



**Centre for the Cooperation
in the Mediterranean**

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Every day closer to people



Spanish Red Cross

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Two displaced sisters in a school used as a shelter in the province of Rural Damascus. Bed linen is hung and used to divide the classrooms and give shelter to more families. April 2013 .

© Ibrahim Malla - ICRC

World Humanitarian Day* and beyond: promoting a culture of non - violence and peace

Prompting us 'to reconsider the fundamental principles of humanity by highlighting what binds cultures and societies to each other and from within'¹ the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace stands as an enduring priority worldwide and a demanding endeavour in our region.

In a time of humanitarian and economic crises where the basic elements of a culture of peace such as a genuine respect for diversity, an effective intercultural, inter-religious and intergenerational dialogue are undermined by conflicts and unrests with unprecedented consequences on communities, the process of nurturing humanitarian values such as human dignity, respect for diversity, inclusiveness, mutual understanding and cooperation is crucial.

To this end, in the context of the conflicts that are currently affecting the Mediterranean region, on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day 2013 we wish to dedicate our 16th newsletter to all humanitarian workers who devote themselves to assist those in need, to all RC/RC National Societies who are currently facing continued struggles to reach and assist the most vulnerable, to all those volunteers and staff who have lost their lives in conflicts that violate the basic notions of International Humanitarian Law, and to all communities who are suffering the consequences of conflicts that seem endless, leaving indelible scars left on the bodies, minds and hearts of their children, a generation – as UNICEF alerts - on the verge of being lost.

Addressing IFRC Strategy 2020 on the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace, in the first week of October the Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean and the Spanish Red Cross will welcome young volunteers from across the region to the Workshop 'Youth promoting a culture of non-violence and peace'. The workshop will focus on the IFRC 'Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change' toolkit as well as Leadership skills training, both intended as useful tools to actively engage youth in dropping bias, towards that necessary change of mind sets that will help us to achieve inclusive and trust-based communities, in a timely peace-building process throughout the region.

* <http://www.worldhumanitarianaday.org/>

1. UNESCO's Programme of Action 'Culture of Peace and Non-Violence. A vision in action'; (UNESCO 2013)

‘Saving Water. Saving Lives’, Atlantis IX

In the frame of the International Year of Water Cooperation, this summer the Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CCM), in partnership with the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina (RCSBiH), organized the ninth edition of the Mediterranean Youth Camp Atlantis which was held in Jahorina, near Sarajevo, from 30th June to 7th July 2013.

International facilitators and speakers:

- Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre
- Regional Activity Centre for Cleaner Production (CP/RAC)
- UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Development and Territory Management of the University of Turin
- Regional Education and Information Centre for Sustainable Development (REIC)
- CCM
- Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Italian Red Cross
- Macedonian Red Cross

The camp was attended by 75 participants, comprised of 55 volunteers representing 15 National Societies, a representative of the European Youth Coordination Committee, the IFRC Europe Zone and 10 International facilitators.

The 2013 edition of Atlantis was mainly devoted to subjects regarding the issue of environmental sustainability and human rights, with a focus on the access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The aim of the Camp was to build the capacities of RC/RC Youth leaders to become promoters of a culture of active citizenship by encouraging sustainable consumption and the respect of human rights, through intercultural dialogue and the exchange of experiences. Participants worked to find the root causes of the on-going crisis concerning environmental sustainability and water and sanitation through different workshops and activities:

Workshop on Sustainable Consumption and Gender, aimed at strengthening the awareness of young people with regards to environmental **challenges** and their consequences on human lives, as well as providing them with the necessary tools and information to not only change their own individual behaviour, but also inform and improve the behaviours of those around them;

Workshop on Human Rights and Environment, where participants learned how to recognise the social effects of our environmental behaviours and the causes of

National Societies in Atlantis IX:

Andorran RC; RC Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatian RC; Egyptian RC; French RC; Hellenic RC; Italian RC; Lebanese RC; Libyan RC; Monaco RC; Montenegro RC; Palestine RC Society; RC of Serbia; Spanish RC; Turkish RC

environmental issues;

Workshop on Youth Employment and Green Economy, through which participants could understand the importance of investing in green economy: a fundamental opportunity to contribute to societies' progress towards a sustainable future in terms of growth, social inclusion and development.

