

DREF operation



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

China: Sichuan Earthquake

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13 May 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

CHF 250, 000 (USD 236,580 or Euro 153,355) has been allocated from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) in delivering immediate assistance to those affected by the earthquake in Sichuan province. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

The RCSC has launched a national appeal and is currently in discussion with the International Federation on launching an international emergency appeal within the next few days. The RCSC welcomes direct assistance for the provision of relief items to affected populations, especially cash contributions that will allow RCSC branches to purchase items locally, rather than rely on disrupted transportation routes.

Summary: By 7 a.m. Tuesday, 13 May, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs reported 9,219 casualties from the 7.8-magnitude earthquake which hit on 12 May 2008 and affected eight provinces and municipalities including Sichuan, Gansu, Shaanxi, Chongqing, Yunnan, Shanxi, Guizhou and Hubei.

With staff and volunteers on 24-hour duty, the local branches of the RCSC immediately allocated emergency relief to the field after the earthquake hit. Food, water, and tents have been distributed but are still needed. Medical support is a priority at this stage. A joint emergency assessment team of four people from the RCSC headquarters, the Federation regional delegation in Beijing, and the Hong Kong branch of the RCSC is on the way to Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province.

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months to support emergency relief, and will therefore be completed by August 2008. A final report will be made available three months after the end of the operation by 30 November 2008.

[<click here for contact details>](#)

[<click here to view the map of the affected area>](#)

The situation

Wenchuan County, the epicentre of the earthquake, is located 31.0 degrees north latitude and 103.4 degrees east longitude in Sichuan province, according to the State Seismological Bureau. With a population of 111,800, Wenchuan lies in the southeast part of the Tibetan-Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Aba, 146 kilometers northwest of Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan. Wenchuan is home to Tibetan and Qiang minorities. At least 57 people died and more than 300 others were seriously injured in the eastern part of the county, a local official said early on 13 May. "This is only a rough estimate of the casualties in the county seat. It is highly possible that the figure will rise as the actual numbers of casualties in the mountainous area

are not readily available," said Wang Bin, Communist Party Secretary of Wenchuan County. According to Wang, another 60,000 residents in Wenchuan could not be reached since the quake occurred due to damaged telecommunication lines and roads. "More than 30,000 residents are staying outdoors at the county seat despite heavy rains," he said. Wang appealed for emergency aid via a satellite phone early Tuesday, almost 11 hours after the county was cut off from the outside world. "We are in urgent need of tents, food, medicine and satellite communications equipment through air drops. We also need medical workers to save the injured people here," he said.

Of the overall total of 9,219 casualties, 8,993 were in Sichuan, 132 in Gansu, 85 in Shaanxi, eight in Chongqing and one in Yunnan, the Ministry of Civil Affairs said this morning. The tremor also levelled some 500,000 rooms¹ in the affected areas.

Hanwang township of Mianzhu, which is less than 30 kilometers away from Wenchuan and has a population of more than 60,000, suffered serious casualties though the exact number is not available. "A large number of houses along the main street of the township were levelled," a local resident Peng Jia told the news media. Peng, a publicity official with the Hanwang-based Dongfang Steam Turbine Plant, said at least 200 students and teachers were buried after a building of the factory's adjunctive middle school collapsed. The factory's 300-member rescue team has pulled four students out of the debris, with only one still alive. Peng claimed that the high number of casualties will in part be due to a lack of professional rescuers and equipment. Zheng Zemin, deputy secretary-general with the Mianzhu Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, said the city is in desperate need of drinking water, food, medicines, tents and professional rescuers and equipment.

In nearby Beichuan County of Mianyang, the local Red Cross branch reported that by 20:00 hrs on 12 May, about 5,000 people were feared dead, 6,000-7,000 people were buried in the ruin, and at least 20,000 people were injured. Surviving villagers said the old town of Beichuan was heavily covered by giant swaths of debris slides, and the new town also suffered serious damages, particularly the kindergartens, primary and middle schools, and vocational schools. The Mianyang city disaster relief headquarters said about 80 percent of the buildings in the old town area in Beichuan collapsed, and more than 60 percent of the buildings in the new town were destroyed. Cofferdams formed by the landslides in the upper streams of rivers in the county threaten to inundate the downstream areas in Beichuan. As rescuers moved toward the quake-hit centres, rocks slid down the mountains and piled upon boulders the size of houses which were already obstructing various sections of the road.

