

Programme Update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Palestine Red Crescent Society

Appeal No. MAAPS001

30 August 2009

This report covers the period 01 January 2009 to
30 June 2009.



Palestine Red Crescent Society disaster management teams distributed relief items to and erected temporary shelters for the thousands of displaced civilians in Gaza Strip during and after the devastating hostilities at the beginning of the year. **International Federation.**

In brief

Programme purpose: The purpose of the programmes is to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable people in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) and the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora.

Programmes summary: The Gaza crisis at the beginning of the year has dominated the whole political, security, humanitarian, economical and social picture of the oPt in the first six months of 2009. Massive destruction and unimaginable suffering of the people in the Gaza Strip encouraged the international community to send substantial donations and give pledges. The Palestine Red Crescent Society (Palestine RC) was in a similar position, receiving a big amount of donations in cash and in kind for its immediate and ongoing response to the crisis. From its headquarters in Al-Bireh, the National Society was able to meet the needs of its colleagues in the Gaza Strip, but tight restrictions imposed by Israeli Authorities on import and export and movement of personnel to and from Gaza made the whole operation a huge challenge. Still, the Palestine RC employees and volunteers all around Gaza Strip were able to deliver impressive support to the sick and wounded people and those in needs.

In the West Bank and in the Diaspora, with massive support from its many partners, the Palestine RC has continued to develop and improve its programmes, capacities, and services for the vulnerable people. Despite the concrete wall built by the Israeli Authorities¹, separating families and friends from each other, preventing farmers from accessing their fields and pupils and students from

¹ The wall is partly along the border between West Bank and Israel, but mostly far into the West Bank.

accessing their schools and universities, along with the hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks paralysing the economy, the Palestine RC has been able to continue carrying out its humanitarian mission for the most vulnerable people. This has been possible thanks to the strong commitment of its employees, volunteers and partners. While health and care and other social services generally provided by the Palestinian Authority (PA) are still facing problems with regards to salary disputes with the staff, negatively affecting the quality of services, the Palestine RC has without any interruption continued all its programmes in oPt as well as in the Diaspora. The vast majority of programme support is received through bilateral agreements with sister societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Federation, as well as substantial financial support from the Palestinian Government.

Through working in the spirit of the Operational Alliance (OA), the coordination of programme and project support from partners has been improved, referring to and based on the Strategic Plan of Palestine RC and the central and leading role of the National Society in the whole process of planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Financial situation: The total 2009 budget channeled through the International Federation secretariat was revised from CHF 285,029 (USD 262,968 or EUR 187,093) to CHF 1,905,029 (USD 1,757,580 or EUR 1,250,461), of which CHF 1,709,518 (90 per cent) covered during the reporting period (including opening balance). Overall expenditure during the reporting period was CHF 1,430,074 (75 per cent) of the budget.

In the first six months of 2009, there has been one major and one smaller private donation through the International Federation to Palestine RC in response to the Plan 2009-2010. The Palestine RC has decided to allocate most of these funds to its primary and secondary health care programmes, of which a major part will go to maintaining the Palestine RC hospital services for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The smaller part of the donation is allocated to the organizational development programme of the National Society. These donations were the reason for the revision of the budgets.

Click here to go directly to the attached financial report on the International Federation secretariat component of the total budget. An additional financial report including bilateral contributions and based on information received from the OA partners, is available at the representative office in Palestine (see contact details at the back of this report).

See also Gaza Humanitarian Crisis DREF Operation and related reports at: <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=61>

No. of people we have reached: During the reporting period, the total number of direct beneficiaries and consultations resulting from the programmes was more than 995,000. The same number of people is expected to benefit from the programmes during the second half of the year.

Our partners: 45 community-based and four government-based partners, 15 international organizations, three United Nations (UN) and several developmental agencies, and 26 partners within the RC/RC Movement including sister National Societies, ICRC, and the International Federation representations have been the main partners during the reporting period.