Workshop on Water, Sanitation and Health: action at RC/RC Youth level, where participants could improve their knowledge about Water and Sanitation and hygiene promotion and understand the need to involve local communities in the Wat-San activities.

In order to develop their **leadership skills**, participants attended a specific workshop run by the Italian Red Cross, and were also introduced to the IFRC toolkit **YABC** (Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change): they experienced how a leader communicates, trusts and cooperates and they worked on their skills of communication and empathy, in order to learn how self-criticism, dropping bias and inner change can lead towards a more inclusive and peace-based society. Participants were also able to experience the setting up of a social mobilisation activity, a tool of the YABC initiative which, during Atlantis IX was used with the aim of raising awareness on the access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a human right.

Special sessions also included a workshop by the **RC/RC**



Workshop on Sustainable Consumption and Gender / © J.R. Gràcia

Climate Centre, in which participants – through the game “Paying for Prediction” – understood the need to implement long-term investments to be able to predict which environmental risks may happen in our countries and be prepared accordingly; the **Terra Game**, a role-play

aimed at raising awareness of the influence of human activity on the general degradation state of the planet and at making the participants aware of the importance of personal engagement in the task of preserving and improving the environment, at local and global level. Moreover, participants attended an **interactive demonstration on first aid** linked to environmental hazards by the RCSBiH.



First Aid interactive demonstration by the RCSBiH / © J.R. Gràcia

Throughout the week, National Societies' delegations had the opportunity to share their best practices on programmes and activities regarding environmental sustainability and water.

and sanitation, as well as to take part in a Recycled Paper Laboratory run by the CCM and the CP/RAC.

The evaluation of Atlantis IX has been extremely positive. Participants concluded that their overall expectations had been met and the percentage of participants considering the general content of the training as 'good' or 'excellent' was 94,3%. Yet the real success of the Camp will depend on the rate of replication of the best practices exchanged and experiences shared. Youth have the potential to be - and are already acting as- agents of behavioural change within their communities. Their work must be reinforced and supported and we hope to uphold those goals through the future editions of the camp.

For the full Report of Atlantis IX, visit the CCM website: www.cruzroja.es/ccm

From Croatia to Syria, through Atlantis

by Kristina Repusic, Croatian Red Cross

International camps are useful to gather more knowledge, discover new things and possibilities by exchanging experiences with people, you might never say that at first, similar to you. You explore different cultures and test yourself in new surroundings. You learn about others, but what's also important – you learn about yourself. It also helps participants to feel like a part of something real and great like the Movement and that really motivates you to act more and better. Atlantis VIII showed that not always nice things are exchanged on this kind of gatherings. Sometimes we share what is hurting us, what is pulling our life apart, and that's ok, because no matter where you are from, what religion you are and what culture you belong to – we all have the same things on our minds and we are united through our developed sense for humanity.

Atlantis VIII, held in Andorra in 2012, definitely brought more than exchanging practise among NS that participated. It brought to us a brutal picture of reality that is happening in Syria. Some might say that it's typical picture of a reality affected by war, but as a person raised within the principles of the Movement, as a volunteer that reaches out and gives everything he/she has to make this world more beautiful, it was hard for me to accept cruel actions that hit our colleagues in Syria. It was hard for me to put that reality into 21st century and the least I could do was to share their story among my friends. We gathered more than 150 messages of support on a summer school of Red Cross Youth of Osječko-baranjska region. We wanted them to know that we know their story and that we feel their pain so we decided to make a flag shaped as a parchment and make it cheerful and with lots of colors. I asked creative volunteers from my city branch to help me and they finished it just before going to Atlantis IX where it was given to the Centre hoping that it will soon reach its destination. We are happy to have this opportunity to show unity and compassion just like the Movement teaches us. I would like to use this moment to send best wishes to all our friends volunteers that create the big family of Red Cross and Red Crescent.

"From Osijek, with love..."