The earthquake damaged communication facilities, cutting off telephone communication with Wenchuan and nearby areas. Road transportation was also cut off in Aba prefecture. There is still no news about the situation in the townships of Yingxiu, Wolong and Xuankou, which are located exactly at the epicentre. Premier Wen Jiabao, who is in the City of Dujiangyan, about 100 km from the epicentre, has asked relief military personnel waiting in the city to enter the area as soon as possible even if they have to walk to Wenchuan.

Several major highways and expressways in south-western Sichuan and north-western Shaanxi provinces have also been closed, according to the Ministry of Transportation, and over 200 trains have been stopped because of damage to the railway network in and out of Sichuan.

China has launched emergency rescue operations in the quake-hit zones. Premier Wen Jiabao, who arrived near the quake centre on Monday afternoon by plane, said the quake was a "major disaster" and called for calm, confidence and courage. He urged the rescuers to seize every minute to enter the worst-hit areas. By 6:30 a.m. Tuesday, more than 16,760 troops and armed police had been dispatched into the quake-hit areas. More than 34,000 others are on their way by air, rail, motor vehicles and on foot. Early Tuesday, dozens of military vehicles were heading to Beichuan County, where officials said up to 5,000 people are dead.

An executive with the China Three Gorges Project Corporation reported no signs of damage to the dam from the earthquake, and everything was going on as usual.

The weather forecast for Sichuan predicts rain in the next few days, which will inevitably complicate rescue efforts.

¹ The Ministry of Civil Affairs counts the numbers of rooms instead of total buildings. An average one-family home may have 3-5 rooms.

Coordination and partnerships

The International Federation East Asia regional office continues to support the RCSC in their earthquake relief operations. Coordination of appeal-related activities is done jointly between the RCSC headquarters' relief department and the regional office's disaster management team. The International Federation's East Asia regional disaster management team is currently composed of the regional disaster management delegate, the relief coordinator seconded by the Japanese Red Cross, and a disaster management officer. All three have been working closely with the relief department of the RCSC headquarters. The regional finance manager is also providing support to the RCSC headquarters and branches to help them meet financial reporting requirements. The PMER team in both the regional office and the zone will ensure timely reporting, and support from a communications specialist in the region will enable information dissemination to the media and the public.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Utilizing the DREF funds, the RCSC has begun efforts to transport 500 tents and 5000 quilts from Hubei by road, and 300 boxes of water purification materials from Yunnan. All the relief items are being sent to the damaged areas directly and expeditiously. However, the bad road conditions in Sichuan are a serious problem at this time, hindering relief efforts throughout the province.

The RCSC implemented a contingency plan immediately after the earthquake. So far the RCSC, through its regional disaster preparedness centre in Chengdu, has despatched 557 relief tents and 2,500 quilts (worth 780,000 CNY in total) to the affected areas in Sichuan province. A joint emergency assessment team of four people from the RCSC headquarters, the Federation's regional office, and the Hong Kong branch of the RCSC, is on the way to Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province. Local Red Cross branches have sent their own assessment teams to the disaster areas and contingency plans have been put into action. The Sichuan branch has sent two response teams to the disaster-hit areas. In Chongqing, the local Red Cross branch distributed drinking water and food parcels, and also set up tents and shelters in Liang Ping County for those affected, including students who were caught by the collapse of their school building. Many Red Cross branches have also started local fund raising within Sichuan.