Two private donors, Swedish government through Swedish Red Cross, and Norwegian Red Cross have been the main contributors to the International Federation component of the Plan during the reporting period.

Context

During the last few days of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, the Israeli military operation on the Gaza Strip and its devastating consequences dominated the international media, international political and

diplomatic community and governments around the world, as well as all national and international humanitarian and human rights organizations working in the oPt. Official figures from the Palestinian Ministry of Health (MoH) published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) indicated the death toll as 1,440 out of whom 431 were children and 114 women². The number of injured was 5,380, out of whom 1,872 were children and 800 women. In addition, three Israelis were killed and 183 injured by rocket and mortar fire by Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip, while eleven Israeli soldiers were killed and 340 wounded. In order to meet the basic needs of the 1.5 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and contribute to the recovery and reconstruction efforts, substantial donations were provided by the international community. Nevertheless, implementing projects remained as a concern due to the area being under tight closure, not allowing anything to be brought in apart from the basic needs for survival³. Despite constant pressure from the UN, ICRC, diplomatic missions in the oPt, governments around the world, and international humanitarian as well as human rights organizations to ease the closure of the Gaza Strip, very strict procedures are still in place and reconstruction and recovery programmes have only started at a very limited scale.

In the West Bank, all segments of the population are facing obstacles on a daily basis due to the tight restrictions and the more than 640 checkpoints, roadblocks, or other physical obstacles to free movement. Despite international condemnation and pressure, the expansion and building of new settlements is continuing, resulting in demolition of Palestinian homes and confiscation of Palestinian properties and land in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In particular, tension between settlers and the Palestinian population in the vicinity of Israeli settlements is growing by the day, causing great concern among the people and all the humanitarian actors in the territory and around the world.

On the other hand, the situation of the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora is becoming increasingly difficult and intolerable. They are denied all kind of access to the Palestinian territory, and their status is to remain as refugees for their entire life. They are living under very poor conditions and without the rights of ordinary citizens such as to work and access social services.

Similar to the political picture between Israel and Palestine, also the internal differences between the various political Palestinian factions has been of great concern. Reconciliation processes have been initiated, even with facilitation from neighbouring Arab countries, but have not provided any tangible positive results. In reality there are still de facto two different administrations in Gaza Strip and the West Bank in place, without the strong desire on both sides to reconcile. Despite the majority of the Palestinian people crying for their politicians to unite and become one, all the conferences have been closed without consensus, leaving the Palestinians in a difficult position. The economy of the entire Palestinian population is stressed to the limit, and general hope for a better future is fading.

Support to ongoing programmes and activities of Palestine RC in the oPt and Diaspora

During the first half of 2009, there has been a steady number of RC/RC as well as other partners supporting ongoing programmes of the Palestine RC in health and care, social development, and disaster management. However, as the Israeli military operation on Gaza Strip at the beginning of the year became so overwhelming and catastrophic, the operation of the National Society, the RC/RC Movement, all national and international organizations and UN agencies became the dominant part of all interventions and support to the Palestinian people in the oPt. Palestine RC immediately responded to the needs when the hostilities started but, like any other humanitarian actor, soon faced huge difficulties in operating even though a big supporting apparatus was established within the headquarters of the National Society as well as with RC/RC partners. The military offensive and attacks, the intolerable security situation, heavy bombardment and destruction to private houses, schools, official buildings, mosques, health facilities, and even the Palestine RC Al-Quds hospital and administration building in Gaza City, as well as the denied access to the killed and wounded people

² These figures do not include those who died due to lack of access to regular health care.

³ According to OCHA, more than 80% of all goods let into Gaza from Israel are basic food items.

made the operation a huge challenge. As part of the support to Palestine RC and the RC/RC emergency structure, the International Federation played a vital role in preparing the Emergency Appeal, designing and updating mobilization tables, and working closely with the top management of the National Society.

