

## ***AZERBAIJAN: EARTHQUAKE***

**Appeal no: 35/00**  
*6 December, 2000*

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 312,438  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 1,200 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

### ***Summary***

Responding to the earthquake which hit the Baku area on 25 November, the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRCS), supported by the Federation and with an allocation of CHF 75,000 from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), is prepared to deliver immediate relief assistance to 300 families (approximately 1,200 persons) in the form heating facilities, mattresses, bed sets, cooking facilities, warm clothes, water/sanitation facilities, and hygiene supplies. Meanwhile, an assessment has started of health and social institutions and IDP centres. The assessment should be completed within one month at which time the Federation and AzRCS may consider a revised appeal.

### ***The Disaster***

On Saturday 25 November 2000 at 22:10 local time (18:10 GMT), Azerbaijan was struck by an earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale, followed by a quake a minute later measuring 6.3. According to the US Geological Survey, the epicentre was in the Caspian Sea 25 km to the south south-east of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. The earthquake was felt as far away as Georgia's capital Tbilisi, 600 km north west of the epicentre.

The earthquake affected the northern-eastern coastline of Azerbaijan, with the main damage occurring between the Absheron peninsula and the Russian border. Baku is situated on the south side of the Absheron peninsula which stretches into the Caspian Sea. Minor earthquakes are a common phenomenon in this area. This earthquake is however the strongest experienced in 150 years and the first to hit Absheron in many years. Absheron, including Baku, is the home of approximately 4 million people, half the country's population. This is a very densely populated area that has grown substantially over the last 10 years in terms of population but not housing, which means the number of occupants per housing

unit has grown. Many of the refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) from the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh have found refuge here.

According to the government of Azerbaijan, 31 people died as a result of the earthquake, 26 of them immediately after the quake and 5 people a day later in a gas explosion. A total of 412 people were either hospitalised or sought medical assistance. Everything from distress to serious fractures are reported. Of the patients that were hospitalised, 42 remain of which 10 are said to be in critical condition.

Immediately after the earthquake 100 buildings were found unsafe and 3,500 people (800 families) were evacuated by local authorities. These families have been accommodated in old hotels without running water and heating. A further 1,000 buildings are expected to be damaged to such an extent that evacuation in the near future may be necessary with the potential of up to 35,000 people forced to leave their homes. Severe damage has been observed in the case of 19 educational institutions of which 11 are primary/secondary schools and 8 colleges and universities. A total of 6 health and social institutions are severely affected. Up to 500 patients were moved within the current facilities to other hospitals and institutions.

5 IDP collective centres are also evacuated with 400 families forced to move. These families have been accommodated in old factories and administration buildings not designed for human habitation, with negative public health implications.

No major disruption of services in terms of electricity, water, sewage or transportation has been experienced. Gas supplies were cut immediately after the earthquake as a precautionary measure, but this is now resumed in most of the affected areas. Electricity was cut in some parts of the city, but restored the next day. The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society office was one of the buildings that was completely destroyed and evacuated.

Although the earthquake was of a magnitude with the potential to cause severe damage to people and infrastructure, the sand/gravel ground upon making up much of the Absheron peninsula absorbed most of the shock of the quake. However, buildings in this area are old and ill maintained due to the devastating economic situation in Azerbaijan. The destruction is not always visible to the naked eye, but structural damages are expected to be substantial.

## ***The Response so far***

### **Government Action w**

An emergency session in the Cabinet of Ministers took place immediately after the earthquake. The President issued a decree establishing a commission led by the Prime Minister. The commission is assessing the situation and preparing an appeal for assistance. The President has allocated 25 billion manats (approximately 5.5 million USD) for immediate assistance. The earthquake revealed the government's lack of capacity to respond immediately after a disaster as no public statement or information were given to the millions of panic stricken inhabitants that occupied the streets of Baku following the quake. Most people spent the entire night in open spaces such as parks, parking lots or parade grounds in fear of another earthquake. The mobile telephone network became overloaded and failed, adding to the anxiety and frustration of people unable to contact their friends and family members.

