



# Branch Quarterly

Malta Red Cross - First Malta Branch

ISSUE 4 – JULY 2009



The 8<sup>th</sup> of May marks the International Red Cross Day. The Malta Red Cross Society joined societies from all across the globe and celebrated this day with a public display at Freedom Square in Valletta.

Read the full story on page 2.

## *EDITOR'S NOTE*

Welcome to the fourth issue of the Malta Red Cross – First Malta Branch Quarterly. Our newsletter keeps you up-to-date with what is going on within the branch as well as with the events and activities, both locally and internationally, which shape the work of the Branch. It is only through assisting people in need that the Malta Red Cross – First Malta Branch is able to fulfill its roles in society.

Over the past few months the Branch has also managed to attract new volunteers who are very promising and highly enthusiastic. We welcome them on board and hope that volunteering with the Red Cross gives them back that sense of satisfaction that has kept us going.

Following the Annual General Meeting, a new committee has been formed. I congratulate the members and thank all the other members of the Branch for the sterling work they do.

**JAMES XUEREB**

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## RED CROSS DAY

This year is, beyond doubt, an exciting year for the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Indeed, worldwide the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement commemorated the 150th anniversary of the battle of Solferino, where Henry Dunant, who is one of the founders of the International Committee of the Red Cross, conceived the origins of the said movement. The 8th of May marked the International Red Cross Red Crescent Day which is a reminder of the constant humanitarian efforts of National Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies worldwide. Moreover, this day cherishes the extensive attempts to promote the relief of human suffering in small or large disasters, man-made or natural.



With so much to commemorate, the Malta Red Cross Society organised a full day event at City Gate, Valletta to pay tribute to these milestones achieved by the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, and to disseminate information about the vital work that is constantly done on a voluntary basis on the 9th of May, since the 8th of May fell on a Friday. The main entrance to Valletta was very busy and quite a number of people stopped in their tracks to admire the fleet of vehicles which were put on display, to

inquire about the numerous courses the branch offers and to get more information about how to join the team of extremely enthusiastic and skilled volunteers. As usual the Segways, generously provided by our partners Intervisions Ltd., did not fail to turn heads.

During this activity volunteers talked to passers-by, highlighting the power of individuals to make a difference in the world. This year's campaign for Red Cross Day is entitled "Our World, Your Move", and therefore the activity was geared towards a clear call for action – that is to help others in making their lives better. We all know that the world faces exceptional challenges and conflicts, ranging from wars and mass displacement to climate change, migration and a global financial crisis, to mention just a few.

We all have a collective responsibility and obligation to make our world a better place to live in, and to leave it in a better state for the future generations. Each one of us should feel obliged to do something and help others. We can all, each in our own way, make a positive difference in people's lives. As Henry Dunant believed, "All can, in one way or another, each in his own sphere and within his own limitations, do something to help the good work move forward."

One of the main highlights of the morning was our encounter with The President of Malta, Dr. George Abela, who, together with his wife, greeted us with a smile and took time to acclaim the sterling work The Malta Red Cross does on a voluntary basis.



Volunteers from the Malta Red Cross society organised short demonstrations to the general public, both in First Aid Techniques as well as Rescue Displays, to the applause and admiration of the general public. A demonstration was given to show how a casualty with a suspected spinal injury is handled and transported over difficult terrain. Using a bucket stretcher and a rescue tripod, a team of volunteers lowered the "casualty" down from Pope Pius V Street to Freedom Square. This is just one of the skills taught during the Emergency Response Foundation Course.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all those volunteers who attended the event and to our new Secretary General, Dr. C Saydon, for her constant hard work and support and also for being present throughout the event.



Even though it was a long and busy day, all volunteers who attended the event enjoyed themselves and felt a sense of belonging towards this organisation that resides in no less than 186 independent nations – making it the largest humanitarian organisation in the world. Even though volunteers make considerable personal sacrifice by choice to help others, we are proud to be amongst the more than 90 million Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers around the world.

A special thank you goes to Pizza Hut, Valletta for their generous offer given to all volunteers present.