As the Palestine RC, to a great extent, operates with partners under bilateral agreements, the role of the International Federation in oPt and with Palestine RC has been mainly linked to facilitating and supporting the organizational development and disaster management initiatives, programme coordination and capacity building processes, and being the link between the National Society and other partner National Societies (PNSs) than those with bilateral representation in oPt. With Palestine RC and its RC/RC partners operating under the OA concept, the yearly plan launched by and through the International Federation is also considered as the Appeal of the National Society, reflecting budgets and logframes for all Palestine RC programmes. The International Federation is involved in the preparation and design of this document, while the National Society is in charge of reporting to partners on progress and output. Similar to last year, also in the first half of this year, thanks to this “all-inclusive” Appeal structure, big private donations have come in to support the Palestine RC.

Progress towards outcomes

Palestine RC is implementing a range of programmes with bilateral support, coordinated and further developed within the OA concept. All these have special reports, which may be obtained on request to the National Society.

Disaster management outcome: Effective operational linkages between disaster management and other programmes are established; thus contributing to improved Palestine RC disaster management capacities and adjustments to its organizational structure.

Primary health care (PHC) outcome: Affordable and quality PHC services and health education are regularly delivered to the people in the oPt.

Secondary health care services (SHC) in oPt and Diaspora outcome: The Palestine RC hospitals in oPt and the Diaspora continue providing SHC services to the Palestinian population.

Emergency medical services (EMS) outcome: People residing in oPt have access to EMS.

National blood transfusion services outcome: Safe blood is provided from healthy voluntary donors to all Palestinians who need it at all times.

Social welfare programme outcome: Vulnerable and disadvantaged Palestinian people are socially and psychologically supported.

Rehabilitation and ability development outcome: Quality of life of persons with disabilities and their families in the Palestinian community are improved through rehabilitation and development of their abilities towards better integration.

Psycho-social support programme (PSP) outcome: Individuals from the Palestine RC staff and volunteers, beneficiaries, and selected underserved groups are equipped with skills and individualized tools that aid in the reduction of personal damages and negative external effects and behaviour.

Capacity development outcome: The Palestine RC organizational systems are increasingly efficient, effective and able to contribute proportionally to the well being of the most vulnerable in the oPt and Diaspora.

Youth and volunteers outcome: Potentials and deepened knowledge about the Palestine RC principles and goals are promoted among volunteers, which bring investment in social development.

Information, dissemination and international humanitarian law (IHL) outcome: All the Palestine RC staff and volunteers are sensitized and trained on humanitarian values according to the National Society's code of conduct and the knowledge of public about humanitarian values is increased.

Programmes supported financially by the International Federation

Disaster Management

Outcome

- Effective operational linkages between disaster management and other programmes are established; thus contributing to improved Palestine RC disaster management capacities and adjustments to its organizational structure.

Achievements



With the emergency operation of Palestine RC and its RC/RC partners in the Gaza Strip under and after the latest Israeli military operation, the National Society was able to carry out important lifesaving and relief services. Relief teams comprising Palestine RC staff and volunteers focused on emergency response. During this operation, 75 Palestine RC volunteers were injured and one killed before the ceasefire came into effect. Following the ceasefire, the disaster management unit of the National Society shifted its attention to relief efforts. Due to the large number of individuals, families and neighbourhoods being affected, the level of relief needs was beyond the individual capacity of any organization. Therefore, the disaster management unit provided relief services in close coordination with the municipality of Gaza, ICRC, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and many other international and community-based organizations, as well as Palestine RC's own inter-departmental and inter-branch response. For those having lost their homes due to the heavy bombardment, the Palestine RC teams established seven tent camps of 100 tents each, housing 700 persons in each camp and nearly 5,000 in total. The teams dug latrines in accordance with Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere Standards), although the land available

for the camps was too small to comply with the standards for the total area of the camps. As part of cooperation and partnership, and in order to avoid permanent involvement of Palestine RC in the sheltering programme, the National Society was coordinating with the relevant municipal governments and city councils for ongoing management and care of these seven camps. As a prerequisite for establishing the camps, the local communities agreed to provide food and daily needs in cooperation with UNRWA and the World Food Programme (WFP). The communities also coordinated supply of drinking water and water kits (jerry cans, bottled water and water treatment supplies) with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Palestinian Water Authority. In addition, Palestine RC volunteers distributed family hygiene kits and women sanitary kits in the camps and hospitals. Following the RC/RC intervention in Gaza during the military operation the National Society, with support of its partners, has worked on the terms of reference (ToR) for an evaluation of Palestine RC activities in Gaza Strip in those first three weeks of 2009. The evaluation is to take place in the autumn of this year.

