

# 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

## MOROCCO: EARTHQUAKE

1 March 2004

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 181 countries.

### In Brief

Appeal (Preliminary) no. 06/04; Operations Update no. 2; Period covered: 26 – 29 February 2004; Appeal coverage: 100% (note: contributions are now being recorded in the Federation's systems, and will be reflected shortly on the web page for this operation).

#### Appeal history:

- Launched on a provisional basis on 24 February 2004 for CHF 2,832,000 (USD 2,282,852 or EUR 1,799,553) for 6 months to assist 30,000 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 75,000.
- With Operations Update no. 2, this is now considered a full (and final) Appeal.

**Outstanding needs: none; this appeal is fully covered.**

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: 2004 Annual Appeal for North Africa (no. 01.88/2004)**

**Operational Summary:** With after-shocks and tremors being felt continuously in the northern Moroccan province of Al Hoceima, the entire population of approximately half a million people remains in a state of alert. Exposure to freezing night temperatures together with occasional rainfall is a major concern since some 30,000 of the directly and indirectly affected people are living and sleeping outdoors, mostly in makeshift, improvised shelters. The immediate distribution of tents and blankets is therefore considered a pressing priority. Within its own capacities and available resources, the Moroccan Red Crescent's (MRC's) response, supported by the Federation's Field Assessment Coordination Team (FACT), has been perceived by the affected population as extremely positive, but there is growing pressure on the national society to fill in gaps in the overall response. To address some of these demands, on 28 February the MRC started to enlarge its tented camp with 6 large tents being erected to accommodate 120 persons. This will contribute to alleviating the suffering of a portion of the affected people and to partially ease mounting tensions among the population. The Federation appreciates the timely and generous donor response to this preliminary Appeal, which is now fully covered ([click here to go directly to the attached mobilization table](#)). Parallel to the targeted distributions of 1,100 tents that started on 28 February (in line with priorities identified through the FACT/MRC field assessments in Tamassint, Imzouren and Ait Kamara), the needs of the affected people are being reassessed. Given that this Appeal is fully covered, it is now considered as the full Emergency Appeal, and no revision will therefore be issued. Operational adjustments will be reflected in subsequent Operations Updates.

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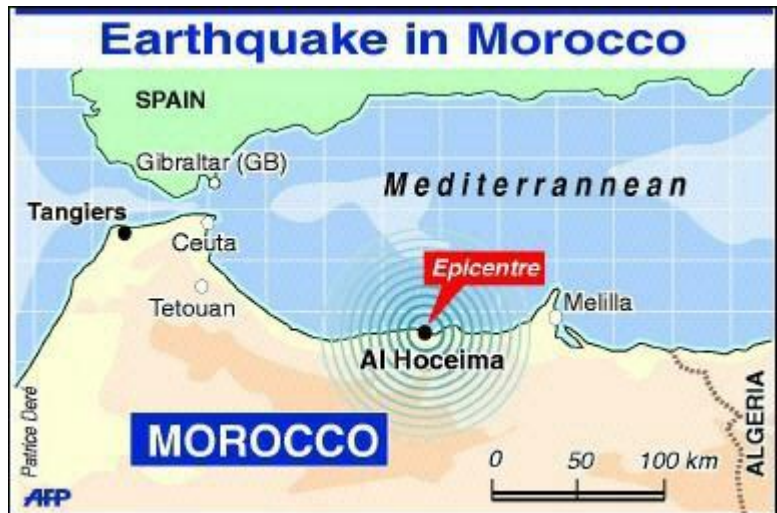
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## Background

At approximately 02:30 am on Tuesday, 24 February 2004, an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale hit north-eastern Morocco. The epicentre was reportedly located in the Strait of Gibraltar, approximately 15 kilometres west of the Mediterranean port city of Al Hoceima (185 miles or 295 km east-northeast of the capital Rabat) capital of the Al Hoceima Province<sup>1</sup>.

## Operational developments

Five days after the earthquake that struck the northern Moroccan district of Al Hoceima, the situation remains alarming as after-shocks continue. According to official reports, the disaster caused 572 deaths, with some 500 injured and several thousand affected. Almost the entire population is staying outdoors with fears increasing with each after-shock. Schools are closed as well as almost all shops in the provincial capital Al Hoceima. The MRC was one of the first organizations to respond to the disaster, together with the civil defence, local communities and authorities, the army and national NGOs.



At the earliest stages of the operation the assessments, mobilization of resources and response activities focused on the affected urban communities. The access to several remote villages was made possible within the 48 hours following the disaster.