More information on the work of the Malta Red Cross First Malta Branch can be found on its website:

[www.mrc1.org.mt](http://www.mrc1.org.mt)

*Paulette Fenech & Owen Micallef*

# FUN ACTIVITIES

## FOOTBALL ACTIVITY



In order to encourage a more active lifestyle for its volunteers, the Branch organised a 5-a-side football match for volunteers and their friends. The game saw a number of great shots and saves from players of both teams. By the end of the match, which lasted over 2 hours, the players were exhausted but glad that they gave it their best and continued to enhance the spirit of teamwork.

A big Thank You goes to Paulette for her first aid assistance and photography skills!

## EMERGENCY VEHICLE HANDLING TRAINING

In a bid to encourage more people to become volunteers, the Branch organised a trainer session where prospective volunteers had a chance to drive some of the vehicles which are used to offer emergency care. Three volunteers from the Branch explained the basic rules and guidelines needed to drive an emergency vehicle. Afterwards, the prospective volunteers took turns to drive an ambulance, a rescue pick up and a quad bike.

The participants showed immense interest. This training afternoon served as a very good induction to prospective volunteers and a boost for the First Malta



Branch to continue to provide excellent service.

*Sergio Zammit*



# PALESTINIAN RED CRESCENT

*Bianca is a member of the Malta Red Cross Society – First Malta Branch. She is currently working as a human rights monitor in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.*



The Palestinian weekend comes on Friday and Saturday with Friday being considered the holy day. It is for this reason that every Friday sees demonstrations being organized in various locations around Palestine. The target of these demonstrations is the wall which contrary to popular belief is built across and not around Palestinian towns and villages. In this way it successfully divides families from their fields and many times their only source of income as well as from schools, hospitals and places of work, not to mention from other family members. In this context, every Friday Palestinians gather

together with Israelis and Internationals in order to demand that human rights be observed and justice served, for the wall was declared illegal by the International Court of Justice.

Israeli Authorities have responded to the sentence given by the International Court of Justice by continuing to build the wall. In the same manner, non-violent demonstrations are repeatedly met with hostility from the Israeli army in the form of sound bombs, tear gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition. Sound bombs and tear gas canisters are known to enter houses, breaking windows and walls and delivering their poisonous gases. Rubber bullets and live ammunition are also being used with a growing frequency and recently a new high velocity gas projectile is being used as a weapon by being shot towards groups of people instead of in the air as dictated by international accords. This technique has resulted in the paralysis of Tristan Anderson, American activist and killing of Besam Abu Rahme, Palestinian organizer of weekly Bilin demonstrations.

International Court of Justice by



It is in this context that the Palestine Red Crescent Society delivers its emergency and ambulance services every Friday in the various locations across Palestine where demonstrations take place. Most of the first-aiders are volunteers of the same age as the Israeli soldiers, and they are targets of Israeli hostility as much as the demonstrators. Yet, against all the odds they face, their continual presence every Friday is a symbol of their determination to deliver their services in order to “ease human suffering”[1] and support their community.

*Bianca Zammit*

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[1] PRCS website [http://www.palestinercs.org/about\\_PRCS.aspx](http://www.palestinercs.org/about_PRCS.aspx)

# Worth a mention...

*The work of the Branch would not have been possible without the assistance of our sponsors:*



Middlesea Insurance p.l.c.



*Special Thanks to our partners, Intervisions Ltd., distributors of Segways Malta.*





# We Need You

## RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS



**Malta Red Cross**  
First Malta Branch

**Do you feel you CAN make a difference in  
today's world?**

- Would you like to Learn the Latest First Aid Skills?
- Would you like to Meet New Interesting People?

 **We are Recruiting more**  
**Volunteers!**

Email us on [mrc1administration@gmail.com](mailto:mrc1administration@gmail.com) or call 79 000 112  
for more information and to GET INVOLVED TODAY!

**A new First Aid Course will be starting  
shortly and limited spaces are available!**

*THANK YOU*



# Ambulance Posts

## ISLE OF MTV - MALTA SPECIAL

For the third year running, the Malta Red Cross offered its first aid and ambulance service to the public attending the Isle of MTV - Malta Special 2009 event on the granaries in Floriana. The line-up of well known performers, such as The Black Eyed Peas and Lady Gaga, attracted tens of thousands of people who challenged the very high temperatures as well as the Swine Flu scare in order to get as close to the stage as possible.

