

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

IRAN: EARTHQUAKE

27 December, 2003

Preliminary Appeal No. 25/03; Operations Update no. 1

Preliminary Appeal launched on 26 December 2003 for CHF 15,409,300 (USD 12,290,337 or EUR 9,886,505) for 6 months for 200,000 beneficiaries.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: N/A

Period covered: 26 to 27 December, 2003

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: based on preliminary indications of generous and timely donor support the appeal is some 50% covered (estimated); an updated list of contributions for this appeal will be made available shortly on the Federation's website, reflecting the list of donors who have provided hard and soft pledges.

Outstanding needs: given the scale of the needs, and size and scope of the operation, the Federation encourages donors to continue to pledge assistance to meet this preliminary appeal budget, and the anticipated revised appeal.

Operational Summary: one day after the earthquake hit Iran's Kerman Province, the level of devastation has now become clear, with reports indicating between 10,000 to over 20,000 casualties. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is responding by using its combined strength to effectively marshal support to assist the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRCS), through the Federation. The IRCS, together with the Government, is responsible for coordinating and managing the search, rescue and relief operation, and the Federation emphasizes the need to direct all assistance activities through the national society. The Federation is deploying a five-person Field Assessment Coordination Team (FACT) and a joint British and Danish logistics Emergency Response Unit (ERU) will arrive in Iran by tomorrow (28 December).

Consistent with the original preliminary Appeal, the most needed items include: family tents; plastic sheets/tarpaulin; blankets; kitchen sets; water purification tablets; generators (12 kw); heaters (kerosene); kerosene.

Background

The level of destruction caused by the major earthquake (registering 6.3 on the Richter Scale), which occurred on the morning of 26 December 2003 at 05:28 (local time) in Iran's Kerman Province (south of the capitol Teheran) is just now becoming clear. The earthquake was centered on Bam, an old historical city with low houses and buildings (one to two stories in height). The search and rescue phase of the operation continues, but accurate information from the affected area remains difficult to obtain. Once again, the Federation emphasizes the

Iran: Earthquake; Appeal no. 25/03; Operations Update no. 1

preliminary nature of the estimates. Casualty and injured figures could rise dramatically as rescue efforts continue and are reinforced.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRCS) formally requested international assistance, and the Federation responded by launching a preliminary Appeal (no. 25/03) on 26 December 2003 to provide immediate relief and basic assistance to the intended 200,000 beneficiaries. Relief teams are now arriving on site to deliver and distribute assistance, and assess the situation to better specify the needs, including medium to longer-term rehabilitation requirements.

Operational developments

One day after the earthquake hit, search and rescue operations continue in an effort to locate and treat the injured. Despite widely fluctuating reports and estimates of the number of casualties and injured, the situation remains very fluid and it is still extremely difficult to specify with any degree of certainty the total number of dead, injured, and homeless. The Federation however maintains its estimate of over 10,000 casualties, and between 30,000-40,000 injured. The situation in outlying areas, previously inaccessible, is now being assessed, and the number of injured and dead could well escalate. Since the start of the operation the Federation has emphasized the preliminary nature of the estimates.

Reports from the field indicate temperatures in the affected area are falling to 9 degrees centigrade (and sometimes to 0 degrees), with conditions of snow and freezing rain. Given the fact that the majority of the population in the affected area is now living and sleeping outdoors, there are enormous concerns about the health of those who survived the earthquake, and there is an urgent need to expedite the delivery of the relief assistance currently enroute – in particular tents.

All relief flights are being given priority clearance by the Government, and the international airport in Kerman is being used for this purpose. Recent reports confirm that some 37 aircraft are currently operating in the area to transport the injured from Bam to Tehran and other provinces. So far, some 1,338 injured people have been transported to Tehran hospitals; 152 to Khorasan; 625 to Isfahan; 570 to Shiraz; 362 to Bandarabbas; and 2,927 injuries to other cities. In Tehran, over 150 ambulances are transporting the injured to Tehran hospitals.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Coordination - search and rescue; assessment (FACT), and ERU deployment

The following actions have been taken or are underway:

- a joint German and Austrian Red Cross search and rescue team is being deployed and will be on site imminently.
- a Swiss search and rescue team with sniffer dogs is currently working in Bam.
- the Federation is deploying a five-person FACT team (schedule to arrive in Iran tomorrow, 28 December) consisting of a team leader (head of the Norwegian Red Cross international department, an information delegate, a reporting delegate, a medium to long-term rehabilitation expert, and a disaster management coordinator. The FACT will join the disaster management delegate already in Iran.
- two French Red Cross delegates specializing in water and sanitation will arrive tomorrow (28 December) on French Government aircraft.
- water and sanitation, and health ERU's are currently on standby.
- two German Red Cross relief delegates are currently in Bam conducting an assessment; a report is pending or expected shortly.

Immediate emergency relief (food and basic non-food items, health)

Objective: distribution of relief items

The Swiss Red Cross will be dispatching two flights tomorrow (28 December) to Bam with various relief supplies. Distribution will begin immediately upon arrival. The Japanese Red Cross is providing a basic health clinic. The IRCS has indicated that food items are not a priority for external support. A number of donor national societies are organizing relief flights which will be arriving in Iran over the next few days (*for details or mobilization tables on these relief items please refer to the Federation's Disaster Management Information System – or DMIS*).

Medium to longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction

While the longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs are an important component of this appeal, given the current search, rescue, and relief distribution stage of the operation, the Federation considers it premature to elaborate on the longer-term needs until the FACT team is on the ground and operational.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The high level of media interest in this disaster continues, and the Federation media contact person is working around the hour to satisfy media requests for information, conducting interviews, and is providing key updates to the media as they become available.

For further details please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

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