### **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w**

The Federation issued an Information Bulletin on 26 November, and has since allocated CHF 75,000 from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allowed the procurement of emergency relief items to begin. The AzRCS has established an emergency assessment group currently located within the Federation delegation headquarters as their own office is evacuated. Information is being collected through local representatives and close contact has been established with the government's commission. One group is assessing the material damages, the other looks into the situation for the victim's families, the hospitalised and evacuees.

The Federation delegation is co-operating with and assisting the AzRC in collecting information. Federation staff has participated in the government's information meetings together with the AzRC. Embassies and international oil companies in Baku were briefed by the Federation delegation on 1 December on the current situation and what the Federation and AzRC are planning to do in response to the earthquake. A press conference was called on Monday 4 December by the Federation Delegation and AzRC. All measures are aimed at promoting local fund-raising for the disaster.

#### **Other Agencies' Action w**

The ICRC has no mandated requirement to respond to this particular type of disasters, but the ICRC's Head of Delegation in Azerbaijan participated in the information meeting on 1 December for Embassies, UN agencies and other donors (i.e. ECHO, the Swiss Government, USAID).

UN agencies and local/international NGOs are waiting for the government's Appeal. The majority of the NGOs are focusing their programme activities on long-term sustainability activities such as credits, loans, small business development and training, not relief.

#### **Co-ordination w**

A disaster commission has been set up by the government, but no co-ordinating body among the NGOs is established as of yet. The AzRC is working in close co-operation with the government commission for co-ordination and information sharing.

## ***The Intended Operation***

#### **Assessment of Needs •**

The government is appealing for immediate assistance to the evacuees in the form of heated tents, blankets and cooking equipment. There is also an immediate and anticipated later need for construction material to repair damaged IDP collective centres and social and health institutions.

A detailed assessment has been carried out by the Federation delegation and AzRC and a plan of action and budget has been elaborated (see below).

#### **Immediate Needs •**

Immediate needs are 50 tents, heaters, hygiene articles (soap, laundry soap, tooth paste and brush, sanitation towels), cooking utensils, water and sanitation facilities (latrines and water supply), candles, mattresses, bed sets, warm clothes and blankets. The Federation delegation and the AzRC has surveyed 22 sites (hotels, factories, administration buildings and warehouses) where the most vulnerable people have been accommodated. These are families that are IDPs, very poor and/or with no possible host family. Some of the surveyed sites are in such bad condition (damp, leaking) that tents are considered a better option in the short term. The weather conditions are not favourable this time of year with temperatures dropping below freezing, adding to the urgency of providing heaters. The Delegation is actively seeking alternative temporary accommodation to tents but it proves difficult now in an already overpopulated capital.

#### **Anticipated Later Needs •**

It is anticipated that there will be long-term reconstruction/rehabilitation needs, and a future need of humanitarian assistance for the approximately 35,000 people living in the 1,000 partially damaged houses. Families have to be evacuated during the reconstruction phase. Experiences from other earthquakes in this region show that there are invisible damages to buildings and infrastructure that might have long-term consequences for the population.

The Federation delegation and the AzRC will assess the situation to consider whether there would be further needs related to reconstruction/rehabilitation or refurbishment to be covered with Red Cross and

Red Crescent intervention. This assessment will start immediately and a conclusion should be reached within one month.

## ***National Society/Federation Plan of Action***

### **Emergency Phase •**

The objective is to assist up to 300 families (approximately 1,200 evacuees) living in dire conditions with immediate assistance in form of heating, mattresses, bed sets, cooking facilities, warm clothes, water/sanitation facilities and hygiene articles. Out of these beneficiaries, 50 families living in the most appalling conditions will be accommodated in tents. The following activities will be implemented with the aim of completing the distributions and provision of adequate water/sanitation facilities within the end of the year:

- Immediate procurement of heaters (including kerosene), cooking utensils, blankets, hygiene articles (soap, laundry soap, tooth paste and brush, sanitation towels), mattresses, bed sets, candles, warm clothes and jerry cans to assist the most vulnerable evacuees.
- Tents for 50 families are to be placed at a location agreed with the government/local authorities to assist those living in the worst conditions. Water and sanitation facilities to be provided near the temporary shelters through construction of latrines and provision of water supply.
- The Federation delegation will have overall responsibility for procuring the supplies (all supplies are planned to be purchased locally, except for the tents), complete customs clearance (if required) and deliver supplies to the AzRC warehouses from where the distribution will be organised. The head of sub-delegation in Sabirabad has traveled to Baku to co-ordinate the distribution together with the national society. Logistics, finances and reporting will be the primary responsibility of the delegation.
- The AzRC will be in charge of compiling beneficiary lists and erecting tents.