In two branches in the Hebron area of West Bank - Idhna and Bani Naim - and in Jabalya branch in the North of Gaza Strip, the National Society, in collaboration with German Red Cross, will soon start a community based risk reduction programme where branches and communities will work closely together. The European Union has recently approved the funding of this programme. As a member of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) zone disaster management team reference group, the Palestine RC has been attending several meetings and workshops on this subject.

Constraints or Challenges

Under the military operation in the Gaza Strip, the biggest constraints and challenges experienced by the RC/RC Movement and all other actors were due to the intensity of the operation and the direct military attacks on everything and everywhere. Even respect for the RC/RC protective emblems were ignored. In addition, in times of the hostilities access to sick and wounded people was denied, leaving those in desperate need for help waiting for days, and in many cases leading to people dying.

Under the military offensive, the main warehouse of the Palestine RC was bombed, putting the National Society under increased stress as the relief teams lost most of their relief stock.

Health and Care

Outcome

- Affordable and quality PHC services and health education are regularly delivered to the people in the oPt (primary health care).

Achievements

The Palestine RC continued providing health care services through its PHC centres in oPt to a more than 288,900 beneficiaries through medical consultations, laboratory tests, x-rays and dental services. Throughout the reporting period, the population had difficulty to access the health facilities in the areas of Qalqilya, Jenin, and Hebron, and in the Jordan Valley were served by mobile clinics, while other health centres of the National Society provided services also during extended opening hours. With financial and technical support from Swedish Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and Spanish Red Cross, 20 PHC centres in the West Bank continued providing reproductive health care services as part of their regular programme. Health education is an important integrated part of the activities in the centres as well as in a number of schools. The community based development programme and home visits continued, with the PHC social workers and nurses visiting a number of patients on regular basis and responding to calls from new patients who are not able to go to the clinic.

With financial and technical support from German Red Cross together with Finnish Red Cross, the safe motherhood programme was expanded also to include an income generating component through micro-credits. The safe motherhood committee members benefited from workshops, and PHC staff and community committees attended workshops carried out in the West Bank. Training courses and workshops were conducted for PHC service providers and community teams. A training session to evaluate clients' satisfaction through using questionnaires has been followed up and provided important information to the efforts of the Palestine RC in improving the health services it provides. Immunization services in PHC clinics of the National Society, which have merged with those of the MoH, were carried out by the staff of the MoH. The Spanish Red Cross support to PHC centres in the Gaza Strip has been of utmost importance for the continuation of these services. However, for the first couple of months, the activity in these centres were suspended or minimised to a minimum level due to the heavy fighting, destruction of facilities, and security issues.

Palestine RC Lebanon branch has been moving its focus and resources in the nine PHC clinics over to preventive health care and becoming more of community centres. In the refugee camps, UNRWA has the mandate to provide curative health care services, allowing the Palestine RC to focus more on the preventive aspects of the programme.

As for in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, for some time there have been discussions between the National Society and the MoH for the ministry to take over the curative part of the programme, while

leaving the National Society to focus and further expand the preventive part. Between the two bodies there is a common understanding that this will be done, but is awaiting the first steps to be taken to implement this change.

The good cooperation between Palestine RC and the MENA Zone Office in Amman is of great importance in professional terms, and the leaders of PHC services at the headquarters of the National Society have during these six months been attending workshops and development initiatives organised by the Zone Office. In addition, a vital contribution to the PHC programme is the logistical support of ICRC. This is in particular important when importing anything from Israel into the Gaza Strip.

