



**DREF Bulletin**  
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## CHILE: EARTHQUAKE

*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. CHF 150,000 (USD 129,422 or EUR 89,659) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs of those affected by the earthquake. This operation is expected to be implemented over a minimum period of three months, and will be completed by 15 February 2008; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 15 May, 2008). 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

On November 14, 2007 at 12:40 local time, a strong earthquake measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale hit the north coast of Chile (source: United States Geological Survey). The epicentre was located in Quillagua, 40 km east of the coastal town Tocopilla and 175 km north of the city Antofagasta. The earthquake was caused by the release of pressure caused by the subduction of the oceanic Nazca plate beneath the South American plate. [Click here to go to a detailed map of the affected region.](#)

Latest reports indicate there are 15,000 people affected, 157 people wounded in the II Region of Antofagasta and 5,000 houses have suffered damages in the locality of Norte Grande. 400 emergency shelters have been mobilized to be set up in the affected area. In the town of Maria Elena, 70 percent of the houses have structural damages. Improvised shelters housing 200 families have been opened and 70 percent of electricity is down. Local authorities have promised to have a complete needs and damage assessment in order to identify the immediate needs of the affected population.

The towns of Tocopilla and Maria Elena were the worst affected, with populations of 24 thousand and 7 thousand respectively. Two lives were lost in the town of Tocopilla, and 115 people were injured, of which 89 women, 19 male and seven children.



Map showing the epicentre of the earthquake in Northern Chile. Source: Chilean Red Cross

A group of construction workers were rescued from a tunnel where they were carrying out reparation works. Two miners have been reported missing since the earthquake. Mining activity in the area, a major source of employment and income for local populations, has been temporarily paralyzed.

On 15 November, the Chilean government through its National Emergency Office (Oficina Nacional de Emergencia – ONEMI), sent 14 tonnes of relief items including camp beds, mattresses, blankets, kitchen kits, tents, cookers and water tanks to assist those in need. In addition, the government has confirmed that it will provide 1,000 temporary homes in the coming hours and has also installed 100 chemical toilets. The Chilean President and four cabinet ministers have visited Antofagasta and other affected areas. The Minister of the Interior has formally declared the region a *catastrophe zone*, a measure which will help speed up the delivery of aid. Private companies have offered to support efforts by contributing building materials.

Nearly seven tonnes of humanitarian aid are being sent by the Peruvian government's Civil Defence Institute (INDECI) to support those affected by the earthquake. This aid includes water, mattresses, blankets, hygiene kits and kits for babies (including diapers, wet wipes, powdered milk and bottles).

There have been two major replicas measuring 6.2 and 6.8 on the Richter scale (source: United States Geological Survey). On 16 November around 40 minor tremors were felt in the region. At least two to three replicas are being felt every hour causing significant stress amongst the local population.

## **Red Cross action**

Since the onset of the emergency the Chilean Red Cross (CRC) National Relief Department activated their response mechanisms and is assisting those people affected by the earthquake. The National Intervention Team (NIT) has been activated including three members from the affected zone. The CRC volunteers from the northern I and II Regions are on alert. With the support of 50 volunteers, including two Regional Intervention Team (RIT) trained volunteers deployed to the affected areas, immediate relief activities are taking place.

As water systems have been cut off, firemen have been distributing water, although this is mostly murky and undrinkable. The CRC has been encouraging local populations to use this water appropriately and promoting personal hygiene through local radio spots. In the capital Santiago, the CRC has launched a campaign for the donation of food items. At the request of the CRC, the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has deployed a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specialized in Water and Sanitation to assist operations in the field.

The recurrent replicas are causing continued stress amongst the already emotionally traumatized population. The CRC was the first institution on the ground providing psychosocial social support to people affected by the earthquake in Tocopilla.

The collapsed hospital in Tocopilla has received 120 people with medium and serious injuries. The CRC has installed two tents to provide additional medical care and psychosocial support which, in conjunction with the temporary hospitals installed by the armed forces, are providing medical care to the affected population.

The CRC is participating in coordination meetings. ONEMI organized the first coordination meeting on 15 November, with the participation of CRC. During the meeting the CRC was recognized as a key actor in sanitary support (also by law) and that the National Society could support response efforts in the areas of pre hospital healthcare, first aid and water and sanitation.

The National Relief Coordinator has been deployed to the affected area to evaluate the situation on the ground and coordinate activities. The Federation's Regional Representation in Lima and Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) are supporting the National Society by activating regional response mechanisms including the allocation of funds from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and the mobilization of a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member.

## The needs

### Immediate needs:

The most immediate needs identified by the Chilean Red Cross (CRC):

- Milk
- Diapers
- Hygiene kits
- Blankets

**Longer-term needs:** The early recovery and rehabilitation needs of the affected population will be reviewed by assessment teams and the response of the CRC will be adapted accordingly.

