

NICARAGUA: Masaya Earthquake

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The Disaster

On 6 and 7 July, two strong earthquakes (5.4 and 5.2 on the Richter scale, respectively) shook the main central coastal region of Nicaragua. Its epicentre was situated 6 kilometres from Masaya city, resulting in significant damage to populated mountainside villages and infrastructure.

The seismic tremors that affected the Masaya department have lately fallen into relative calm and the population is getting back to normal. The Nicaraguan Institute for Territorial Studies (INETER) has initiated a series of geological studies in the region of the Apoyo Lagoon as well as the urban area of Masaya.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Nicaraguan Red Cross divided its humanitarian activities into two phases:

In the urban area of Masaya city, 1,690 families were assisted (phase one) during the emergency with goods supplied by the Nicaraguan population, the American Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross.

The Red Cross brigades carried out an assessment in urban and rural areas of Masaya and identified four municipalities (Tisma, Caterina, Diria, and Diriomo) in which the Nicaraguan Red Cross will implement its assistance programme (phase two) for 800 families.

In response to the Nicaraguan Red Cross request for assistance to 800 families, the following has been received from the Federation and PNS:

Federation	CHF 45,900
Spanish Red Cross	CHF 17,000
American Red Cross	CHF 17,000
Canadian Red Cross	CHF 10,338

The total amount of CHF 90,238 covers the total budget.

The procurement of relief items has been concluded. The National Society will begin phase two on 23 August with a three day distribution in Masaya.

The Spanish Red Cross is financing an additional programme of psycho-social support and tropical disease assistance for the population of Masaya with a total value of CHF 25,500.

Needs

The Nicaraguan Government established a Special Damage Evaluation Commission, backed by the “Law on National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation”. Immediately after the earthquake the Commission was activated along with the Infrastructure Commission co-ordinated by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure. This Commission comprises representatives from the central government institutions, private initiative and University of Engineering.

The destruction of houses was extensive due to construction faults, specially on the buildings located close to or on the mountain slopes. The Nicaraguan Red Cross is presently discussing the construction of foundations for new houses with the German Red Cross. The reconstruction might, however, cause environmental damage if the trees in the surrounding area are used as construction material.

The Nicaraguan Red Cross is reviewing proposals received from other aid agencies in order to avoid any duplication of efforts.

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