

# **ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINE RED CRESCENT SOCIETY**

**IN THE WEST BANK/GAZA, LEBANON &  
SYRIA**

**CHF 7,953,000**

**Programme No. 01.45/98**

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The heady days following the signing of the Oslo I and II Peace Accords between Israel and the PLO have given way to an angry stalemate in the implementation of these and subsequent agreements. The highs and lows since these accords were signed have not changed one underlying reality -- that of deeply worsening economic conditions for the majority of Palestinians living in the West Bank/Gaza (WB/G) and Lebanon. In Lebanon, approximately 350,000 Palestinian refugees from 1948 and 1967 are still left out of the peace process while their economic plight continues to worsen. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, unlike Syria, are regarded as foreigners and their possibilities to work are restricted. Meanwhile, insecurity in Israel as a result of suicide bombings has given a heightened sense of urgency to finding a solution to one of the most tenacious problems in the Middle East region. On the positive side, the newly established and now unified National Society structure based in the West Bank continues to take root and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) is better placed to provide essential services to the Palestinian population.

## ***The Operation***

This operation will see the extension of Federation assistance to the ongoing process of building a unified and well-functioning PRCS, both through the development of its headquarters and branches as well as the improvement of its services to the Palestinian population in the WB/G, Lebanon, and Syria.

The International Federation and PRCS began their development co-operation in 1993. In the WB/G, Federation support has focused on institutional development, giving priority to the PRCS headquarters and its network of branches, based on the PRCS work-plan for 1995-96. Service programme delivery has been in the areas of primary health care, social and welfare services, physical rehabilitation, and first aid. In 1995, a Development Delegate was assigned to the PRCS headquarters, and in 1997 a Health Delegate was appointed, significantly increasing the Federation impact on the development of PRCS.

Co-operation with the PRCS branches in Lebanon (PRCS/L) and Syria began in 1994. The main activity has been the rationalisation of the PRCS' health system and the improvement and upgrading of PRCS' health institutions.

Response to the 1997 Emergency Appeal for PRCS was, at time of printing, approximately 50% in Lebanon and 70% for WB/G. No assistance was earmarked for the branch in Syria but it was visited by the Regional Delegation on several occasions.

In 1997, ICRC continued to support PRCS in the development of an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) programme as well as a dissemination and a family visit programme.

## ***Objectives in 1998***

The PRCS, with assistance from the Federation, has identified several priority areas which need to be addressed in the coming year. Support is being sought for the existing services provided by the branches in health, rehabilitation and social services, although with a priority for Primary Health Care in WB/G. Now that the reconstruction of the PRCS/L Primary Health services is near completion, the objective for PRCS in Lebanon in 1998 is to upgrade hospitals. In addition, PRCS still requires support for the institutional development of its headquarters and branches. Below are the main objectives in 1998:

### **West Bank/Gaza**

- | To provide financial and human resources to improve and expand the existing programmes of PRCS in order to provide better and more efficient services to the Palestinian community in the WB/G, Lebanon and Syria;
- | to extend the coverage of existing health, social welfare, rehabilitation, youth and disaster preparedness activities by creating more efficient structures;
- | to use institutional development tools and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of the PRCS, especially in training, development/strategic planning and financial management, of the headquarters and increasingly in the branches;
- | to create a resource development unit at the headquarters to improve the financial strength and independence of the Society;
- | to promote the image of PRCS through public relations and information activities, in order to increase membership and stimulate volunteer public participation in its activities and services, and to contribute to the dissemination of the role of the PRCS and the Movement in the Palestinian community.

### **Lebanon**

- | To finalise the reconstruction and modernisation of the PRCS/L health structure as outlined in the development plan from 1994, updated June 1997;
- | to continue to provide PRCS/L with salary support, medicines and medical supplies;
- | to strengthen the institutional development of PRCS/L to enable it to become more independent of international aid, strengthen its organisation, and assist it in achieving co-operation agreements with UNRWA.

### **Syria**

- | To provide medical equipment to the newly built "Palestine Hospital" in the Al Yarmuk refugee camp.

## *Plan of Action*

### **Institutional Development**

#### *General Support*

The Federation programme aims to continue funding key headquarters functions throughout 1998, albeit at a reduced rate compared to 1997. This assistance, which represents 16% of salary costs at the headquarters, will be phased out by the end of 1998. Some assistance will also go towards the establishment of a resource development unit, expansion of the planning unit, creation of a training co-ordination unit, and financial management training at the headquarters and branch levels. Some assistance is also foreseen to cover headquarters running costs and the purchase of two computers. The process of institutional development within the PRCS branch in Lebanon will begin at a more accelerated rate. In the area of disaster preparedness, the plan is to organise workshops and planning seminars in co-ordination with ICRC.