Our volunteers, in collaboration with doctors and nurses from the Health Department and rescuers from the St. John's Rescue division, assisted a great number of casualties, mostly suffering from dehydration. With our clinics set up near the Independence Monument Statue on the left side of the stage, our help was constantly sought since we were the closest to the audience and highly visible.



The Segways, lent to us by Intervisions Ltd., proved indispensable to reach casualties within a matter of seconds. They were also very helpful in assisting the ambulances to pass through dense crowds.

This post attracted a very high number of volunteers as the event is one of the biggest events on the island. Apart from enabling volunteers to practise their first aid skills elaborately, volunteers could also work hand in hand with members from the Health Department, the Civil Protection Department and other NGOs.

The Isle of MTV held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July was preceded by a number of other parties which formed part of the Malta Music Week. The Branch also offered its services during the parties and concerts held at Popeye Village, Ghajn Tuffieha and Bugibba.

*Sergio Zammit*

For more information on Ambulance Posts and First Aid Services kindly contact Robert Brincau on 79000112.



# VOLUNTEERS ABROAD

## VISIT TO AQUILA

It all began on the early hours of the 6th of April. For many it looked like any other winter night, cold and cloudy, but for the people living in one of the coldest cities in Italy it turned out to be a night they will never forget. It is a tragedy which will also remain imprinted in the minds of those who rushed to the sites where houses have turned into piles of rubble. Since then rescue workers have desperately worked around the clock to save as many lives as possible and till this date cannot remember how many people they saved but can pinpoint every spot in which someone died.



Two months later the picture is still the same. With the beautiful panoramic Apennine Mountains as a backdrop, one can still see the houses and apartments with the shutters closed for the night, with the laundry still on the balconies and where the façade has collapsed with clothes still hung in the wardrobes. Every time the same series of events play in front of your eyes: people running out of their homes in despair taking nothing but what they had on. Once safe outside they were not permitted to get back into the houses and only a small part of the population was given the opportunity to return after weeks, escorted by members of the fire department. At the moment there are around 1,400

of these workers with about 800 vehicles to help them out in the day to day tasks.

All around the city centre, which is a no go zone referred to as red zone, one can see numerous campsites. There are over 150 of them scattered around, ten of which belong to the Italian Red Cross. The entire logistical aspect of these 10 camps is coordinated from the base camp. This first tent was set up in twelve hours and was functional in twenty-four hours in the parking area of a closed factory. Others utilized football grounds, sports centres, squares and other areas belonging to the state.

Apart from providing personal items to the civilians, Red Cross members also pay particular attention to the recreational aspect. In most camps they provide a gamesroom and also nurseries where children and adolescents can do something creative or have some fun during the day. Most of these tents are also equipped with an air-conditioning system and thus are a good refuge during the peak hours when the sun is fiercely hot. At this point in time the temperature during the day may rise up to 34°C and only starts to go down in the evening reaching a minimum of about 16°C.



This visit made us proud to be part of the Red Cross team more than ever. After all the cameras and reporters have left, they humbly continued to make the life of the people sheltering in camps better and as close to normal as possible. Some of them have hardly seen their families in the past two months but continue to perform their job by practicing the seven fundamental principles of Red Cross, which are humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality.

*Paulette Fenech*

# Malta Red Cross

## First Malta Branch

### The Team

**Edward Gruppetta** (Chairperson)  
**James Xuereb** (Vice-Chairperson)  
**Stephen Sultana** (Treasurer)  
**Marie Anne DeBattista** (Branch Secretary)  
**Robert Brincau** (DRT Coordinator)  
**Owen Micallef** (Marketing and PR Officer)  
**Michael Falzon** (DRT Consultant)  
**Sergio Zammit** (Activities and B.D.C.'s Officer)  
**Vanessa Pisani** (Equipment Officer)  
**Paulette Fenech** (Assistant DRT Coordinator)  
**Lina Sultana** (First Aid Technical Advisor)  
**Kevin Carbonaro** (Webmaster)

For more information about the Branch, including our Ambulance Service and First Aid Courses, and if you wish to become a volunteer with the world's most prominent Humanitarian organization, contact us on:

**(+356) 79000112**  
**[mrc1administration@gmail.com](mailto:mrc1administration@gmail.com)**  
**[www.mrc1.org.mt](http://www.mrc1.org.mt)**