Kristina



Red Cross Youth of Osječko-baranjska branch with the support messages for SARC volunteers / © CRC



Awareness session about Syria in Atlantis IX. / © J.R. Gràcia

“Dead Society”, wins the 5th Edition of the Mediterranean Youth Photo Contest

The photograph “Dead society”, by Adam Slacanac from Croatia, has been awarded the first prize of the 5th edition of the Mediterranean Youth Photo Contest that was held under the theme **“Respecting our World: Every change starts from YOUth”**.

The pictures had to be related to environment preservation and climate change, and all the works submitted were exhibited in the 9th edition of the Atlantis Youth Camp in Jahorina (Bosnia and Herzegovina) that focused on humanitarian challenges related to water.

The jury was composed of members of the Spanish Red Cross and the Red Cross of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also members of the Red Cross / Red Crescent Climate Centre in The Hague, that also contributed to the dissemination of the contest by publishing all the finalist photographs **on their website**.



1st Prize, “Dead Society” / © Adam Slacanac

Empowering youth to be promoters of a culture of non-violence and peace

The starting date of the Youth Workshop on the promotion of a culture of non-violence and peace is now approaching and both the Spanish Red Cross and the CCM are working in close collaboration to ensure a fruitful activity for all youth participants.

The aims of the workshop are to empower youth volunteers from the Mediterranean region to promote a global culture of non-violence and peace, and provide them with the basic tools to become agents of positive change within their own communities, by improving their leadership skills and their self awareness through many useful workshops including, among others, the YABC toolkit and Leadership Skills sessions which provide a valid basis for Youth development.



A workshop by the IFRC Principles and Values Department is also foreseen, as well sessions on non-violent communication and peace education.

In a time of dire humanitarian consequences deriving from conflict and violence across the region, this workshop is increasingly important for the specific contents that will be spread and for the multiplier effect that the young participants will be able to generate as intercultural ambassadors and active promoters of a global culture of peace in their National Society and communities. Furthermore it is in line with the IFRC Strategy 2020 which, in its strategic aim no. 3 highlights the importance of promoting social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace, as well as the Dubrovnik Declaration stemming from the 11th Mediterranean Conference which underlines the importance of Youth empowerment across the region.

Location: Mallorca, Spain

Dates: 30th September to 6th October, 2013

For further information visit the CCM website:
www.cruzroja.es/ccm

XII Mediterranean Conference –San Marino 2015

The Centre for the Cooperation in the Mediterranean is glad to announce that the next Mediterranean Conference will be hosted by the Red Cross Society of the Republic of San Marino. After formal approval by the Governing Board of the CCM, the proposal was finally endorsed and, although the dates are yet to be defined, the celebration of the Conference is envisaged for the spring of 2015.

The proposal of the candidature of the Red Cross of San Marino was made following a first visit there by the Vice President of the CCM, Ms. Marta Corachán whom, together with Dr. Massimo Barra (member of the CCM Governing Board), discussed the proposal with the President of the host National Society, Mr. Raimondo Fattori. Both Mr. Fattori and the local authorities of San Marino expressed their will to welcome the representatives of the 25 National Societies members of the Conference in a Republic which, in a time of crisis and conflict affecting the Mediterranean region, stands as an emblematic space given its long lasting history of neutrality and solidarity.

The CCM will assist the Red Cross of San Marino in the logistical aspects of the organisation, as well as in the drafting of the contents related to the main areas of concern at regional level which will be discussed during the Conference.



From right to left, Ms. Marta Corachán, CCM Vice President; Mr. Raimondo Fattori, President of the Red Cross of the Republic of San Marino; and Dr. Massimo Barra, CCM Governing Board. / © CCM

To this end we take this opportunity to encourage partner National Societies to keep sending the CCM the follow up questionnaires regarding the priority areas to be addressed in the XII Mediterranean Conference.

For further information, please contact the CCM:

mediterraneo@cruzroja.es

Updates from the Movement and CCM engagement

Keeping up with all the news and updates going on in the Movement may be challenging at times. That is why it is very important to keep in touch with the Zone offices and non statutory bodies such as the CCM, in order to have the most up-to-date information and possible contacts for further clarifications. But how is the CCM keeping up with all the upcoming events?

