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Emergency Plan of Action update Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Population movement



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF Operation n° MDRMK005	Glide n° OT-2015-000069-MKD
Update n° 1 Date of issue: 26 June 2015	Timeframe covered by this update: 19 - 26 June 2015
Operation start date: 19 June 2015	Operation timeframe: 4 months (19 June 2015 – 19 October 2015)
DREF amount allocated: CHF 193,218	Revised operation budget: CHF 200,098
Number of people affected: 10,000	Number of people being assisted: 4,600
Host National Society presence: 20 staff and 120 volunteers from 6 branches of the Red Cross Society of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia along with the staff of Headquarters and the City Branch of Skopje	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, UNHCR, MSF, ICRC	

Summary of major revisions made to the Emergency Plan of Action:

In general terms, the operation has started as it had been planned. Based on the activities of the Red Cross Society of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia during the first week of the operation, it was found that the costs of the first-aid materials needed were higher than first anticipated, and the operation budget is therefore to be increased by some 6,880 Swiss francs so as to respond to required needs on the ground.

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

Since September 2014, the number of migrants that are transiting through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) has been constantly increasing. According to various sources, hundreds of migrants are transiting now through Macedonia day by day. The migrants usually come from Greece, and they walk along the railway line Gevgelija Veles in the direction of Kumanovo and the neighbouring villages where they cross the Serbian border on their way to the countries of the European Union. They would usually cross the border on foot, or they might use public transport or bicycles, or they would illegally board some closed train wagons and continue their journey towards the northern border of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on their way to Serbia. As a result of recent intensified controls on the trains by the police, most migrants choose to make the trip on foot across the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. They walk along the highway M5 or along the railway in the direction Gevgelija – Demir Kapija - Veles- Skopje - Kumanovo, and on the road they frequently get confronted with criminal groups.

According to official local statistics, over 2,300 migrants transited through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the period between January 2015 and May 2015, and about 600 persons are sheltered in the reception centre, located in the capital city of Skopje and managed by the Ministry of Interior, where they stay from one to six months. If these persons request asylum, then they are relocated to the centre for asylum seekers which is managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

As most of the people who are transiting through the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with a view to seek a better life and protection in other European countries are crossing the Serbian border from the FYROM using the “Western

Balkan Migratory Route”, the number of persons received at the Serbian/Macedonian border is also indicative for the number of migrants transiting through FYROM. Based on this information the Serbian authorities registered 9,000 migrants trying to enter Serbia from the FYROM in the last six weeks.

Under the mentioned circumstances, the competent authorities of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) have inquired very recently whether the Red Cross Society of the FYROM could step up their much appreciated efforts so as to handle the issue jointly with the Government in a humanitarian spirit in compliance with the relevant international standards and principles. The available resources of the National Society are already extremely stretched. Therefore some international assistance would be most welcome, and the National Society would like to receive financial support for this operation from the IFRC’s Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Should the numbers of migrants remain high or increase further in the coming months, the National Society will consider a longer term programme or the launch of an emergency appeal.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

One of the regular activities of the Red Cross Society of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is the support to refugees and asylum seekers, for reducing their vulnerability and enabling them to integrate into the society. Despite the fact that the Red Cross is regularly following the situation in the field with new activities for this vulnerable group, still there are a significant number of migrants that need additional assistance, having in mind the difficult route that they use to reach their destinations. This specially applies to babies and children that live in subnormal conditions which represents a risk to their health, growth and development.

In its regular activities and programs the Red Cross implements activities in the area of ensuring primary health care support in the reception centre for seven days a week, such as referrals to secondary and tertiary medical institutions, distribution of medicaments, food, clothes, provision of non-food items and material products, as well as the distribution of information materials about the available services. Having in mind that 27 persons have lost their lives on the railroad tracks in the last six months, the Red Cross developed 20 information boards with warning about the potential dangers on the railroad in cooperation with UNHCR and ICRC. The information material was translated into eight languages, and the boards were placed along the railroad on which the migrants walk on foot. In June 2015 the Red Cross Society of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia established a mobile team with one driver, one paramedic and one doctor in cooperation with the UNHCR office in Skopje to work on the highway M5 in (Skopje/Veles/Demir Kapija). The mobile team administers first aid to persons that transit towards Serbia. In the last 15 days the mobile team was doing 70 to 120 interventions per day.

The Red Cross of the FYROM is coordinating all of its activities in cooperation with the responsible authorities in this area.