### The proposed operation

**This DREF seeks to support immediate response activities for the affected communities in the Northern region of Chile. Since the initial assessments are still being carried out, the CRC is preparing a plan of action which will be presented shortly.**

The CRC has requested support from the International Federation, through PADRU, in the areas of water purification, health promotion and hygiene. Objectives and planned activities will be adjusted in line with more detailed information resulting from damage and needs assessments, including possible clean up operations, health, shelter and water and sanitation needs.

## Communications and coordination

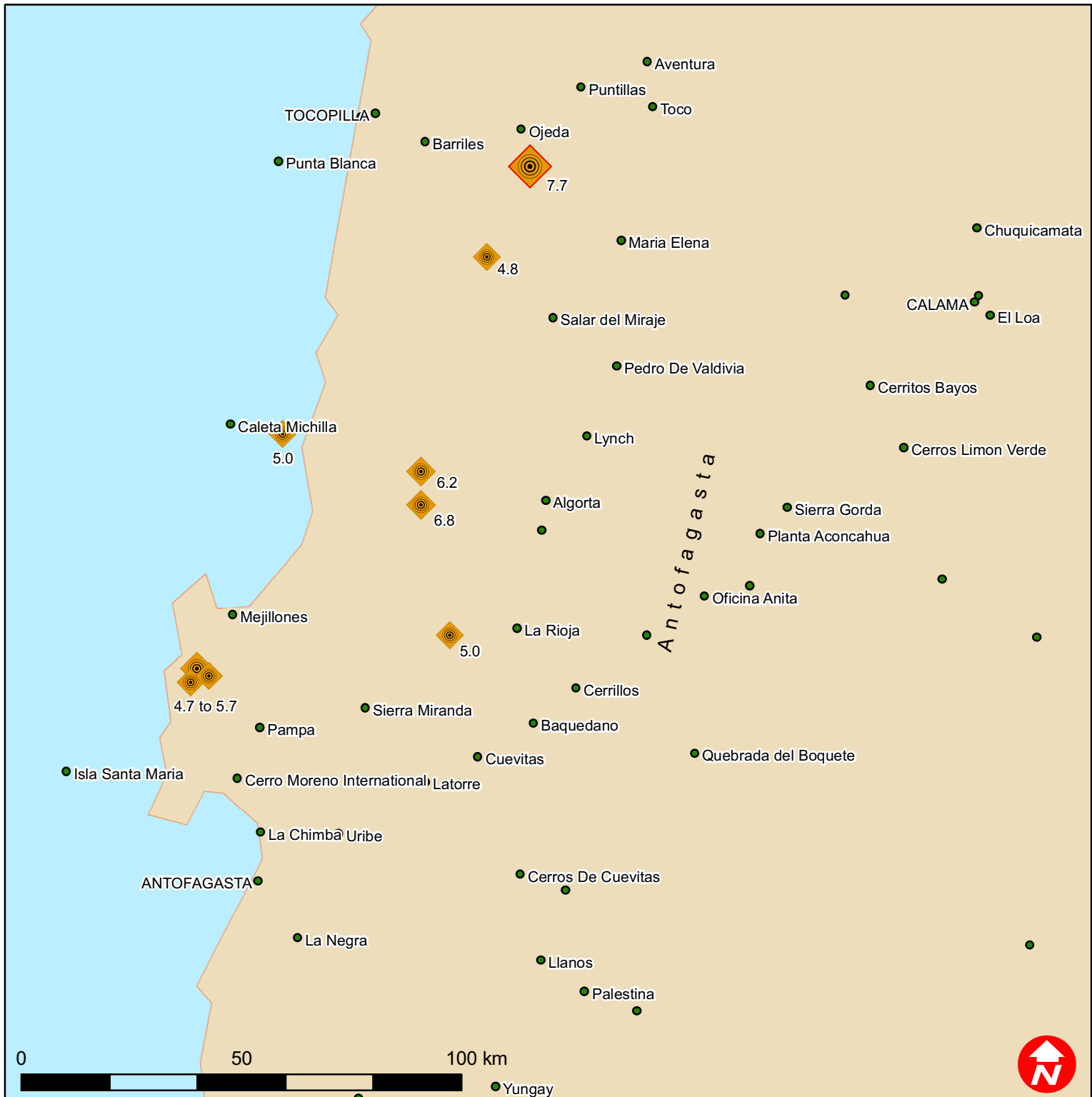
Maintaining a steady flow of timely and accurate information between the field and other major stakeholders is vital for fundraising, advocacy and maintaining the profile of emergency operations. During an operation, communications between affected populations and the Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as with the media and donors, is an essential mechanism for effective disaster response and the cornerstone to promote greater quality, accountability, and transparency. There has been close coordination and support to the CRC to increase the visibility of their actions in regards to the communication through the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), the Regional Representation Office and the Communications department of the International Federation's Secretariat in Geneva. Furthermore, the communication activities targets five main target audiences: the media, the Red Cross Movement, beneficiaries, local authorities and donors.

There have been four reports issued through the Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) on the global Federation website. An Information Bulletin has been published and further DREF Bulletins will be published on the global Federation website <https://www.ifrc.org> and the regional website [www.cruzroja.org](http://www.cruzroja.org) as the operation progresses.

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