2013 is truly going to be a year filled with important events for the Movement. As a matter of fact, from 12th to 15th November the 19th session of the **General Assembly** of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies will take place in Sydney, Australia. Immediately after the GA, there will be the **Council of Delegates** on 17th-18th November. The two day meeting will bring together Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies from 188 countries, ICRC and IFRC. Participants will discuss how the Movement can respond to pressing humanitarian challenges and there will be an event held under the theme

“150 years of humanitarian action”. Before these two important events, Sydney will also host the **Global Youth Conference** on 9th-10th November.



© Australian RC

For more information on all the events please visit the **dedicated web page**.

As for youth, the Youth Commission is reaching out as much as it can in order to make all youth initiatives truly youth led, and this is why it has contacted the CCM for further support and collaboration. On the one hand, the CCM has provided support for the translation into Spanish and Arabic of the IFRC Youth Engagement Strategy (or IFRC Y.E.S), for it to be shared during a global consultation process. This task has been carried out in collaboration with the national Youth Director of the Spanish Red Cross, Aitor Murciano Moreno and the IFRC MENA Zone Office. On 27th-29th June 2013, the Youth Commission met in Geneva, for the Youth Commission Meeting on the first two days, and for the IFRC YES Workshop on the 29th. The CCM Youth Desk was invited to both events and during the last workshop, which was the final phase of the global consultation process on the IFRC YES that had been carried out by the focal points in the Zone Offices, the CCM had an active role in being part of one of the three working groups. This hard work was carried out with extreme team spirit and collaboration, and the results will soon be visible with the publication of the IFRC Y.E.S. Draft 1.

Therefore we invite you all to keep on checking the CCM web page and the MedYouthPort@I for further updates.

Humanitarian aid in Syria: a rising demand

In 2008, the General Assembly of the UN established that August 19th would be World Humanitarian Day with the aim of strengthening the spirit of mutual help and humanity as well as recognizing those who face danger and adversity in order to help others.

At present, urgent assistance is still needed in many contexts of humanitarian catastrophe, caused by conflicts or natural disasters, in which it is necessary to act as fast as possible, according to the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and operational independence.

The conflict in Syria is a clear example in which more than two and a half years after its outbreak, the need for humanitarian aid has reached unprecedented levels and continues to increase. The conflict in Syria has turned into the most extensive of the conflicts of the "Arab Spring" and, in spite of the clear figures that make evident the need of aid, there is still a lack of political response and humanitarian intervention on the field.

Every day we receive a lot of information about the conflict through several communication channels, and in many occasions this overinformation leads us to remain impassive about all the reports coming from this very harsh conflict, 30 months after its outbreak.

In the past few months, the dialogue with both the authorities and the opposition has paid off. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) have been able to reach conflict-stricken areas such as Idlib, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Deir Ezzor and Rural Damascus, where ICRC's personnel has been able to spend up to a week.

Key facts of the conflict

The conflict began in late January 2011, in the context of the so-called "Arab Spring" and influenced by other simultaneous protests in Arab countries demanding democratic reforms.

The protests intensified to the point of open confrontation between the rebels or opponents of the regime of Bashar al-Assad, and the Syrian regular army.

In several areas the conflict, which has been particularly devastating in Homs, Aleppo and Damascus, still persists.

According to the data that was published by the United Nations, the number of victims of the conflict exceeded 100,000 by the end of July 2013 *.

Since July 2012, 5,000 people have died every month in Syria, with Damascus being the most affected region in the conflict, where more than 17,800 victims have already been registered.

*<http://www.euronews.com/2013/07/25/syria-death-toll-tops-100000-says-un-chief/>

The IFRC launched its first emergency appeal in 2012 and in December the appeal was extended by another year, which should allow SARC to have ambulances and mobile health units as well as to distribute food to 20.000 families every month.

