



Gaza: IFRC calls to respect a permanent cease-fire and to extend support to affected people in Gaza

Geneva/Gaza – 29 August 2014 From Gaza, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) calls for a stronger support to the affected people in Gaza to ensure a quick recovery phase in light of the permanent ceasefire in the Gaza strip. The call comes as the IFRC Vice President, Dr Francesco Rocca, finishes his visit to the Gaza Strip, 50 days after military operations started.

The IFRC delegation included the president of the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) Dr Younis Al Khatib.

“We, the IFRC and our 189 National Societies, cannot accept the suffering of the Gazans. During my visit, I saw a dramatic destruction all around. We need to extend our support to the PRCS services and this is why I’m urging the International community for a strong mobilization of resources for Gaza,” said Dr Rocca. He also stressed the imperative need to lift the blockade on Gaza strip to allow the humanitarian aid to reach the affected populations.

In Gaza, at least 2,101 people have been killed and 10,224 injured. Approximately 70 per cent of them were civilians. The aftermath of 50 days of fighting is extremely worrying. The IFRC is extremely concerned by the situation where more than 475,000 displaced Palestinians lacking basic means of survival. A large number of explosives, remnants of the fighting, have also been dispersed throughout civilian areas, adding to the threats on the populations.

The IFRC delegation was appalled by the scale of the damage to the infrastructure in the Strip. More than 17,000 homes have been destroyed or severely damaged and 216 schools have been damaged. At least 373,000 children require direct and specialized psychosocial support. Preliminary estimates indicate that up to 1,000 of the children injured will have a permanent disability.

The IFRC delegation met with the PRCS teams, who are witnessing on a daily basis the suffering of, women and elderly as well as the collapse of the infrastructures in the Strip. The PRCS volunteers themselves were exposed to direct threat with two of them, members of the emergency medical teams, killed in the course of duty and 46 were injured in addition to several destructions in PRCS ambulances and hospitals. In Jabalia and Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip, the PRCS teams and the people who have had to flee their homes raised their concern over the shortage of medical supplies, fuel and electricity and the lack of special surgeons.

The humanitarian priorities include providing relief items, medical equipment, medical supplies, generators and fuel for health facilities, mobile health care teams, psychosocial support and temporary shelters. In addition, there is an urgent need to refer some of the casualties to specialised hospitals outside Gaza.

“As a Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, we have to continue advocating strongly to ensure the international humanitarian law is respected, all attacks against civilians and

civilian objects are prohibited under international humanitarian law,” said Dr Younis Al Khatib. He also called upon the International community to increase its support to enable the Palestine Red Crescent Society respond effectively to the needs of the most vulnerable.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society launched on 14 July a preliminary national emergency appeal for the amount of \$14,570,915 US dollars to respond to the immediate and medium term needs of the affected population such as health care, relief, shelter and psychosocial support. The current funding coverage is around 36 per cent.

With the dramatic increase in the humanitarian needs, the Palestine Red Crescent Society has done a rapid assessment in order to revise its appeal based on urgent humanitarian needs and taking into account the necessity of a strong and sustainable recovery process.

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