The Moroccan sovereign, H.M. the King Mohammed VI arrived in the affected region on the 28 February in the evening for a 48 hours visit. It has been announced that the King Mohammed VI will pay a visit to the MRC/Federation camp on 1 March. In terms of the so-called ORSEC plan (an equivalent of the national emergency response plan), various national players (civil protection, the army, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Health, and others) were mobilized and started to deploy in the region in order to provide search and rescue and other emergency response activities within their respective mandates. The ORSEC has not been updated for many years, and the current operation proves a need to launch as soon as possible a dialogue among national partners in order to better define roles and responsibilities and improve coordination mechanisms.

The Moroccan Army and the Civil Defence have opened several tented camps in the affected urban areas. Many people are however reluctant to leave their destroyed or damaged properties to move to the camps. Damage assessments are underway and governmental reconstruction and rehabilitation projections and plans will be known in the coming weeks.

## Assessment: methodology and main operational findings

The Federation team (FACT/ERU/media and health specialists) together with MRCS counterparts assigned to the fact finding mission started systematic needs assessments in the most affected communities in order to prioritize regions to be assisted and make immediate distributions plans.

Three teams were deployed respectively in the communes<sup>2</sup> of Ait Kamara, Tamassint and Imzouren, which have been reported as most affected. Each of these communities is made up of several villages or local communities. Teams have conducted family to family visits and interviews, as well as meetings with the authorities (local authorities, health authorities, army, civil defence and community leaders) and other national and international NGOs and GOs present on the ground. The information below is based on these sources.

<sup>1</sup> Al-Hoceima is a province of a Taza-Al Hoceima-Taounate willaya.

<sup>2</sup> Administratively Morocco is divided into willaya, willayas are further divided into provinces, provinces into districts and districts into urban and rural communes (commune rurales et urbaine). Rural communes are made-up of several villages or local communities.

Commune	Villages	Population	Dead	Injured	Structural damage
Imzouren		25,000	n/a	n/a	90%
	Iaakayan, Louta, Issout				
	Bni Bou Ayach				75%
	Pont Nekor				50%
Ait Kamara	13 (total)	6,000	200	n/a	
	Tazarine		49	40	n/a
Tamassint	13 (total)	13,000	110	n/a	60%
	Iderdouchen		56	n/a	80%
	Zeniat Sidi Aissa		18	n/a	

### General

In all the villages and communes visited there are visible signs of destruction of houses ranging from 30 to 90 percent. However it was difficult to assess the real extent of the damage due to a variety of situations (for example where outside walls of houses have remained intact but the interiors have collapsed). Families in all visited places are living outdoors nearby their houses in improvised shelters made of improvised material. They are reluctant to leave their farms and move to the camps.

### Shelter

The conclusion of the assessments indicated a clear need for shelter (tents and blankets) for the affected population. Many of the people managed to withdraw basic household items from their collapsed or damaged houses. All interviewed families expressed an urgent need for tents. The lists below outline quantities of tents needed in the most affected communities, and were compiled in consultation with local leaders - mukadems and caids.

<b>EVALUATION OF TENT NEEDS</b>	
<b>COMMUNE TAMASSINT</b>	
Centre Tamassint	372
Tamassint Sonfla	157
Iaadem	102
Idardouchen	244
Zariat Sidi Aissa	270
Aghlid	112
Iaatmanen	149
Ait Aziz	263
Ait El Kadi	88
Ikaltouren	78
Ait M'hand on Yahia	125
Isrihlen	100
Tghanini	95
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,155</b>
<b>COMMUNE AI KAMARA</b>	
Ait Daoud	205
Tazarine	185
Bouham	167
Ait Kamara Centre	285
Ait Benzekri	102
Izafzafan	74
Ait Nassaoud	87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,105</b>
<b>COMMUNE IMZOUREN</b>	
Bni Bu Aya	300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>

<b>COMMUNE BENI ABDELLAH</b>	
Center	63
<b>TOTAL</b>	63
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,623</b>

## Health

Health facilities have not suffered major structural damage. The main hospital in the region is Mohammed V Hospital with 330 beds located in **Al Hoceima**. The maternity wards of the hospital were the only damaged and deliveries are now taking place in the mobile clinic adjacent to the damaged ward. There are two health centres with in patient capacity (Tarquiste and Imzouren with 25 and 30 beds respectively).

The number of disaster-related health urgencies treated in the Mohammed V hospital on the 24<sup>th</sup> February was around 300, out of which 30 were severe cases and 7 were subsequently referred to Rabat Hospital. On 25 February the number of patients treated decreased to 100 patients, a majority with fractures.

