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Information bulletin

Italy: Population Movement

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Italian Red Cross will determine the need for external assistance after the on-going assessment mission is completed this week with the support of the IFRC Secretariat's Europe Zone Office.

Summary

Since the tragic accident over the weekend hundreds of newly arrived migrants have been rescued from the sea by the Italian navy and coast guard vessels. A boat with 220 new migrants arrived safely with the support of the Italian Navy on 23 April. The newly arrived migrants were disembarked across the ports of southern Italy, most of them in Salerno, Catania and Augusta during the week.



Every one of us wants to live in dignity/@Italian Red Cross

The migrants rescued during these operations reported that the conditions in which they had to cross the sea were simply terrible. A number of vulnerable groups including children and pregnant women have been among those disembarked in Italy. Most of those who take the risky journey by sea are desperate people fleeing war-torn countries, searching for a better life and wanting to live in dignity. Human smugglers charge immense prices and force people into unseaworthy fishing vessels, knowing that their passengers will accept any level of risk in the desperation to escape their homelands.

IFRC Secretary General Elhadj As Sy visited Catania, Sicily, on 21 April after the tragedy and met with the Italian National Society's leadership, staff and volunteers as well as the survivors of the latest boat accidents. He also attended an international press conference where he emphasized the fact that we tend to talk about the *number* of people who have died, the *number* of people who have arrived on the shores of Europe but this issue is not about "numbers", it is not about figures but it is about real people. He has reminded us all that behind each number you will find a story of a once very proud father, a mother who wants the best for her children, the story of a child who came into the world in a situation that forces his or her parents to be on the move.

Following the request of the Italian Red Cross on 20 April 2015, the IFRC Europe Zone Office has deployed its Disaster Management Coordinator to assess the needs together with the Italian Red Cross in Catania, and he has been in the country since 22 April. A DREF bulletin is being drafted at the moment to be issued as soon as possible. A coordination meeting with ICRC was held today, on 23 April, to discuss the important issues related to Restoring Family Links (RFL) and the National Society's capacity to address them in various locations.

The situation

Week after week, thousands of migrants are saved and brought to the southern ports of Italy in Lampedusa, Augusta, Trapani, Messina, Porto Empedocle, Agrigento (Sicily), Reggio Calabria (Calabria) and Taranto (Apulia). In 2015, Sicily alone has received 8,259 arrivals by 30 March and 19,654 arrivals by 21 April whereas the whole of Italy has seen over 24 065 migrant arrivals by 21 April.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Italian Red Cross is continuously providing the following activities in all the regions affected by the ongoing crisis:

- Distributing hygiene kits to the migrants as soon as they reach the harbour;
- Providing migrants with medical assistance upon landing;
- Providing Restoring Family Links (RFL) services;
- Providing migrants with food and non-food items in the transit centre.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.



The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.