
**Information Bulletin n° 1-2005/winter
3 January 2015**

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Red Cross Society of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The situation

On 28 December 2014, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was hit by heavy snowfalls that resulted in snow drifts, two meters high in some places, limiting the movement of all types of vehicles on many highways and mountain corridors, cutting the communication with a number of mountain villages. The electricity lines were also cut in some of the regions, the most affected ones being Ohrid, Struga, Debar, Kichevo, Skopje, and Kumanovo. For more than ten hours about 150 vehicles with 500 drivers and passengers were stranded on the Skopje – Ohrid highway due to the heavy snowfall.



Macedonian Red Cross response team distributing relief items for snow-trapped residents. Photo: Macedonian RC

The Macedonian Red Cross is in constant communication and coordination with the state institutions on the central and local levels. At the moment, the Macedonian Red Cross is collecting and processing the information obtained from the Red Cross branches and the state institutions, and it is developing a plan of action to assist the affected population. The population that lives in the rural areas is faced with shortages of food, medicaments, and electric power failures.

	Region	Affected villages	Affected people
1	Ohrid	23	1,000
2	Struga	23	3,000
3	Debar	10	3,000
4	Skopje	3	700
5	Kumanovo	3	500
6	Homeless in Skopje	n.a.	100 (registered)

The weather forecast for the forthcoming days is predicting extreme low temperatures with -20°C, and from 9 and 10 January 2015 new snowfalls are expected.

Activities of the Macedonian Red Cross in cooperation with the state institutions

Reacting to the snow wave that struck the biggest part of the country, the Crisis Management Headquarters of the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia held an emergency meeting on 29 December 2014, which was also attended by the Secretary General of the Macedonian Red Cross, Sait Saiti, PhD. The meeting served to define the activities of each institution in the state structures in compliance with the standard operational procedures in case of disaster response.

The complete available machinery and means of transport have been used for clearing the roads, and, as first priorities, the responsible authorities started the repair of the electricity pylons and the evacuation of the older people that found themselves blocked in the remote mountain villages.

The Macedonian Red Cross, as a member of the Crisis Management Headquarters, is actively involved in the rescue operation and is regularly updated with new information about the situation and is requested to solve some urgent challenges.

In the crisis-hit regions the Macedonian Red Cross branches have mobilized their emergency response teams, and they are in the field with the representatives of the state institutions helping them evacuate the residents.

In agreement with the Government, the Macedonian Red Cross will start the distribution of humanitarian assistance for the most affected population as soon as the roads are cleared.

Some of the distribution will be done with army helicopters and some will be distributed with field vehicles and other means of transport.

The Red Cross branches of Debar, Ohrid, Struga, Kichevo, Kumanovo and the City Red Cross of Skopje have already distributed in the remote mountain villages 300 food parcels, 300 hygiene parcels, 1,000 blankets and 2 tons of warm clothes with their own field vehicles.

The car drivers and passengers that had been stranded for more than ten hours on the highway Kichevo-Ohrid were assisted by the Red Cross with 500 blankets. The distribution was done by the local teams for disaster response.

The City Red Cross of Skopje, opened a station for homeless people in the capital, which is working around the clock providing the following services for the homeless people:

- Accommodation for homeless people in the station, hygiene services, and laundry / supply of clothes;
- Patrol team with a medical vehicle to transport homeless people;
- Warm meals;
- Primary health care;
- Operation of a telephone help line, + 389 70/317-803 on which citizens can report homeless people that need assistance.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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Click here

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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.

