



EL SALVADOR: SEISMIC SWARM

DREF Bulletin
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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 185 countries.

In Brief

- This DREF Bulletin is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time.
- On 27 December 2006 CHF 60,000 (USD 49,710 or EUR 37,712) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs in this operation.
- This operation is expected to be implemented over 2 months, and will be completed by 27 February 2007; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation by 27 May 2007.
- Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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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 \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for

national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and current situation

A seismic swarm became active on 17 December in the western Department of Ahuachapan. Between 17 and 26 December, 950 tremors have been registered, of which 150 were felt by the population in the areas of Atiquizaya, Turín, San Lorenzo, Apaneca and Juayua (see Annex 1). The swarm showed a declining tendency on 18 and 19 December until it entered into a new cycle of activity in the early hours of 20 December with strong localized quakes. The shallow nature of the quakes has been replaced by quakes of a higher local intensity, the strongest being of a 4.6 magnitude (Intensity level VII)¹.

The quakes felt on Wednesday and Thursday have done the worst damage in terms of infrastructure; the numbers presented by the Ministry of Housing have shown that in the five affected Municipalities 1,637 homes have been damaged with 875 homes suffering severe damage (uninhabitable), 512 homes moderate and 250 homes minor damage. 80 percent of the damaged homes are in the rural zones and 20 percent in urban areas. The estimated affected population by the swarm stands at around 9,000 people.

Preliminary data of damaged homes²

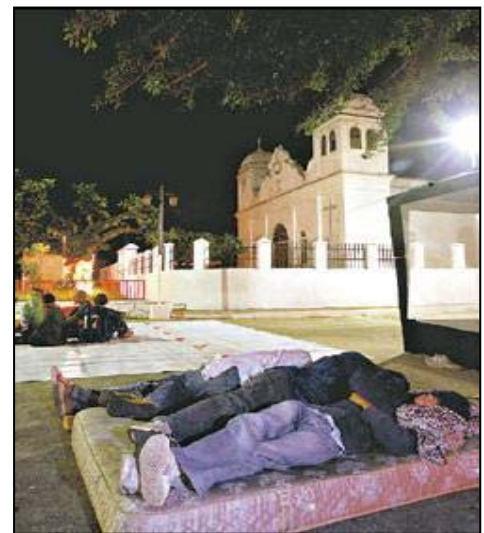
Village	Minor damage	Moderate damage	Severe damage	Total
San Lorenzo	167	212	225	604
Atiquizaya	83	300	310	693
Ahuachapan			115	115
Turin			125	125
El Refugio			100	100
TOTAL	250	512	875	1,637

Authorities indicate that the seismic cluster in Atiquizaya-San Lorenzo-Turin still persists. Although tremors are diminishing in number, they are still being felt to date. As observed in previous similar situations, these seismic cycles decrease and increase some time thereafter, in light of which this situation is being closely monitored.

The origin of this seismic cluster is attributed to the activation of local fault and is therefore not related to the recent activity of the Ilamatepec volcano or with the also recent thermal activity in Ahuachapan.

Seismic swarms have been reported previously in this area, the most recent being in Turin and Atiquizaya on 7 - 13 of April 2005, registering 183 earthquakes of which 24 were felt by the population.

A state of emergency has been declared by the president of El Salvador for five municipalities: Atiquizaya, Turin, San Lorenzo, Refugio and Ahuachapan; seeking to ensure emergency measures to improve the situation of thousands of victims in this zone. Following the reactivation of the swarm, Civil Protection declared a yellow alert in the five affected municipalities, which activated all national emergency response entities under the Civil Protection System.



People sleeping outside of their homes in the Municipality of San Lorenzo

¹ Intensity level VII – Difficulty maintaining standing position, is felt by drivers of moving vehicles, furniture breaks, visible and serious damage to building structures, waves in standing water.

² Source: Ministry of housing 26/12/06

Because of past experience, the population is in a heightened state of alert and some have been sleeping outside of their homes for fear of stronger tremors.

In addition to the seismic activity, a cold front has appeared in El Salvador carrying winds between 30 and 40 kilometres per hour with occasional surges of up to 50 kilometres per hour. A slight dip in temperature is expected in the hours of night and dawn. Weather conditions are expected to prevail until 27 December and start to fade gradually on 28 December.

Although the majority of the population is staying close to their homes, one official shelter has been established in San Lorenzo with approximately 100 people. Since large numbers of the population in rural areas still remains outdoors, shelter (plastic sheeting or tents) has been assessed as one of the major needs at this moment.

The main areas of action to date are:

Temporary shelter: Although the municipal authorities have reported a total of 2,245 damaged homes, the government started on 26 December the provision of temporary shelter materials to 1,000 families in five of the affected municipalities. The shelter package consists of: 36 zinc sheets, wood, nails, hinges and tools. The distribution centre for these items has been established in Atiquizaya.

Food: The Spanish International Cooperation Agency started the distribution of food assistance. The World Food Programme (WFP) has given 23.3 tons of food items to the government, which will be distributed to the affected population by the mayors of the different villages.

Hygiene kits and mattresses: Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRCS) has distributed 325 hygiene kits, while the Spanish International Cooperation Agency has distributed 225 packages and 340 mattresses.