The overall health situation seems to be under control with no outbreaks of disaster-related. According to the situation surveyed in most of the health facilities in the region, 50 percent of the patients are currently suffering from psycho trauma and anxiety.

The Moroccan army has deployed three health facilities in the areas of Ait Kamara, Imzouren and Beni Hadifa. The MRC is operating an advanced health post is based in Al Hoceima city centre. An average of 20 patients daily (most of them suffering from stress) sought assistance from the medical team.

Another health centre was established in an army camp erected in Al Hoceima sheltering approximately 2,000 people. The centre provides health care to the population of the camp. An average daily number of 150 patients were recorded in the last two days. Most of the patients suffered from mental distress, injuries, and respiratory infections

**Imzouren:** On February 28, the MRC opened a health facility at the entrance of the Red Cross and Red Crescent camp. Two hundred patients were seen the first day, of which 100 (50%) were suffering from stress and trauma, 50 from chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, 10 from respiratory infections and two from diarrhoea. The remaining 48 people who came for consultation were basically in need of psycho-social support.

**Ait Kamara:** The Health Centre operating under the Ministry of Health receives an average of 50 patients daily. Cases of diarrhoeal diseases were not reported.

**Tazarine:** The Spanish Government deployed (6 February) an emergency team (SAMUR) of three medical staff to operate a basic health centre and a mobile clinic. The mobile clinic is running in cooperation with the MRCS. On the 26 and 27 of February a total of 91 patients were treated in the basic health unit. The majority of patients suffer from injuries, some of them being pre-disaster injuries and respiratory tract infections with some cases of stress reported.

**Tamassint:** The commune of Tamassint has a health centre where most of the earthquake injuries had been treated. The most severe cases were however referred to the main hospital Mohammed V in Al Hoceima. The number of patients currently does not exceed the normal average of 30 per day. The most common pathology is related to respiratory tract infections (50 percent of the cases). The only needs identified in the medical field were expressed by the medical staff in the Tamassint Health centre where there is a lack of tetanus vaccines and antibiotics for serious respiratory tract infections and in the Al Hoceima Mohammed V hospital where anaesthetics were reported as the only missing medical supplies.

## Water/Sanitation

According to the MoH staff responsible for water and sanitation, the systems have not been damaged and the water supply has not been interrupted. Water quality control has been undertaken in Ait Kamara and Imzouren. As a conclusion there is no indication for a possible outbreak of water-born diseases. However the sanitation is becoming an issue of increasing concern, especially in the urban areas given that all camps lack sufficient facilities (latrines especially). The Federation is closely monitoring the situation as well as the WHO that started to inspect sanitation in all the camps.

**Red Crescent camp in Imzouren:**

The expansion of the camp may pose sanitation problems due to the very limited number of facilities available (below Sphere standards).

**Tazarine:** Water is available from the usual sources of supply -- wells that were not damaged by the earthquake. Water quality control has not taken place. Some quantities of water purification tablets with instruction for use were distributed to the population.

**Tamassint:** Water is available from usual sources of supply -- wells that were not damaged by the earthquake. Water quality control has not been undertaken. There were no cases of diarrhoea reported at the Health Centre.

**Food**

Even though there are no acute food shortages especially in the rural areas, access to food is fairly limited particularly in the cities. Most of the shops are closed and markets have not been fully restored yet. A total or partial loss of houses and households coupled with the fact that people live outdoors indicate that the situation needs to be further monitored. In almost all the locations visited, Federation assessment and relief teams have assisted in distributions of bread and other food items such as canned fish, olives and oranges. Distributions to the population were done directly from cars and trucks.

**Response so far: government/other organizations**

According to the information gathered so far, in the Tamassint commune, the Moroccan government distributed blankets, sugar, canned food and flour by helicopters on 27, February. The French Civil Protection donated 140 family tents to the local authorities of Tamassint, but distributions have not taken place immediately due to a lack of consistent distribution plan. The Italian Cooperation donated blankets and basic food items to the authorities of this commune.

In Ait Kamara, the local authorities have distributed so far 1,000 tents. However the quality of these tents proved to be far below the standards and the population expressed deep dissatisfaction. In Tazarine, 140 tents donated by the Spanish government were distributed on 28 February. MSF have distributed blankets and food items.

