

MEXICO: OAXACA & GUERRERO STATES. EARTHQUAKE

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The Disaster

The 7.6 force earthquake that struck Mexico's Oaxaca & Guerrero states was the strongest registered in Mexico in over 14 years and serious casualties were avoided only because of the relatively low population density in the area of the epicentre. A further tremor of 4.8 on Friday added to tensions. Nonetheless, the damage to those areas impacted is significant and is now becoming available as local government and Mexican Red Cross rescue and assessment teams send in further information.

As of Sunday, 3 October 1999, the following confirmed statistics were available from the field and the Mexican Seismic Institution, SINAPROC: 18 fatalities (16 in Oaxaca state, one in Vera Cruz and one in Mexico federal district); 47 injured; 418 displaced persons in seven shelters; 300 houses destroyed and approximately 3,500 damaged.

Serious damage is so far reported in Puerto Escondido, Jamiltepec, Tutultepec, Pinotepa Nacional and Santa María Colotepec. Those affected are receiving assistance from members of the army, Red Cross and other relief organisations.

In Santa María, 300 houses are reported to be completely destroyed. In San Pedro Tututepec, 20 communities are isolated because of the floods. According to the Red Cross evaluation team reporting at 19:h30 local time on 1 October 1999, approximately 3,000 buildings have been registered as damaged, with half considered seriously damaged.

In Juquila, Oaxaca, one hospital was evacuated and the state hospital was damaged but is operational. Assessment and rescue efforts are being hampered by heavy rains and flooding which have destroyed bridges in Mixtepec, cutting off communities in Bajos de Tilan and San Pedro Tutuepec.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Mexican Red Cross Assessment teams, co-ordinating with the Air Force and military units, are slowly providing reports from the damaged areas though communication remains difficult. Two teams are operational, one in the Puerto Escondido area of Oaxaca state and another in Guerrero. The co-ordinator for disaster response, also a State Delegate, is providing specific information as it is received from the teams, but confirms that the conditions the teams are experiencing in the field will continue to limit full assessment details.

In the meantime, in consultation with the senior management of the Mexican Red Cross, a Federation delegate has been deployed and is now in Mexico to provide support to the National Society in the

affected region. The immediate task of the delegate is to ascertain if and what further assistance may be required by the National Society, and to co-ordinate with other Participating National Societies in the field.

The Canadian Red Cross has started to accept donations for the earthquake and the American Red Cross is maintaining support as reported in previous Information Bulletins.

Needs

Any needs will reported in the next Information Bulletin.

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