Plastic sheeting and tents: World Vision has given 50 tarpaulins to the affected population, while the military provided 100 tents as a loan. The Salvadoran Red Cross has distributed 325 tarpaulins in the rural area.

Red Cross action

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC) activated its National Intervention Teams (NIT) and provided initial response to the emergency situations by supporting activities such as First Aid care, needs assessments and the provision of immediate relief items in the form of plastic sheeting and hygiene kits to 325 affected families (some 1,625 persons) in the municipalities of Atiquizaya and San Lorenzo. At the moment, the population of these two municipalities in the western department of Ahuachapán seem to be the most affected.

Activities that have taken place have been in charge of the National Relief Department which, in line with the National Response Plan, has offered support at the local level by mobilizing NIT members from the Santa Ana Branch, relief items, power equipment, telecommunications equipment and other items. Visibility and equipment of volunteers in the Branches of Atiquizaya y Santa Ana need to be improved in order to increase their operational capacity.



Distribution of relief items on 23 December

The SRCS in coordination and with the assistance of the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has designed a Plan of Action to reach a total of 500 families (2,500 beneficiaries) to be implemented with CHF 60,000 from the Federation's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF).

Objective 1: 500 families (2,500 beneficiaries) affected by the seismic swarm in the area of Ahuachapan benefit from the distribution of humanitarian aid, psychosocial support and disaster preparedness activities.

Activities planned to reach this objective: The Federation and the SRCS will distribute hygiene kits, blankets and tarpaulins. Each family will receive one hygiene kit, five blankets and one tarpaulin.

In order to achieve this objective the National Society plans to carry out the following activities:

- Identification of affected families
- Selection and registration of beneficiary families
- Psychosocial support
- Support to volunteers
- Dissemination of earthquake preparedness materials -posters.
- Distribution of 500 Hygiene Kits (one per family)
- Distribution of 2,500 blankets (five per family)
- Distribution of 500 tarpaulins (one per family)
- Reporting and information

Hygiene kits that will be distributed contain the following items:

Hygiene kit	
Item	Amount
100 % Cotton towel, 70x30 cms	5
Soap 250 gr	5
Shampoo 250 ml	5
Tooth brush	5
Tooth paste, 100 gr	5
Toilet paper, roll	5
Sanitary napkins, box 10 units	12
Deodorant - roll on	2
Disposable razor	5
Comb - man	1
Comb - woman	2
Calculated for a family of five members for a period of 30 days	

Timetable of planned activities:

Activities	Weeks			
	1	2	3	4
Receipt of relief items from PADRU	X			
Selection and registration of beneficiaries	X			
Psychosocial support to beneficiaries	X	X	X	
Distribution of earthquake preparedness posters and talks			X	
Distribution of relief items	X	X	X	
Reports				X

Coordination

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society is part of the National Emergency System (Sistema Nacional de Emergencias - SISNAE), which coordinates all disaster response activities on behalf of the Salvadorean government through its Emergency Operations Centre. Coordination takes place at national, departmental, municipal and community levels with the Commissions of Civil defence, and other present organizations such as WFP, World Vision, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), CARE, Spanish International Cooperation Agency and others in order to share needs assessments and coordinate response activities. The current plan of action of the National Society is based on these assessments and information stemming from coordination meetings, and has been developed to respond directly to this phase of the emergency. If further needs arise, a more complete strategy will be developed.

From the onset of the disaster, the SRCS has liaised with PADRU which will support the National Society with technical and logistics resources. A Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member will be deployed to support the SRCS in the coordination and implementation of the plan of action.

The operation will be executed under the direction and supervision of the National Relief Department of the SRCS in coordination with the Ahuachapan departmental Branch, the Atiquizaya local Branch and the support of NITs and volunteers of the different local Branches of Ahuachapan and Santa Ana.

Psychosocial support to the affected population is coordinated with the Community Health Department of the SRCS.

Communications – Advocacy and Public information

Through continued public and media relations it is hoped that the public will develop an even better understanding of the mission of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and the activities the organization undertakes in serving affected communities. As a member of the International Federation, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society seeks to promote the Fundamental Principles in all activities and subsequently facilitate additional visibility of the Movement as a whole.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – Principles and Values

The Federation is working with the Salvadorean Red Cross Society to assist the most vulnerable. In the planned operation, the activities to be carried out in First Aid, psychosocial support, emergency response and disaster preparedness are based upon the principle of humanity. Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the level of vulnerability of those affected, respect of the culture and ensuring gender sensitivity.

Activities planned for this operation are based on the SPHERE project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response. The operation will ensure transparency through the drawing up and dissemination of narrative and financial reports. All objectives put forward in this DREF bulletin are in line with Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement.

[Annexes below,](#)
[click here to return to the title page or contact information](#)

Annex 1

Map of the affected region



Annex 2; Budget summary

Description	Amount	Unit	Cost	Total USD
Blankets	2,500	unit	3.53	8,825.00
Hygiene kits	500	Kit	18.55	9,275.00
Tarpaulins	500	unit	12.02	6,010.00
Shipping and insurance	1			3,000.00
PSR – International Federation (6.5%)	1			1,895.00
Custom charges	1			200.00
Visibility	1			1,000.00
Disaster preparedness posters	2000	unit	0.40	800.00
Volunteer support	50	unit		3,000.00
Operational charges	1	total	5,000.00	5,000.00
TOTAL USD				39,005.00