A longer-term objective is to assess the need for the repair of 6 health and social institutions and 5 IDP collective centres (approximately 2,000 people considered affected) with the aim of assisting in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of institutions and social centres. This will consist of an depth assessment of selected damaged structures such as IDP collective centres and health and social institutions, to identify possible future reconstruction/rehabilitation needs for the most vulnerable population. The Federation's Caucasus Regional Construction delegate will have the overall responsibility for this phase. When all the information is compiled, a prioritised list of institutions will be prepared and a detailed list of required materials issued as a basis for an appeal for long-term rehabilitation/reconstruction. The assessment should be completed within one month.

In terms of capacity building, an emphasis will be on further developing a disaster preparedness and response capacity within the AzRCS. The earthquake of 25 November 2000 once again emphasized the importance of building the disaster preparedness capacity of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent and to clearly identify its role in the national disaster response structure. Relevant immediate steps in this direction will be expanded if the required support is provided through the Federation's 2001 and 2002 annual appeals.

### **Capacity of the National Society •**

The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society is currently undergoing a major transition as a result of a change in the management in July 1999. As many as 88,000 members are registered throughout the country. Baku is the base of the headquarters with 35 full time employees and a number of volunteers. There is also a regional centre in Baku as well as in Sumgayit on the northern side of the Absheron peninsula. The national society owns a 4,200 m<sup>2</sup> large warehouse in Baku, easy accessible and with good standards and security arrangements. The logistics, finance and disaster preparedness and response departments are under training but not on a level to handle an operation of this size and will require assistance from the Federation delegation.

The national society's operational potential is partly disrupted as a result of the earthquake damage caused to their headquarters. A temporary headquarters has been set up in the Federation office but some office equipment is needed in order for the national society to be fully operational. The government has indicated that they might be willing to let the national society lease office space for 99 years in the

same building as the Federation delegation is located, free of charge. However, there will be a need for repair and refurbishment.

#### **Present Capacity of the Federation in Azerbaijan •**

The delegation currently has 6 delegates and 100 permanent local staff in Azerbaijan (mainly involved in the southern Camps operation). Additional resources are hired on an ad hoc basis. With the addition of the regional construction delegate, sufficient resources exist to handle phase one of the operation. Vehicles and warehousing is sufficient, but will need strengthening during phase two. Logistics is currently short on staff and an additional logistics officer should be hired. VHF radio sets for the AzRC staff is also a priority.

#### **Evaluation •**

Monitoring of the programme will be carried out parallel to the implementation with an intermediate and final evaluation planned. This should be done by experts outside the Federation Delegation.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

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<b><u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u></b>		APPEAL No. 35/2000
<b>AZERBAIJAN EARTHQUAKE</b>		
TYPE	VALUE	
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>	IN CHF	
Shelter & constructions		
Tents	85,000	
Tarpaulins / Plastic Sheeting	5,800	
Other shelter materials	2,500	
Clothing & textiles		
Blankets	12,000	
Sheets / Mattresses	6,000	
Winter Jackets / Boots	20,000	
Water & Sanitation	15,000	
Medical & first aid (Hygiene supply)	12,000	
Utensils & tools (Buckets/Jerrycans/Cooking stove, pots & pans,	13,800	
Other relief supplies (kerosene/candles)	11,100	
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>		183,200
<b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>		
Computers	3,000	
Telecom. equipment	5,000	
Office furniture & equipment	10,000	
Household furniture & equipment	10,000	
<b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>		
Programme management (automatic calculation)	21,068	
Technical support (automatic calculation)	6,307	
Professional services (automatic calculation)	6,994	
<b><u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u></b>	15,220	
<b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>		
Expatriate staff	9,750	
National staff	26,500	
Personnel (support costs)		
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u></b>		
Travel & related expenses	5,000	
Information expenses	2,700	
Administrative & general expenses	7,700	
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>		129,238
<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>		312,438
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		312,438