

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: EARTHQUAKE

22 September 2003

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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

This document is being issued

for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

An earthquake that measured 6.5 on the Richter scale shook the Dominican Republic shortly after midnight on 22 September. The centre of the earthquake was located approximately 15 kilometres south of the town of Puerto Plata and 20 kilometres north of the town of Santiago, the second largest city in the Dominican Republic. The earthquake was felt in the capital city of Santo Domingo, but was not felt in neighbouring Haiti.

Most of the damage caused by the earthquake was structural and there were very few casualties reported. The earthquake caused two deaths, both heart attacks, and dozens of injuries. Fifty families in the region were evacuated but were soon able to return to their homes. Patients in two hospitals in Santiago, one of which was a children's hospital, were evacuated but there was no damage to the buildings and the patients were able to return indoors.

In Puerto Plata several buildings were damaged including two schools and, in the city centre, a collapsed wall affected vehicular traffic. In Santiago, several schools were damaged and the airport was temporarily closed down, but is now operational again. In the town of Nagua there was damage to a number of schools, mostly consisting of cracks in the walls or floors. In addition, the earthquake caused the roof to collapse in the local public hospital. In the towns of San Cristobal and Cotui there was also some light damage to schools.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Both the Dominican Civil Defense and the Dominican Red Cross sent damage and needs assessment teams into the affected areas in order to determine the level of damage caused and the level of assistance required. The Dominican Red Cross informed the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) of the situation and a delegate from this unit was standing by to be deployed to the region. A staff member from the region was also standing by to provide support with regards to communication, information and reporting. Neither was deployed as the situation was not serious enough to warrant it.

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According to the contingency plan for the Dominican Red Cross, the National Society's blood bank was activated, making available 300 units of blood in the blood banks of San Francisco, Santiago and Santo Domingo to cope with the injuries. The Dominican Red Cross is currently collecting an additional 200 units of blood donated by military officials, and is working to increase the reserve blood supply.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.