Nevertheless, the humanitarian response remains insufficient, and it is hindered by security restrictions and bureaucratic controls. The ICRC announced in mid-May

that the aid intervention in favour of the civil population should be increased and therefore appealed to its donors for 62.3 million Swiss francs (approximately 65.2 million US dollars, or 50.5 million euros) in additional funding to step up its response until the end of the year for vulnerable people suffering the effects of the armed conflict within Syria and its neighbouring countries. The additional funds will bring the ICRC's total budget for Syria in 2013 to 101.3 million Swiss francs (around 82 million euros) and make the organisation's operation in the country its largest in the world in budgetary terms¹.



Humanitarian aid delivery in cooperation with SARC and ICRC in Homs, Syria. In the background the sky is full of smoke from close explosions. February 2013 / © Ibrahim Malla - ICRC.

In this respect, the decision coming from the EU in June about increasing the aid to 400 million euros for Syria and neighbouring countries hosting refugees from the conflict, especially Jordan and Lebanon, was very well received. This aid package will become one of the largest investments made by any donor so far².

Of these 400 million, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) plans to invest 250 million for humanitarian work in Syria and neighbouring countries, while the remaining 150 will be directed towards development aid and to support those communities hosting refugees, as well as the security of the camps.



© Turkish Red Crescent

The aid in figuresⁱ

- The **Syrian Arab Red Crescent** is the only humanitarian organisation that can provide services across the country and it has extended its aid to nearly 2,000,000 people monthly through its 3,000 active volunteers, 14 branches, 77 sub-branches, 41 points in Damascus and many other vulnerable areas of Syria.
- In 2012, the **ICRC** and **SARC** distributed food to one and a half million people.
- The **Spanish Red Cross** contributed in 2012 by making a shipment to Jordan and two to Syria with non-food items: hygiene kits, kitchen sets, jerry cans for water storage, blankets and tents for shelter. These shipments coming from the logistic centres of the Spanish Red Cross in Valencia and Catalonia allowed 4,000 Syrian families to have their basic needs covered.
- From July 2012 to June 2013, with support from the **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** to **SARC**, more than 85,000 families were supported with food parcel and other basic goods, including 47,100 tarpaulins, 219,095 blankets and 123,135 mattressesⁱⁱ.
- The estimation from the UN shows that by the end of 2013, half of Syria's population will be in need of humanitarian aidⁱⁱⁱ.

ⁱ <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2013/05-13-syria-finanices.htm>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/appeals/?ac=&at=247&c=4,7,224,18&co=SP681SY&dt=1&f=2013&re=&t=2013&ti=&zo=>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/syria.php>

In fact, neighbouring countries have been severely affected by the large numbers of incoming refugees: Turkey (with 434,814 registered refugees)³, Jordan (515,068), Lebanon (675,363), Iraq (160,997), Egypt (106,587) and the rest of North Africa (12,332) have become the first hosting destinations of the Syrians seeking refuge. In Turkey, for example, a joint action between the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and the World Food Program (WFP) was made to support the Turkish government in providing basic food to the Syrian refugees at the border. Until April 2013, when the official results of the activity of the TRC were published, daily food was provided monthly to 13,526 Syrian refugees settled in Kilis, to 9,249 in Hatay and to 11,934 settled in Harran.

In Lebanon, the ICRC will help the emergency medical services of the Lebanese Red Cross to increase its support operations for the injured people arriving from Syria and will pay for the treatment costs of more patients.

In Jordan, the ICRC will deliver surgical and other medical supplies to the border health posts and some hospitals for the treatment of wounded patients. In these two countries, the ICRC will provide emergency relief to refugees as they arrive.



A Young girl walking around the tents in the camp of Domiz, in the South-West of Dohuk province, in the autonomous region of Kurdistan, in Northern Iraq. 56,000 Syrian refugees, mainly Kurdish, found shelter in the Camp. March 2013 / © Ibrahim Malla

The number of Syrian refugees who have been forced to leave their cities has been increasing, reaching more than 1,698,339 refugees as of August 7th, 2013). However, it is estimated that the actual figures are even higher, due to the fear of many Syrians of the registration process.

Children are among the most affected by the conflict. According to UNICEF Executive Director, Anthony Lake, "the risk of becoming a lost generation is increasing every day." Syria has more than 3.6 million children in need of urgent assistance: UNICEF is facing the most important humanitarian emergency of the 21st century.

