

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

China: Earthquake

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Red Cross Society of China is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

Summary: A 7.1-magnitude earthquake in China's Qinghai Province has killed at least 617 people and injured a further 10,000 people with the figure on the rise. According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), this is the strongest quake to have hit the remote mountainous area since 1976. Relief personnel were rushed in, however, excavation and rescue efforts remain difficult as rescue workers deal with the high-altitude environment and debris-littered surroundings.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)



Rescue workers evacuate a survivor after a strong earthquake hit Yushu County on 14 April 2010. Excavation efforts continued overnight with more emergency rescue teams from across China arriving the epicentre. Photo: Xinhua News

The Situation

An earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale hit northwest China's Qinghai Province at 07:49 local time on 14 April 2010 (23:49 GMT on 13 April 2010). Its epicentre was calculated to be 33.1 north and 96.7 east, which is about 50 km away from the Jiegu Township, the government headquarters of the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Yushu, and about 800 km away from Xining, the Qinghai provincial capital. Qinghai is located on the northeastern part of the Tibetan Plateau. Some 750 aftershocks have been recorded with the largest one registering a magnitude of 6.3, about an hour and 36 minutes after the earthquake.

According to the latest official statements, 617 people have been reported dead while some 9,110 people have been injured and 313 are missing. The earthquake toppled 15,000 residential buildings, forcing 100,000 residents to relocate. Electricity, water and communication are completely cut off, while roads linking the airport and Jiegu were blocked by landslides triggered by the quake, although air transportation has been established from Xining.

Many people are still buried under the debris of collapsed houses near the epicentre in the Jiegu Town, home to some 100,000 people. Most of the survivors stayed out in the open area on the first night amid freezing weather or sought temporary shelters in buildings that remained unaffected by the tremor. Rescuers have set up more than 40 tents for survivors in Jiegu, but more are desperately needed.



Rescuers worked overnight to clear debris in Yushu County. Photo: Xinhua News

The Chinese government immediately sent an assessment team while relief teams from Qinghai province and the neighbouring Tibet Autonomous Region were deployed to the affected area. Other teams made up of professional rescuers, soldiers, police officers and medical workers have been dispatched to Yushu from across the country, along with tents, cotton-padded clothes, quilts, food, water, medicine, bulldozers, excavators, cranes, generators and other relief supplies.

The rescue and excavation process is hindered by freezing weather, difficult road conditions, high altitude and thin air. The affected area sits at about 4,000 meters above sea level. Some of the rescuers were reportedly already feeling dizzy due to low oxygen levels in the air soon after arriving at Yushu.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

One day after the disastrous earthquake, Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) has raised the emergency response alert level to the highest following a similar move from the government. RCSC headquarters is coordinating the emergency response action with more relief items on the delivery plan.

An additional 500 tents, 4,000 quilts and 4,000 winter clothes valued at approximately CNY 1,000,000 (approximately CHF 154,000) have been mobilized and are expected to reach the worst-hit areas on 15 April 2010. Other RCSC branches such as the Guangxi, Shaanxi, Guangdong and Hong Kong branches have also mobilized cash and in-kind donations in support of the relief operation. Assessment teams from the National Society headquarters have reached the worst-hit areas and assessments are ongoing together with Qinghai Provincial Red Cross. To better coordinate ongoing assessments, rescue and relief action, a Red Cross response office was established in Yushu county.

Search and rescue teams have already reached the area, and two medical teams from the Beijing Red Cross branch was also sent to the area. Along with the team, eight ambulances, a first-aid unit, a surgery unit, a food aid unit and emergency communication equipment were also brought in.

Furthermore, RCSC has also deployed one water unit and one sanitation unit which was used during the Sichuan Earthquake operation in 2008. Both units are already on their way to the area and are expected to be in place soon.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) East Asia regional office is closely monitoring the situation together with RCSC and providing updated information as it becomes available. It has indicated readiness to support RCSC's relief operation however necessary.