**Survey on medium terms plans**

In order to assess plans and intentions of the affected people for their immediate future, questionnaires developed by the Federation/MRC team and consisting of 8 basic questions were circulated on 29 February among adult residents of the Red Cross and Red Crescent camp in Imzouren. The results of the survey show:

- out of the total number of 130 families (seven persons per family), 90 percent of people are from Imzouren urban commune and the others from its surroundings;
- nineteen percent (19%) of families are living in the camp because their houses were destroyed; 66 percent because their homes were partially damaged; and the others because they are afraid;
- one hundred and ten families are planning to stay two weeks and beyond in the camp;
- related to solutions to their current problems, 58 percent of the surveyed families plan to reconstruct their homes; 18 percent expect external support in rebuilding their lives and 4 percent count on government support, the remaining families are expecting various solutions and hopes ranging from finding a house somehow and somewhere to an end to the tremors;
- eighty-two families lack any kind of information on government plans and support.

Based on the subsequent analysis of the findings of the survey, the Federation and MRC will determine activities to be further implemented for the benefit of the affected population such as: improving living conditions through increased number and quality water sanitation service, psychological support, specially designed activities for children, and other activities identified as relevant.

**Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

At the time of reporting, 135 MRC-trained relief and health workers from the Al Hoceima, Nador, Meknes, Barken, Casablanca, Kenitra, Bni Melel, Tanger, Khalaa, Agadir and Rabat branches (of which 61 are members of

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the recently established National Intervention team) as well as key staff members from the national headquarters led by the secretary general are carrying out a relief operation based on the following activities:

- shelter to some 1,000 affected people in 140 tents erected in the yard of one school in Imzouren; due to the presence of the volunteers and attention and care given to the people, the camp is very popular. Some 700 people have registered with the MRCS with the view to move to the camp if additional capacities will become available.
- health services through one advanced medical post operated by a team of eight and supported by an ambulance in Al Hoceima and another team and ambulance affiliated to the Spanish SAMUR basic health care unit deployed in the village of Tazarine and Ait Kamara;
- psychosocial activities for children in the tented camp in Imzouren ;
- reception and distribution of relief goods from both national and international donors;
- deployment of three assessments teams;
- coordination with the authorities and local communities' representatives.

At the request of the national society, the International Federation launched the current preliminary Emergency Appeal and deployed a FACT team of five to include a MRCS liaison function and backed up by health and media specialists from the Secretariat in Geneva as well as by a regional disaster management delegate from the Federation office in Tunis. The team was gradually deployed with its members arriving on the ground between 25-27 February. The Spanish Red Cross Logistics ERU, helped with two French Red Cross staff, arrived on 26 February. The Norwegian Red Cross has contributed two mobile warehouses to be used for warehousing, and provided a technician to install them.

The MRCS, the FACT and the ERU are based in the Red Cross and Red Crescent compound in Imzouren next to the tented camp operated by the MRCS. A 16-person team was sent by the Spanish Red Cross to accompany relief assistance sent by road from Spain. Volunteers and teams from the SRC's Melilla branch are also providing a valuable contribution to the operation through deployment of teams of volunteers and logistical support (especially appropriate due to the proximity of the Melilla branch of the Spanish Red Cross to the affected area).

Representatives of the German, Netherlands, Finnish and Swiss Red Cross, as well as Tunisian and UAE Red Crescent, arrived in the area to either accompany the assistance provided through their respective national societies or to make local purchase of additionally needed relief items. All these activities have been fully coordinated by the MRCS and the Federation team.

Representatives of Swiss Development and Cooperation agency (SDA) and the Swiss Red Cross have provided very much needed support consisting of three all terrain vehicles with drivers. The Federation and MRC will use these for distributions in remote villages.

ECHO is supporting the operation through funding of EUR 500,000 provided to the French, Spanish and German Red Cross. Its representatives are also monitoring the operation in the affected region.

The assistance provided by the Spanish Government consists of the basic health unit operated by the Spanish SAMUR in the rural commune of Ait Kamara (Terazine village) and relief items such as 120 tents and some quantities of hygiene kits to be distributed either through local community leaders or through the MRCS network. In addition, the MRCS is supporting the work of the basic health unit with an ambulance and a medical doctor who, together with the Spanish colleagues, visits remote communities and/or if needed evacuates patients to the closest referral hospitals.

### **Emergency relief (food and basic non-food items)**

#### **Basic non-food items**

In order to start the relief operation during the first hours after the disaster, the MRC immediately released the available stocks consisting of 90 tents and 1,200 blankets from its national warehouse in Rabat. The local MRC branches from the affected region itself and the closest neighbouring regions mobilized assistance and teams. A valuable contribution in terms of human resources and logistical support continues to be provided by the nearby branch of the Spanish Red Cross in Melilla.

