CICR

*The humanitarian situation remains difficult for the people of **Bani Walid** in **Libya**. To help those who fled the city after heavy clashes this week, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is working with the Libyan Red Crescent to distribute food, drinking water, medicine and other essential items to more than 10,000 people in the nearby cities of Tarhuna and Orban.*

Many people have had to get out of Bani Walid since fighting resumed in the city almost a month ago. The number of displaced people has been increasing, especially since clashes intensified about a week ago. Many of them have taken refuge in nearby towns, including Tarhuna (100 kilometres northwest of Bani Walid) and Orban (90 kilometres northwest). "These people are distressed, confused and angry. They left their homes with very few belongings and need help," explains Asma Khaliq Awan, the ICRC delegate who is coordinating aid in the area.

Medical supplies for Bani Walid Hospital

The ICRC has entered Bani Walid three times (on 10 and 19 October and on 24 October) since fighting resumed there, to deliver medical supplies and evacuate people. The organization had previously delivered medical supplies to the main hospital and Al-Dahra clinic.

On the last of these visits, an ICRC team was able to evacuate seven foreign health workers to Tripoli who had been trapped in Bani Walid since the fighting began early last week. One of the evacuees had her small child.

The ICRC continues to monitor the humanitarian situation in and around Bani Walid as the fighting continues and to offer separated family members the opportunity to maintain or restore contact. The organization is also providing food, water and other essential items to those who have been displaced.

In Tarhuna, displaced people receive assistance directly from the warehouses of the Libyan Red Crescent. "The impressive thing about the whole operation is that all these displaced people have found shelter with host families in Tarhuna," said Asma Khaliq Awan.

In Orban, a collection of hamlets, most displaced people have likewise found shelter with host families. There are so many of them that some have been staying in schools until host families can take them in. The city council and local organizations have formed a relief committee to look after them, and the ICRC has been channelling some of its aid through the committee.

The usual method of distributing drinking water in Orban is to deliver it to houses by truck from the only well in town. As pressure mounted on schools, the ICRC distributed buckets to eight

schools in the city where IDPs had taken shelter. The ICRC has agreed with the local council that it will supply one truckload of drinking water per day to each of the eight schools for at least a week. This arrangement will also involve delivering water to the main clinic.

The ICRC has provided medical supplies and medicines to a clinic and a health post near Orban to help them deal with the influx of patients. "We have delivered enough medicines and dressing materials for them to treat 1,000 people for three months," said ICRC medical delegate Dr Na'im Isma'il.

Cooperation with the Libyan Red Crescent

The Libyan Red Crescent has been sending teams from cities as far away as Benghazi to support its operations in Tarhunah, U'rban, Bani Walid and Misrata. LRCS ambulances have been transporting the sick, the injured and the dead.