Movement Coordination

During this period the Red Cross of the FYROM is regularly sharing information with the Secretariat of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Europe Zone Office, in Budapest and the Office of ICRC in Belgrade.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

Although the Red Cross of the FYROM is implementing significant activities for harm reduction of migrants, the high number of migrants that are sheltered in the reception centre requires more efforts, particularly when it comes to babies, small children, unaccompanied minors and pregnant women. Children would be less stressed if they had some kind of animation, or toys. Many babies need supplementary food as a result of malnutrition or anemia of the nursing mothers in the centres. Besides supplementary food for babies, there is a need for supplementary food for mothers and pregnant women.

Many of the adults need medical care. Primary medical care is provided through the health care unit of the Red Cross which is located in the reception centre, but the number of migrants that requires such an assistance is constantly growing which means that some additional health care provider (a nurse) is needed. Constantly there is a need for a wide range of medicaments, having in mind that many of the migrants that come to the centre are wounded or injured, or have chronic illnesses which require continuous therapies. The Red Cross doctor provides to them primary health care in the reception centre seven days a week. The revised budget of this operation mainly reflects the additional need for first aid material.

The high number of sheltered persons in the reception centre requires the procurement of additional hygiene materials and means for disinfection in order to prevent infectious and communicable diseases.

Most of the local residents are not very welcoming towards the migrants. In order to prevent hostilities and possible conflicts, there is a need for raising public awareness on the need to support this target group, particularly among the population living in the bordering villages and cities.

Special attention has to be paid to migrants that are transiting through Macedonia, which takes them quite a long time, up to two weeks. They go on foot or travel by bicycle, and usually stay in old and deserted houses, or spend the nights out in the open air, without any assistance and support. They are hungry, injured or require medical assistance, food, water, clothes and shoes. Babies and small children are most vulnerable, and they usually need food and are exhausted. Pregnant women usually fall under the same category because they do not have access to medical institutions while transiting through the country.

B. Operational strategy and plan

Overall objective

The emergency/basic needs of 4,600 migrants are covered to reduce their vulnerability including two main groups:

- 600 migrants who are sheltered in the reception centre for foreigners are provided with medicaments, food and non-food items. The psycho-social support and the assistance to restore family links are expected to significantly improve the well-being of the migrants in the reception centre.
- Some 4,000 migrants that are transiting through the country on foot or on bicycles who require food, water, medical assistance, clothes and shoes. These items are expected to reduce the suffering of these persons who stay up to 10 days in the open air along the highways or in the wilderness.

Implemented strategy

1. Provision of complementary food portions to the extremely vulnerable migrants (in average 600 persons) that are sheltered in the reception centre. The parcels with the additional food are being distributed through the Red Cross.
 - Distribution of family food parcels and some baby parcels.
2. Health protection, hygiene parcels and clothing for 600 persons sheltered in the reception centre, according to the size of families, which are being distributed through the Red Cross:
 - Hygiene parcels distributed to families immediately upon arrival in the centre;
 - Distribution of brochures with information on health prevention;
 - Organizing educational workshops on prevention of infective diseases;
 - Basic psycho-social assistance to all persons that require support, particularly to children;
 - Organizing entertainment and creative workshops for children.
3. Provision of water, food, blankets, clothes, first aid kits for self-aid in case of injuries for up to 4,000 persons that transit through the FYROM (on the route Gevgelija /Veles / Skopje /Kumanovo), distributed through the mobile teams and volunteers from the local RC offices with placement of support-points where people usually stop or stay during their travel through the country.
4. Provision of medical materials, equipment and medicaments for the mobile teams for providing first aid for people transiting through FYROM. The first aid kits are being used by the two mobile teams (each one comprised of a doctor, a paramedic and a driver), in the territory of Veles, Gevgelija, Demir Kapija, Kumanovo and Skopje. The teams are working in two shifts from 7 AM to 6 PM, i.e. the time with the heaviest traffic of people transiting towards the Serbian border.
5. Tracing Service / Restoring family Links

Migrants are helped with establishing contacts with their families through the Red Cross. 10 trained persons for restoring family links from the local Red Cross branches are involved in this activity. The required materials for the work of these persons are provided by ICRC.

Progress towards Outcomes

Since the launch of the DREF operation, the Red Cross of the FYROM has been actively participating in the process of implementation of activities for provision of assistance to migrants in order to reduce the suffering of this target group. The activities are focused on three main areas:

- In the Reception Centre in Gazi Baba – Skopje;
- The activities of the mobile teams on the route Gevgelija - Demir Kapija – Negotino – Veles – Kumanovo ;
- Tracing service – restoring family links.

In the Reception Centre in Gazi Baba, the Red Cross continues to provide primary health care support, and the distribution of medicaments according to the needs of the people, transport of persons to secondary and tertiary medical institutions. In the last 7 days the doctor in the Reception Centre has performed 218 primary health care examinations, and assisted 65 children, 3 pregnant women and transported 2 persons to secondary health care institutions. In frames of the support for children, the Red Cross provided clothes, shoes and toys for 43 children that were in the Reception Centre in the course of the week. In cooperation with several restaurants, during Iftar in the month of Ramadhan, the Red Cross distributes cooked food on a daily basis to 160 persons that are sheltered in the Reception Centre in Gazi Baba. Additionally, the Red Cross has distributed 150 sets of blankets.