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 \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

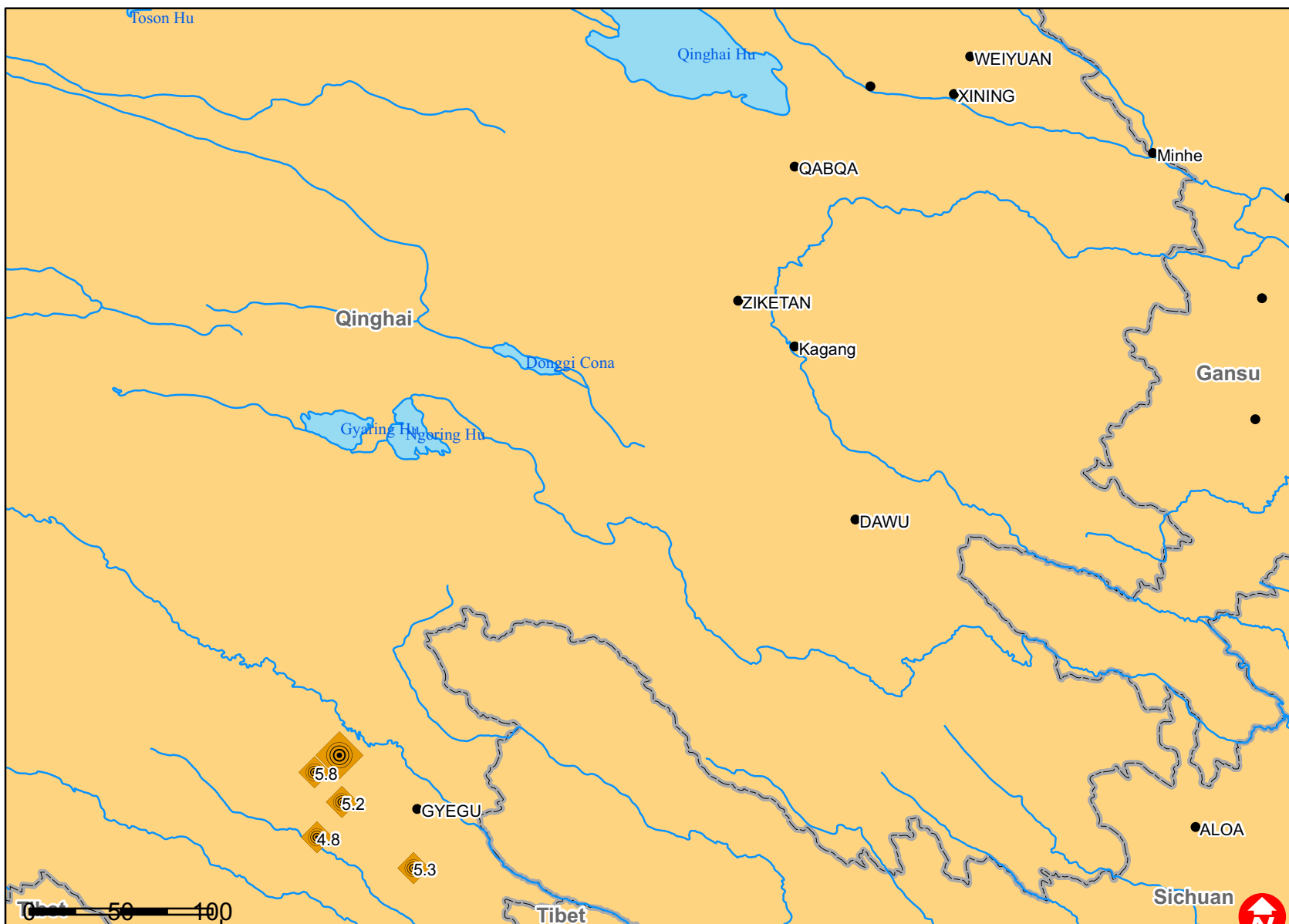
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[<map below; click here to return to the title page or contact information](#)



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-  Main earthquake
-  Aftershocks
-  Main cities
-  Provinces