The conflict in Syria has exacerbated the problem of refugees globally. In fact, according to the figures that were announced by the UNHCR on the World Refugee Day, every four seconds one more person joins the list of displaced (within the country) or refugees (out of the country) who are forced to leave their places. Therefore, every day up to 23,000 citizens leave their homes against their will, a figure that exceeds all records since 1994 and that has been notably increased by the conflict.

According to Juliette Touma, Head of Communications at the organisation, sometimes the aid is just seen as a temporary relief, but with the vaccination campaigns in 2012, UNICEF supplied the polio vaccine to 1.5 million children and also the measles vaccine to 1.3 million throughout the territory⁴.

There are some other rates of concern such as the level of

school attendance, particularly in conflict areas like Aleppo, where it is as low as 6%. Thus providing alternative education to children remains a key priority.

More than 6,500 children died in the conflict. Of those, 1,729 were under 10 years old, according to the report from 'Human Rights Data Analysis Group'

There are of course other vulnerable sectors, such as the case of Palestinian refugees. The conflict in Syria has brought to surface their legal and institutional vulnerability, not only in Syria but also in their hosting countries.

Among those affected by the Syrian civil war, there are Palestinian refugees and their descendants who had settled in the country after the first Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948. Having a particular legal status, Palestinian refugees are in a special position that differs from the other refugee categories.

In fact, the authority responsible for Palestinian refugees is the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), a specific agency other than the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the operational tool established in the early 1950s for the universal protection of refugees. Unlike UNHCR, UNRWA cannot provide refugees with legal protection and therefore, due to the lack of international legislation the status of Palestinian refugees depends solely on the legislation of the hosting countries.

Yet, those countries often deny the new citizenship by reference to an alleged preservation of the Palestinian nationality and the right of return, something that turns Palestinian refugees into stateless victims without legal protection, facing situations out of their control.⁵

As portrayed in the last UNRWA update (July 29th, 2013) over 50% of the registered Palestinian refugees are now displaced either in Syria or in other neighbouring countries⁶.

A political and humanitarian response is needed now more than ever. SARC, along with the support of international humanitarian organisations and local NGOs, is currently providing aid to an average of 400,000 families every month, but the main problem that they are now facing is the lack of safe access to the conflict areas. The situation is unpredictable and extremely volatile, and the risks for SARC volunteers are of great magnitude. The needs are exceeding the help available⁷. It is estimated that since the outbreak of the conflict more than 20 volunteers and staff from SARC have been killed, something which clearly violates the Geneva Conventions⁸.

The assistance provided by SARC is being funded by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UN organisations and other international NGOs with funding from governments and other international donors. To date, just 38% of the budget envisaged by UNHCR⁹ to face the humanitarian needs on the area has been received and, given the urgency, it is still necessary to seek immediate funding.



A Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteer holds a boy after treating his injuries, in Mu'adhamiya, Rural Damascus, Syria. September 2012. / © Ibrahim Malla - ICRC

For further reading and multimedia resources:

- **Syria Crisis:** <http://www.unocha.org/crisis/syria>
- **Syria Humanitarian Bulletin:** <http://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/syria-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-30-16-29-july-2013-enar>
- **Where the war still echoes:** <http://www.irinnews.org/syriaspecial/index.html>
- **Video animation "The Syrian refugee crisis in numbers":** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2013/jul/25/syrian-refugee-numbers-video-animation>

Notes:

¹ <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2013/05-13-syria-finances.htm>

² <http://www.unhcr.org/51b09bf09.html>

³ With data from UNHCR database (<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/syria.php>) updated 22/07/2013

⁴ Interview to Juliette Touma, *Salvar a la infancia de Siria*, in the magazine Afkar/Ideas, summer 2013.

⁵ Jalal al Hussein, *Refugiados palestinos de Siria*, in the magazine Afkar/Ideas, n°38, summer 2013.

⁶ <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=1836>

⁷ <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding/ongoing-operations/crisis-in-syria/frequently-asked-questions/>

⁸ <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/feature/2013/06-18-syria-beyond-humanitarian-challenges-conflicts-today.htm>

⁹ <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/syria.php>, updated 22/07/2013



© Turkish Red Crescent

Solferino 2013: new appeal for the protection of humanitarian workers.

