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CHINA : EARTHQUAKE IN YUNNAN PROVINCE

The Chinese authorities have given clearance for a Federation relief plane to fly in more than 16 tons of emergency supplies for victims of the Yunnan earthquake, the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) told the Secretariat this morning.

The flight will deliver 100 tents, 5,010 blankets, 2,000 jerrycans and 594 kgs of plastic sheeting to Kunming, close to the disaster area. The total value of the goods is CHF 76,000. The departure time will be finalised shortly.

A flight organised by the British Red Cross on behalf of the Federation, carrying 30 tons of blankets and plastic sheeting, is scheduled to leave Britain on Friday and, after a stop-over in Moscow, to arrive in China on Sunday night.

The two flights will back up the airlifting of relief supplies by the RCSC. As already reported, the Society air-freighted medicines and padded coats to Yunnan on 5 February; today it is flying in consignments of medicines on two planes, the second also carrying the headquarters team headed by the Society's Vice President. Immediately on arrival the team will begin an assessment of emergency needs.

The latest figures on the earthquake toll, as reported by the RCSC this morning, are: 242 deaths, more than 4,000 seriously injured and 14,073 slightly injured. About 410,000 houses have been destroyed or badly damaged. The direct economic loss is put at about RMB 4 billion.

The Yunnan RC now has 200 doctors and nurses in the earthquake area providing medical care for victims and has distributed the relief supplies which, as reported earlier, were despatched immediately after the disaster.

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