, the National Society has begun work on putting in place a disaster preparedness programme. In the coming two years the Federation will assist the YRC in this activity. Elements of disaster preparedness are already incorporated into the youth, health education and preventive health and social welfare programmes and emergency stocks are normally kept in regional and, sometimes, local warehouses.

Health

The objective of the health education programme is to update the skills of Red Cross volunteers and local people in preventive health in a situation where the official health infrastructure is deteriorating and incapable of adequately responding to the needs of the population. Some 200 Red Cross volunteers per year from local branches in FRY will be trained in organising regular and other Red Cross health activities. Furthermore, the local population and specific groups (school children, adolescents, pregnant women, elderly, health professionals, etc.) will be trained in preventable health issues such as drug abuse, smoking, alcohol abuse, communicable diseases, chronic diseases, AIDS, tuberculosis, general hygiene, dental hygiene, gender relations and environmental health.

Youth camps will be arranged in 25 YRC branches, targeting between 50 to 100 young Red Cross volunteers (in their final grades of elementary and high schools). Training will be provided in traditional Red Cross health activities such as first aid, home care, life saving, voluntary blood donation, preventive health and Red Cross principles.

The inhabitants of FRY have been in a state of prolonged chronic stress for years now, and the current social welfare programme in FRY is intended to provide services to refugees, internally displaced and locally vulnerable people in the form of hot line services, professional counselling, youth clubs, and clubs for the elderly and families. Co-workers and volunteers achieve over 150,000 contacts annually with refugees and socially vulnerable people. Local people as well as refugees and internally displaced need a wide range of services, including psychological support, psychological counselling and social support. The programme, which includes training of co-workers and volunteers by mental health professionals, will be expanded.

The Psycho-Social Support Programme in Kosovo is designed to strengthen individual, family, and community development by reducing the likelihood of debilitating psychological disorders through the provision of traumatic stress interventions, psychological support, and therapeutic social activities; while also increasing the provision of humanitarian aid through the development of the local Red Cross structures, using the psycho-social programme as a future delivery vehicle. During 1999, five Red Cross Centres and five Mobile Outreach Teams were established to provide psycho-social services, and this programme will be expanded to three more branches during 2000. By the end of the year it is anticipated that the local Red Cross will take over management of the programme.

Humanitarian Values

The YRC is active in promoting humanitarian values through a number of initiatives, several of which are supported by the Federation. Its literature and publicity material promotes the principles of the Movement, and the Federation is working with the YRC to inculcate these values in the National Society's youth programme and will also assist the YRC Information Department staff to formulate and implement a programme of publicity initiatives designed to raise and enhance the profile of the National Society, its values and its work on behalf of the vulnerable.

Other Programmes

The repatriation/reintegration programme will continue to support the process of voluntary and gradual repatriation/reintegration of refugees in FR Yugoslavia based on well-informed decision-making by individual refugees, through the provision of pre-departure information and a counselling service to those refugees planning to repatriate to their country of origin, and to those still considering their options.

Income Generating Projects (IGPs) are intended for YRC branches (municipal, provincial, republican organisations and headquarters) enabling them to overcome a widening funding gap through small grants allocated for 'commercial' projects they implement, manage and run. Mechanisms for the selection and sound implementation of the projects have been secured through the conclusion of a general agreement on IGPs between the YRC and the Federation.

Capacity Building

As a result of the institutional development process initiated by the YRC and supported by the Federation (involving an extensive self-analysis), a plan of action for institutional development was adopted. This document focuses on improving governance, fund raising, public relations, management, human resources and information systems. The plan has received the support and endorsement of the National Society's executive and federal boards. This ambitious programme is planned to last for at least two years. It includes a number of projects touching different areas of the YRC, such as a review of its mission, the harmonisation of legal documents, a reorganisation at both headquarters and branch level, a computerisation programme, the development of new fund-raising initiatives and strengthening of both the external and internal communication systems.

Kosovo

Like many civil institutions, the Red Cross lost many physical structures and resources during the Kosovo crisis between March and June 1999. The Federation, in close cooperation with the ICRC, will therefore carry out a two-phase Red Cross Branch Support Project to strengthen the operational capacity of the Red Cross in Kosovo – so as to allow it to provide efficient delivery of humanitarian assistance from the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement and other humanitarian organisations – with a long-term vision of promoting a strong and sustainable Red Cross structure within the political realities in Kosovo.

Red Cross/Red Crescent experience in other countries which have suffered political and ethnic violence will be transferred and adapted to improve long-term programming in Kosovo.