Article by Italian Red Cross

Thousands of volunteers of the Red Cross and Red Crescent took part in the Fiaccolata of 'Solferino 2013'. Delegations from the Palestine Red Crescent Society and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were also present.



Francesco Rocca, President of the Italian Red Cross, with volunteers from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, during the commemoration event for the 20 SARC volunteers killed during the conflict. / © Ibrahim Malla - ItRC

The events of 'Solferino 2013' ended on 22nd of June with the evocative Fiaccolata, the international gathering of volunteers and staff from around the globe to celebrate the birth of the idea of the biggest humanitarian association in Solferino, Italy. Thousands of people took part in the 20th edition of the event to symbolically recall and retrace the journey made by the rescuers that transported the wounded to Castiglione delle Stiviere. Among the people that took part in the celebrations were the Head of the Italian Civil Protection, Franco Gabrielli, representatives of

the Italian Red Cross -such as the President Francesco Rocca and the General Director Patrizia Ravaioli- and of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, the ICRC and IFRC, and a delegation of volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society, who have also participated in a training on Disaster Management facilitated by the Italian Red Cross.

'Solferino 2013' has been dedicated to Syria and to the tragedy of the population that is involved in an endless conflict and undergoes continuous violations of International Humanitarian Law. During the opening of the Fiaccolata in *Piazza Castello* square, those present were moved by the dedication of one minute of silence to the 20 volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent who were killed while bringing relief to the wounded, the sick and those most in need. *"The events in Syria are the worst humanitarian catastrophe of the last few decades. My thoughts - said Mr Rocca - go to Syria and to all those volunteers that have lost their lives. This place underlines how absurd it is that after 150 years of the birth of the Red Cross we now find ourselves with these 'new Solferinos', new challenges against the violations of International Humanitarian Law and of the principle of neutrality. We renew our appeal to the respect and the protection of the humanitarian workers in Syria and in all other places in the world that are facing critical situations"*. The volunteer of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent thanked the Italian Red Cross on behalf of his National Society for all the efforts in supporting Syria and the population hit by the conflict.

A representative of the Palestine Red Crescent Society delegation also wanted to thank Mr. Francesco Rocca "for having united in a very important and unique occasion the Palestinians of the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon and Syria who are all together in the place which inspired Dunant to

the principles of brotherhood and neutrality". The delegation -of 6 men and 4 women- took part in the training courses organised in the frame of the 'Solferino 2013' events, more specifically in the lessons on Emergency Response, on the principles of International Humanitarian Law and the protection of the emblem, and on the ICRC campaign 'Health Care in Danger'. The Italian Red Cross also gave specific attention to this initiative during the Solferino events, by dedicating an exhibition space to the campaign.



Volunteers during 'Fiaccolata' 2013. / © Ibrahim Malla - ItRC

Best Practice by Lebanese Red Cross: Safer Access Framework

Portraying the commitment of both staff and volunteers of the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) in ensuring they are as safe as possible while carrying out their work in an often challenging environment, the Report 'Principles in Action in Lebanon' describes the methodology of work adopted by this National Society to provide the emergency medical service in contexts which are often made complex by armed conflict, internal disturbances or other emergencies.

Presented at the beginning of 2013 and jointly produced by the Lebanese Red Cross, the British Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the report shows a methodology based on simulations of specific situations within different conflict contexts and it focuses on the application of the Fundamental Principles of the Movement strongly linked to the Safer Access Framework (SAF).

Such application has allowed the evaluation of the access to the population by the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) provided by the LRC.



Lebanese Red Cross emergency medical service volunteers in action. / © LRC

In order to facilitate this process various *operational tools* have been developed to aid decision making, networking and the safety of staff and volunteers in complex situations. Moreover, *credibility and trust* are set as referential framework and basic concepts for a good coordination.

Finally, the report underlines the need to rely on a good leadership in order to achieve the objectives of the LRC and establish the organisational responsibility necessary to ensure the safety of the staff and volunteers, and the access by the EMS to the general population.