The proposed operation

Activities planned:

- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.
- Distribute relief supplies including: tents for 500 families, quilts for 5,000 people, 300 boxes of water purification materials, and 600 boxes of food parcels.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and report on relief distributions.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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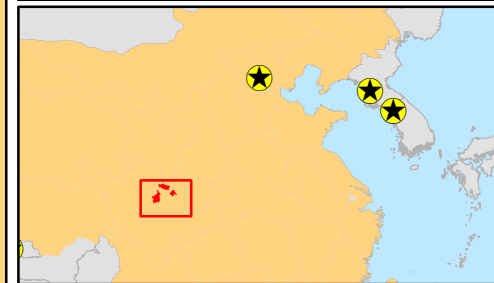
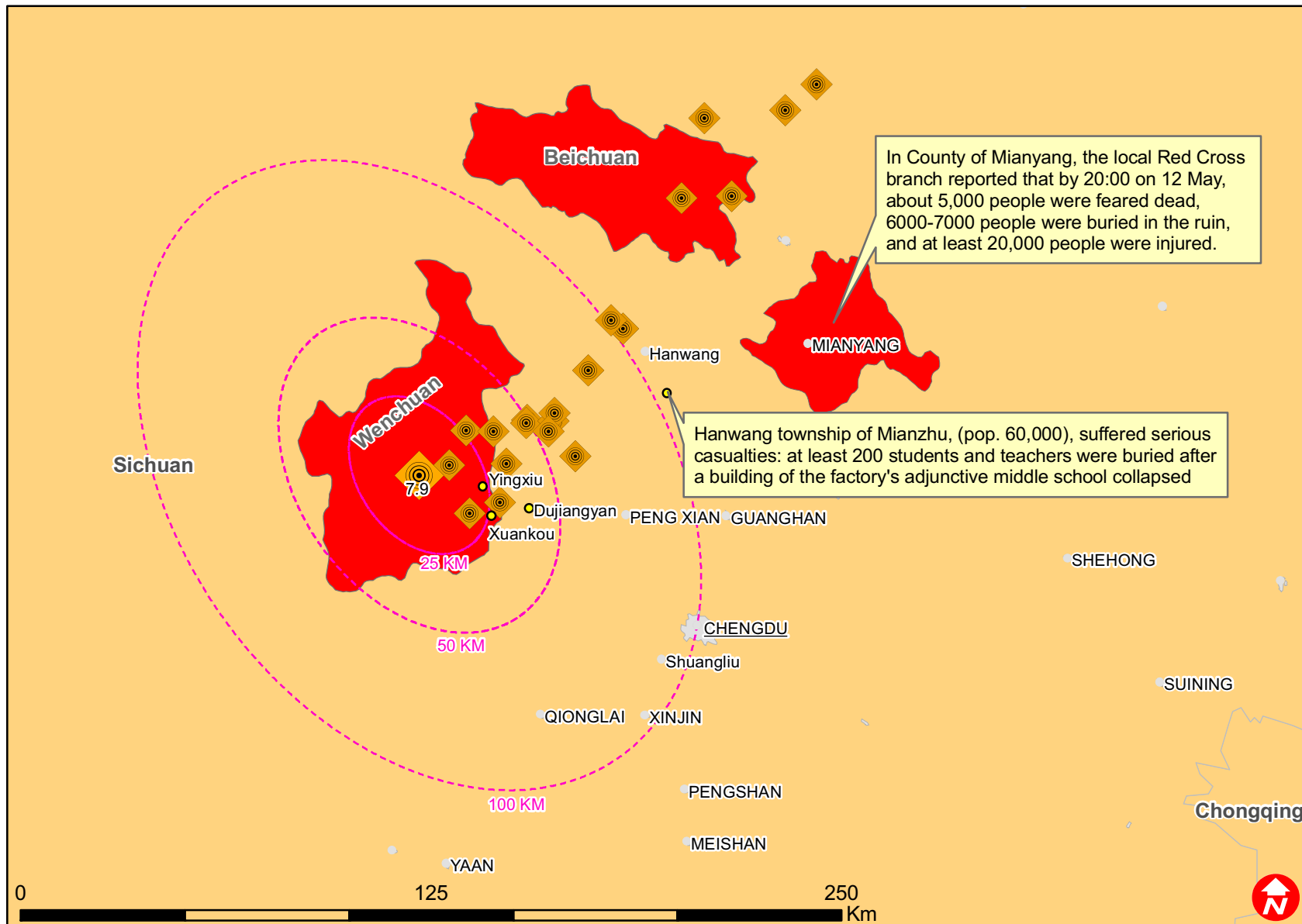
[<Map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



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

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China: Earthquake



-  Main earthquake
-  Aftershocks
-  Most affected counties