A general perception is that the situation in the reception centre has significantly improved during the last week. The hygiene is on a higher level and the atmosphere among the migrants in the centre is much calmer. Additionally, the tracing service is active and works on restoring family links between the migrants and their respective families. 4 such tracing cases are in process, out of which 3 have been initiated by the German Red Cross. There is one case of an unescorted minor, and the case is initiated on a request of his father and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

Two mobile teams comprised of one doctor, one paramedic and one driver, patrol in two shifts seven days a week on the route Gevgelija-Demir Kapija-Negotino-Kumanovo, and they provide first aid to persons in need, and distribute biscuits and water, blankets, baby diapers, sanitary pads for women.

In the last 4 days, after the new amendments on the of Asylum came into effect, a need appeared the mobile teams to be stationed on the railway stations in Gevgelija and Kumanovo (Tabanovce) where they provide first aid support and distribution of food and non-food items.

In accordance with the new Law on Asylum and temporary protection, the migrants must approach the police authorities at the border or in the nearest police station and request a document that allows them to transit legally through the FYROM in a period of 72 hours, in which period they can contact the Centre for asylum and request asylum. As soon as they obtain the document at the border, they may legally use the public transport.

In the last seven days the Red Cross teams provided 636 medical interventions. First aid was provided to 36 pregnant women and 209 children below the age of 5, and 4 people were transported to the medical institutions. Additionally, 33 persons were transported to the Centre for asylum in Vizbegovo, Skopje.

During the field work in the last seven days, the mobile teams have distributed 40 blankets, 122 diapers, 131 packs of sanitary pads for women, 4,782 packs of biscuits, and 377 bottles of potable water (0.5 l).

Operational support services

Human resources

Six Red Cross branches are involved in the activities with a total of 20 staff and 120 volunteers, who are implementing the activities. The DREF operation is covering per diems and insurance for those volunteers who will be exclusively engaged in the implementation of the DREF operation during the four-month period. The operation is covering the employment of two new staff members who will work on the DREF implementation, one at Headquarters and one in the City Branch responsible for the DREF implementation.

Logistics and supply chain

The procurement of the required products within this operation for making the parcels is being done in compliance with the procedure for procurements of the Red Cross of the FYROM. The stock will be placed in Red Cross warehouses in four locations. There are four employees in these warehouses, supported by ten volunteers who are handling the parcels. The distribution of the parcels is being done with Red Cross vehicles by the mobile teams and the local RC volunteers.

Information technologies (IT) and communications

The expenses for communication (telephone and internet) have been included in the final budget.

The visibility of the Macedonian Red Cross is ensured with proper media coverage on both national and local media and press conferences on different milestones. Transparency is ensured by regular published information to the traditional and social media about the current activities and the progress of the operation, including the amount of donations and aid received and distributed.

All relevant information and photos is shared with the public and relevant partners through the Red Cross e-newsletter, the Red Cross web site and the national and local printed and electronic media.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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DREF OPERATION

Macedonia - Migration

25/06/2015

With second allocation

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF	
500	Shelter - Relief	
501	Shelter - Transitional	
502	Construction - Housing	
503	Construction - Facilities	
505	Construction - Materials	
510	Clothing & Textiles	42,959
520	Food	36,160
523	Seeds & Plants	
530	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	29,230
540	Medical & First Aid	21,606
550	Teaching Materials	
560	Utensils & Tools	
570	Other Supplies & Services	
571	Emergency Response Units	
578	Cash Disbursements	
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES		129,955
580	Land & Buildings	
581	Vehicles Purchase	
582	Computer & Telecom Equipment	
584	Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	
587	Medical Equipment	
589	Other Machinery & Equipment	
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT		0
590	Storage, Warehousing	
592	Distribution & Monitoring	14,139
593	Transport & Vehicle Costs	10,194
594	Logistics Services	3,055
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE		27,388
600	International Staff	
661	National Staff	
662	National Society Staff	4,218
667	Volunteers	11,089
Total PERSONNEL		15,307
670	Consultants	
750	Professional Fees	
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES		0
680	Workshops & Training	6,575
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING		6,575
700	Travel	1,500
710	Information & Public Relations	1,360
730	Office Costs	3,200
740	Communications	2,600
760	Financial Charges	
790	Other General Expenses	
790	Shared Support Services	
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES		8,660

599	Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	12,213
	Total INDIRECT COSTS	12,213
	TOTAL BUDGET	200,098