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During the first two days of the operation, the MRC purchased and or received the following items from national and international donors outside of the current Appeal and distributed most of the quantities purchased/received:

- 400 blankets.
- 383 tents.
- 48 sets bed sheets.
- 12 sleeping bags.
- 25 rain coats.
- 1,400 kg of food items.

Statistics on these donations are in the process of being compiled and will be presented in one of the next updates.

Please note that for details on the relief pipeline mobilised through the current Appeal please refer to the mobilization table available on DMIS (also attached).

### Logistics

With one mobile warehouse for storage erected on 28 February in the Red Crescent and Red Cross compound in Imzouren, the logistics ERU is building the capacity to handle all incoming relief goods. However the volume of announced arrivals in the coming days has made it necessary to urgently identify another warehousing locations and to erect the second mobile warehouse. A lack of forklifts has considerably increased the need for manpower and some 50 people are needed to unload tens of trucks arriving daily. Smooth reception and handling of relief goods has been further jeopardized by bilateral (mainly national) donations to the MRC. A lack of manoeuvring space for trucks outside of the compound has been addressed by allocating numbers to each truck waiting for the unloading thus avoiding frequent jams that occurred in the previous days.

### Food

Various food items (canned fish, edible oil, sugar, tea, baby food, milk etc) arrived in the MRC crisis headquarters/camp in Imzouren. These food items were purchased locally by the branch in Nador and donated by the UAE Red Crescent. Regular daily distributions of bread and milk (for children) are taking place in the tented camp operated by the MRCS.

### Distributions

Distribution of tents as priority relief items started on 28 February in the affected areas of Tamassint and Imzouren. These rural areas and their remote communities were identified as being in the most urgent need of assistance. A total of five hundred tents (500) were distributed directly to the beneficiaries on 28 and 29 February in the local communities of Ndardouchen and Zaouiat (Tammassint rural commune), and 300 in the local community of Bnibouayach (Imzouren rural commune). An additional 400 tents will be distributed on 1 March in Ait Kamara and Bni Abdallah. Further distributions will be regularly carried out in the coming days according to the plan developed by the Federation/MRC relief team.

### Federation coordination

The UNDAC team chaired daily coordination and information sharing meetings for agencies and NGOs. The International Federation/NS representatives attended regularly these meetings providing necessary information on Red Cross/Red Crescent activities, assessment findings and plans.

With the departure of the UNDAC team on Saturday, 28 February the Federation has started to chair these meetings. The number of agencies present on the ground is declining with only ten of them present at the meeting on Saturday.

### National Society Capacity Building

The MRC, supported by the Federation Regional Offices in Tunis and Amman, embarked two years ago on an ambitious plan of building its capacities in various institutional, operational and programme areas with the view of improving its services to beneficiaries by using Federation standardized methodologies and tools. The national society is extremely open to the transfer of knowledge and is genuinely willing to upgrade the organization and adjust its functioning to the best practices.

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Within the frame of these efforts, the MRC, with the support of the Federation, has completed (in 2003) a comprehensive disaster management-training programme consisting of two workshops and a simulation exercise. The national intervention team of 82 members was established and trained according to the unified methodology, and one MRC representative completed FACT training in October 2003 and was affiliated to the current FACT mission as a liaison team member.

The MRC considers that the current operation is in many respects a testing ground for putting into practice the knowledge gained through trainings. The FACT and logistics ERU work hand-in-hand with the national society, with several counterparts being assigned to provide both operational information and undergoing further on the job training.

An internal evaluation is planned to take place at the end of the operation. Based on findings and lessons learned, the MRC plans to fine-tune its operational mechanisms and systems. Some of the preliminary findings are the basis for developing capacity building objectives, and this appeal and operation (now considered the full appeal) will be adjusted accordingly.

**Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

The media service of the Secretariat and an information delegate affiliated to the FACT mission in the field provided visibility for the national societies worldwide through interviews given daily to a number of major international and national media (BBC, RFI, Dubai TV, Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabia, Moroccan Radio and TV channels). Some 30 interviews were given to various media from the field since the beginning of the operation. News stories were published and are available at the Federation web site [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org).

The presence in the field of Abdul, star of the French national rugby team (and originally from Morocco), was used to increase media visibility of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Abdul's visit to the affected people organized by the information delegate was filmed by the TV channel France 3 and will be broadcast Tuesday, 2 March in order to raise public attention to the disaster and highlight the response of the Moroccan Red Crescent.

In addition, representatives of several partner national societies who accompanied the assistance channelled in response to the earthquake provided information and feed back to their national media. Also FACT and ERU logistics team members gave several inter views to the media.

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