Constraints or Challenges

The most obvious constraints and challenges during these first six months of the year were those already mentioned - related to the military operation in Gaza Strip. However, also in the West Bank, the PHC centres continue working under challenging conditions due to the security and political situation, sometimes requiring ad hoc solutions to be able to respond to some of the most pressing needs for interventions. Staff members in the West Bank even face difficulties in getting to work due to free movement restrictions, the more than six hundred checkpoints or roadblocks, and the separation wall far into the territory. In addition, lack of qualified health personnel, especially physicians and nurses, is still a problem in some areas. In the Gaza Strip, also after the military operation and tight closure, it has been difficult to bring through new medicine, medical equipment, and medical supplies.

Organisational Development and Capacity Building

Outcomes

- The Palestine RC organizational systems are increasingly efficient, effective and able to contribute proportionally to the well being of the most vulnerable in the oPt and Diaspora (organisational development).
- Potentials and deepened knowledge about the Palestine RC principles and goals are promoted among volunteers, which bring investment in social development (youth and volunteers).

Achievements

With the facilitation of an external consultant provided by Norwegian Red Cross and the International Federation, the Palestine RC has completed the work with regards to revising the Strategic Plan 2005-2010 of the National Society. The final document - Revised Palestine RC Strategic Plan 2009-2011 - was presented to the 10th General Assembly of the National Society in early March and adopted with only minor amendments. A number of delegates from sister National Societies, the ICRC, and the International Federation were invited and present as observers. From the list of many dignitaries addressing the General Assembly was the Prime Minister of Palestine. The two Norwegian doctors first entering the Gaza Strip during the military operation made a presentation of their experience and findings. All the dignitary guests and the leaders of Palestine RC were invited to a reception by the President of Palestine, Mr. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen). A special occasion during the General Assembly was a road in Ramallah being named after Henri Dunant.

During these first six months of 2009, there have been new initiatives in the organisational development process where the International Federation has been an active facilitator to the National Society. Among these processes is the "Good Financial Management" project, looking at improving systems, procedures, and processes, reporting lines and authorization levels, common auditing and reporting of the entire National Society, and structures contributing to good financial performance. Another ongoing process has been the drafting process of the Funding Strategy of the National Society and the following Plan of Action. These processes will continue into the second half of the year.

With Palestine RC being one of the pilot societies in the introduction of the OA concept, the implementation and further development process has continued. However, due to some internal restructuring in the National Society, this process has not been able to keep up the same pace as of last year. Having said that, the RC/RC partners are to a great extent working along the OA principles and encouraging the National Society to stay on in spirit of inclusiveness, transparency, and the seven

ONEs⁴. The new planning and international cooperation group in the National Society is now taking initiatives to speed up the process of further developing the Palestine RC organisational development methodology, widely recognised as the most successful OA programme. Harmonization of planning, monitoring and reporting for all departments has contributed to a common understanding of unified systems, and has improved the quality.

Constraints or Challenges

Knowing that there is need for harmonization of processes and procedures between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the general security situation in the Strip has been a challenge partly for the implementation of such an organisational development process. The need for similar harmonization processes between oPt and branches of the National Society in the Diaspora is obvious, but political issues preventing people from moving between the branches are the constraints. Some restructuring processes in the headquarters of the National Society have also delayed further implementation and development of organisational development initiatives.

Working in partnership

With the ICRC being the lead agency for PNSs in oPt, and together with the Palestine RC and the International Federation is responsible for coordination of RC/RC activities, all initiatives have been further developed within existing structures. The close cooperation and coordination developed during the Gaza crisis is a clear manifestation of good partnership within the RC/RC Movement in oPt. The joint approach in the planning process and response, the Appeal process and mobilization table, and the way logistical challenges were tackled were all of utmost importance for the way Palestine RC was able to carry out its mission in a professional way under extreme conditions and life threatening security situations. Palestine RC has been working with bilateral and multilateral partners for years in an area facing huge challenges, and is highly respected as a reliable actor in the field of providing humanitarian services to the vulnerable people. By being an active partner in further developing the OA concept, part of the new operating model of the RC/RC Movement, the International Federation has facilitated the National Society in further improving its relationship with partners through full transparency and accountability. Old and new partners have been invited to contribute in the development and implementation processes.