For further information on the Principles in Action project and the Safer Access Framework, please contact:

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ICRC hygiene kits and blankets are loaded on a Lebanese Red Cross minivan for distribution./

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Syria: a human tragedy of catastrophic proportions

Article by ICRC

Tens of thousands of civilians in Syria are living in extremely harsh conditions in sealed-off areas, and humanitarian aid is being prevented from reaching them. The consequences could be tragic.

Civilians living in areas encircled by government forces or the various armed opposition groups are not receiving regular supplies of food or other basic necessities. To bring them aid it is necessary to obtain the consent of all sides, which can at times be very difficult.

"The ICRC is extremely concerned about the humanitarian situation in Syria, which is deteriorating by the day," says the organization's director of operations, Pierre Krähenbühl.

"I have seen some terrible situations in my life but the ongoing human tragedy in and around Syria is one of the most alarming I have witnessed... It's nothing short of catastrophic."

His comments came following various meeting with high-level representatives of UN agencies in July 2013 to discuss the growing humanitarian consequences in Syria and surrounding countries. *"The discussions offered the opportunity to share our reading of the humanitarian situation on the ground and highlight the importance of ensuring long term financial support to address the major needs,"* said Mr. Krähenbühl.

"One of the particular concerns is over the number of attacks being committed against health workers, vehicles and medical facilities." According to the ICRC, which works together with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society (SARC) to deliver water, food, medical, and other types of assistance across the country, too many doctors, nurses, and ambulance drivers are being killed, injured, or threatened in the line of duty.

This hampers the ability to meet both acute, life-saving medical needs and the chronic needs of people suffering from disease. *"Since the start of the conflict, 20 SARC volunteers have died while trying to help others,"* said Mr. Krähenbühl. *"They put their lives on the line each time they go to work. There is no normal anymore... no task that doesn't involve some level of risk. They, like civilians, are prey to sniper bullets, crossfire, mortar attacks, and other dangers. It has to stop."*

Mr. Krähenbühl underscores the need for international humanitarian law to be respected by everyone taking part in the fighting: *"Civilians are being killed or forced to flee their homes every day. People face a daily struggle just to survive, sometimes trapped in the fighting, while millions are displaced inside Syria or have sought safety across the*

border in neighbouring countries. This is unacceptable."

Refugee camps and host communities are struggling to cope, while widespread economic deterioration, soaring prices, and the loss of work opportunities have resulted in an increased number of needy families on the other side of Syria's borders.

The challenges of getting aid where it's needed most are manifold. In particular, widespread insecurity, the intensity of the fighting, countless checkpoints, and the multiplicity of armed groups are making the ICRC's work more and more complex. The challenge of getting the necessary consent for access can also severely complicate our access to vulnerable communities.

"Every day, our teams on the ground are working to gain unimpeded access, while trying to ensure better protection for civilians and respect for the rules of war," Mr. Krähenbühl said.

Despite the numerous hurdles, the ICRC, working with the SARC, has managed to deliver food to more than one million people inside Syria, plus household items, such as blankets, cooking pots, and soap, to around 400,000 in the last six months alone. The ICRC also guaranteed access to drinking water for several million people and delivered medical and surgical supplies to health facilities on both sides of the frontline.

Over the past two weeks, the ICRC was also able to help broker an agreement that allowed 25,000 cooked meals to be delivered to Aleppo's central prison.

Despite this recent success, reaching people in areas encircled by government forces or the various armed opposition groups like in Homs remains one of the toughest challenges the ICRC faces in Syria. Under international humanitarian law, the parties to the conflict are obliged to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians. They must also allow civilians in areas besieged by fighting to leave for safer areas, should they wish to do so. Regrettably, these obligations are not always fulfilled.

"It's hard to imagine how tough it is to accomplish these things – not to mention the security risks involved," Mr. Krähenbühl said. *"It's no small feat to enter some areas and make it past dozens of check points, so these are important successes that show what can happen when the rules of war are respected. But make no mistake about it... the scale of this crisis – and its potentially destabilizing effects on the entire region – are deeply, deeply troubling, and much more needs to be done."*

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or one Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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