

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

CHF 9,088,000

Programme No. 01.38/2000

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 co-ordinated 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 Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, with a population of 2 million, has struggled economically since its withdrawal from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991. The situation has been exacerbated by the recent Balkans conflict which provoked a massive flow of over 300,000 refugees into the country, and has hindered access to markets as well as blocked imports and exports. High labour and social costs have combined to make the few viable state run industries non-competitive, and the result is that unemployment is high, underemployment is higher and most large state run industries are bankrupt.

While the economic situation remains quite bleak, there are indications of positive political developments; all ethnic minorities participate in the political process and elections are held in a democratic fashion with changes in government occurring peacefully.

At the end of 1999, an estimated 20,000 refugees remained in the country, mostly from Kosovo, but also including refugee minorities of Serbs and Roma.

Country Assistance Strategy

The main priority for the Federation is to provide support to the Macedonian Red Cross (MRC) in its main programmes, as well as relief support to the remaining refugees and continued support to vulnerable social cases within the Macedonian population. The MRC Social Welfare Programme, originally established to provide assistance to Bosnian refugees, will continue. In the field of development, special attention will be given to increasing the income generation of the MRC by creating an infrastructure that can generate steady income to enable the MRC to cover its core costs. Smaller development projects will be implemented in the areas of public information, and financial reporting and control.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

The main focus will remain relief assistance for the remaining refugees and for vulnerable social cases (identified by the Macedonian Social Welfare Ministry). Working figures for both are 15,000 refugees and their host families, and 72,000 vulnerable social case families. All will receive hygiene parcels. The refugees will receive food from WFP/UNHCR and the social cases from Red Cross Societies and NGOs. All the relief assistance is distributed by the MRC, supported by the Federation, through the network of 34 MRC branches spread throughout the country.

Disaster Preparedness

Emergency contingency stocks will be procured and positioned, to enable the MRC to respond to any possible future movement of refugees or to any natural disasters which may occur.

Humanitarian Values

The Federation, in close cooperation with the ICRC, will continue to assist the MRC in strengthening its information services and its work in promoting humanitarian values, including through the MRC Youth structure.

Other Programmes

A social welfare programme will be implemented concurrently with the relief programme for refugees and vulnerable social cases. Activities will include individual medical and social support, educational programmes, information and advocacy, psychological support and recreational activities.

Capacity Building

The MRC was established only nine years ago as an independent, fully functioning Red Cross society, and has made a concerted effort to overcome initial difficulties. The experience from the Kosovo crisis has both increased the image of the Macedonian Red Cross as well as its ability to deal strategically and efficiently with its branches. More emphasis is being directed at the ability to generate income to cover core costs, and the future programmes of the MRC will be simple, small, low cost and people oriented.

The Federation emphasis will be on assisting the MRC to create sources of income for its headquarters and branches. During the coming year several capital construction projects will ensure that the Macedonian Red Cross can achieve steady income from the rental of office and warehouse space. In terms of institutional development, several programmes will be directly aimed at public information development, and financial and reporting development. The Federation's Regional Delegation in Budapest and Country Delegation in Skopje will provide assistance to the MRC in this capacity building work.