In addition to the “traditional” RC/RC donors, international volunteers have for a number of years made important contributions to programmes of the Palestine RC in terms of voluntary work and capacity building. During the reporting period, there have been great interest to come in and give a hand, in particular in relation to the Gaza crisis. The main financial support to the Palestine RC at the moment is through bilateral agreements, in most cases on long term basis, and through the International Federation and ICRC. Similar to last year, substantial amounts have been provided to the National Society by private donors. The Appeal process through the International Federation is another good example of good partnership.

With its wide range of health and social programmes implemented all over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and in the Palestinian refugee camps in the neighbouring countries, the Palestine RC has enjoyed close relationship with local and central authorities, and with a number of local humanitarian actors. This relationship has improved further, as the importance of the Palestine RC as a reliable provider of humanitarian services has become even more obvious in the shadow of financial crisis and security problems in oPt.

⁴ **ONE** set of working principles; **ONE** plan; **ONE** set of objectives; **ONE** shared understanding of division of labour; **ONE** funding framework in which multilateral and bilateral funding can co-exist; **ONE** performance tracking system; **ONE** accountability and reporting mechanism.

Contributing to longer-term impact

Palestine RC, through its many humanitarian programmes within health and care, disaster response, social development and care programmes and initiatives, is contributing to all four goals of the Global Agenda. The International Federation, PNSs, and the ICRC are all contributing to increasing the capacity of the National Society, the local communities, and the civil society by encouraging and facilitating close relationship and including local communities in the planning and implementation processes of programmes and projects. Awareness campaigns are run and capacity building initiatives undertaken. Social services and development programmes for children with disabilities are based on the positive philosophy of developing abilities instead of treating disabilities, where integration between all groups in the society is a key factor. Following this working modality, the National Society reduces intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promotes respect for diversity and human dignity within the Palestinian community. The psycho-social programme implemented by schools, communities and the National Society in close collaboration and with vital support from Palestine RC partners is an important contribution to a long-term alleviation of the traumatic stress and negative consequences of the hostile environment in the occupied territory for students and young people. The EMS, disaster management activities, and the health programmes are actively reducing the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters and emergencies. In programmes such as PHC, with safe motherhood, reproductive health care, and health committees, the Palestine RC is taking an active part in reducing deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. Women play an important, active, and central role in these preventive activities not only as beneficiaries, but also through their contribution to improving the knowledge and capacity in the communities.

Collaboration between the Palestine RC and its international partners and other humanitarian actors in oPt, and with those working for Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora, has contributed to the provision of reliable services. In addition, improvement in the quality of services has been registered in particular in the health sector through the joint Palestine RC-MoH PHC centres.

Looking ahead

It is hard to predict the future challenges and interventions of the Palestine RC and its partners working in this area occupied for more than forty years, where armed conflicts have been dominant for generations, and where more than two million people in the oPt and Diaspora have lived as refugees for their entire life and still do not see the end of the tragedy. It is important to be prepared for any eventuality through working out contingency plans and building the capacity to meet whatever way of development. This is what the National Society is doing in close cooperation with its many partners. The implementation and further development of the OA concept in oPt, where all RC/RC partners will benefit from good coordination at programme level, is also supporting this process. This is contributing to better integration of all support from partners to the Palestine RC Strategic Plan and its implementation plan. Implementation, coordination, monitoring and reporting will be based on the same principles and will help the National Society and its partners in further development towards optimal use of financial and human resources to the benefit of the most vulnerable people. Better and more systematic collection of statistics and financial data will give the National Society's management more reliable and useful managerial tools for further planning and implementation of programmes.

How we work	
<p>The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".</p>	<p>Global Agenda Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters. • Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies. • Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability. • Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and

promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

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