#### *Youth and Volunteer Activities*

There is a great potential for youth and volunteer activities within the Palestinian community and in the context of the services delivered by PRCS. Main areas of support will still be the annual youth camps (5-6), community oriented activities such as health education, CBFA, leadership training and social services.

#### *Public Relations/Information Activities*

The main activity will be to focus on the promotion of the PRCS image through a regular newsletter, documentary films, a calendar, and PR events in the branches.

#### *Health*

PRCS is at present responsible for running more than 30 clinics and health centres in the WB/G. In Lebanon it is operating 8 health centres, 4 hospitals and one central hospital as well as an ambulance service. The health programme planned for 1998 in WB/G is centred essentially on two main activities: Primary Health Care, and Community Based First Aid. Both aim to reorient PRCS health activities, away from curative to more community-based health care, and to improve the quality of services. Co-operation between PRCS and the Magen David Adom in ambulance and first aid training may also begin in a more systematic manner in 1998. The Federation programme includes administrative support of the present services (30% of the appeal budget), the provision of essential drugs (15%), purchase of medical and non-medical equipment, construction, and utilities (40%), training, health education and information material (15%).

The programme also foresees the establishment of pilot projects to provide a model for the PHC services.

In Lebanon, PRCS will continue to supply medicines and medical supplies to the health centres as well as provide salary support. In addition, it is proposed to renovate and equip the Haifa and Nasra district hospitals, upgrade the Hamshary central hospital, and purchase two ambulances.

The equipment support programme for Syria has not been included in the budget for 1998, but details are available for donors interested in supporting this programme.

#### *Rehabilitation*

For many years PRCS has provided a wide range of physical rehabilitation services to Palestinians in the WB/G and the Diaspora. It remains one of the PRCS' main priorities. Gradually, as the Palestinian Authority builds up its capacity, this service will be integrated into the national health and social welfare structure. Federation support will focus on the early detection of physical disabilities among under-fives, providing skills training and summer camps for the disabled, and financial support to the Society's Rehabilitation centre in Khan Younis.

Donors may fund entire programmes, such as the health programme in the WB/G, or select one or several of the projects which make up this and other programmes. Detailed project descriptions are available upon request from the Secretariat.

### *Social and Welfare Services*

PRCS is providing a wide range of services through the branches in the area of social and welfare services. Some of these areas will be supported by the Federation, such as the development of a policy and development programme. The main objective will be to strengthen co-ordination between the rehabilitation programme, services for disabled people, kindergartens, home care, elderly people and orphanages.

## **Capacity**

### **PRCS Capacity**

In the WB/G, PRCS consists of 19 branches, with some 1,000 employees and 12,000 members. The branch activities include curative health care services at primary and secondary health care level, health education and preventive activities, mother and child care, dental services, pharmacies, laboratory services, rehabilitation services, emergency medical services at national level, prisoner care through family visits, literacy courses, vocational training, children's development centres and kindergartens. The headquarters consists of management and 11 departments.

In PRCS/L the number of doctors, nurses and staff has been reduced by more than 300 over the last year and today amounts to approximately 650 persons. Human resource capacity is very strong but the branch's financial capacity is weak. Financial assistance from PRCS headquarters in WB/G is sometimes unpredictable.

### **Federation Capacity in WB/G, Lebanon, and Amman Regional Delegation**

Since April 1995, a Federation Development Delegate, supported by the Regional Delegation in Amman, has been located at PRCS headquarters, first in Jericho and at present in Al-Bireh. In June 1997 a Health Delegate was assigned to assist in the development of the PHC programme and CBFA training. Amman Regional Delegation staff -- the RD Head, another Regional Development Delegate and a Finance and Logistics Delegate -- all provide some support service. In Lebanon, in addition to a Head of Delegation, the Federation has a Development Delegate and a Health Delegate working with PRCS.

## **Co-operation**

Given the prevailing security situation in the WB/G, the Federation Delegation co-ordinates and co-operates closely with ICRC. The Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations signed in March 1995, whereby ICRC provides important logistical and administrative support to the Federation's development programme in the WB/G, is still in effect. Programme co-operation between the ICRC and the Federation is mostly in the areas of Disaster Preparedness, Emergency Medical Services, and Dissemination, the latter two being co-ordinated by ICRC.