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Information bulletin

Afghanistan: Earthquake

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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| Date of issue: 2 November 2015 | GLIDE n° EQ-2015-000147-AFG |
| Date of disaster: 26 October 2015 | See Information Bulletin n° 1 for South Asia for details |
| Afghan Red Crescent Society point of contact: Abdulrahman Kalantary Director for Disaster Management Email: abr99@yahoo.com | IFRC point of contact: Charles Godfrey Byamugisha, disaster management delegate, email: charles.byamugisha@ifrc.org |
| Number of people affected: 5,457 families | Number of people to be assisted: 2,000 families |

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation. The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) – with support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other Movement partners – is responding to the needs of affected people in the eastern and north-eastern regions of Afghanistan. The ARCS is accepting external support from partners and IFRC is processing a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) request, with the emergency plan of action to be posted on 3 November 2015.

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The situation

Around 13:40 local time (UTC +4:30) on 26 October 2015, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck Badakhshan Province in the north-east region of Afghanistan. According to the US Geological Survey (USGS), the quake's epicentre was 82 km southeast of Feyzabad in the Hindu Kush mountain range and 213 km in depth. The quake's impact was felt beyond Afghanistan as damages and casualties have been reported in the western part of Pakistan while minor damage occurred in India.

In Afghanistan, the earthquake has left a significant humanitarian impact, with at least 91 human lives lost and 425 people injured. There has been substantial damage to houses and property, mostly in the province of Badakhshan. So far, according to



The Afghan Red Crescent Society is distributing food, tents, blankets, water containers (jerry cans) and kitchen sets to affected people in security-sensitive areas. Photo: ARCS

Afghan Red Crescent (ARCS) data released on 1 November 2015, at least 5,457 houses have been confirmed damaged; 4,015 of them totally and 1,406 partially. The ARCS emergency operations centre (EOC) has collected information from 13 affected provinces that felt the most impact of the earthquake: Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kabul, Kapisa, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Paktya, Panjsher, Parwan and Takhar. Some residents of the affected areas have described the earthquake as the worst to have hit that particular region of the country in the last 30 years.

Swathes of Badakhshan – the remote province where the epicentre was located – and other areas in the east and north-east of Afghanistan are yet to be fully covered by assessment teams because of access challenges. As well as a difficult terrain and remoteness, access to some parts is constrained by the fact that the areas are controlled by non-state armed actors. As such, the number of casualties and damaged houses is likely to increase when ongoing assessments are completed and the full tally is obtained.

Action by the authorities

In the immediate aftermath of the quake, the authorities mobilized their disaster response mechanisms at national and provincial levels. The National Security Council convened a meeting on 27 October 2015 to discuss the response and to ensure that government resources were allocated appropriately. On the same day, the ARCS president attended a meeting with the government, during which the National Society was asked to address a range of needs in security-sensitive areas due to its wide grassroots network and acceptance.

The Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Committees (PMDC) have since been active and are coordinating the overall response with in-country humanitarian partners in delivering assistance to earthquake-affected people, with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) also playing a role. Government teams, including the Ministry of Public Works, have since worked to restore road sections which were blocked by landslides, including the roads from Jalalabad to Kabul and Taloqan to Kunduz.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Action by the Host National Society

The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), which has a good image and acceptance across the nation, responded promptly to the disaster, so as to address immediate needs and deliver on its mandate. The National Society branches in the affected areas have since been at the forefront of the response and are distributing essential relief supplies to affected people alongside undertaking initial assessments. Thus far, assessments have identified food, emergency shelter and non-food relief to be among the immediate needs, with winterization being a top priority because snowfall has started in some areas.

At the emergency phase, ARCS staff and volunteers supported rescue efforts, provided first aid to the injured, transported critically injured people to hospital and mobilized community members for voluntary, non-remunerated blood donations in hospitals attending to those critically injured. Subsequently, ARCS deployed two disaster response units (DRU) and community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) volunteers to provide assistance, focusing on seven priority provinces: Badakhshan, Laghman, Kunar, Nangarhar, Nuristan, Parwan and Takhar. The latest ARCS emergency operations centre (EOC) update indicates that the National Society has distributed non-food items (NFI) to some 730 families in the seven provinces. Two mobile health teams (MHT) are working alongside the DRU and volunteers, with at least 900 volunteers mobilized for the response.

IFRC support

The IFRC maintains a country delegation whose main office is located at the ARCS headquarters, with two field offices in Mazar and in Jalalabad. In line with the role of the Secretariat to the IFRC membership, the IFRC Delegation is supporting ARCS in operational planning and coordination with Movement and external partners, including attending inter-agency coordination meetings. In order to augment the capacity of the country delegation in supporting ARCS, the IFRC Asia Pacific office in Kuala Lumpur has deployed one operations coordinator from its disaster management unit (DMU) to Afghanistan while the South Asia office in Delhi has deployed its communication and advocacy manager as surge capacity. The surge capacity from Kuala Lumpur and Delhi arrived in Kabul on Thursday, 29 October 2015 and is providing support including in overall operational planning, Movement coordination, relations with international media and public communications.

Movement coordination and support

A Movement Coordination mechanism already exists in Afghanistan. ARCS is responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the earthquake disaster response operation, with Movement partners supporting and augmenting its efforts, taking into account agreed engagement processes, including those outlined in the security management framework for the Movement in Afghanistan.

Considering the complex context of Afghanistan, ICRC is taking the lead in providing security guidance to ARCS, IFRC and Partner National Societies with in-country presence. This is being done in accordance with the security management framework for the Movement. The support by ICRC to this response extends to coordinating with state security forces and liaising with non-state armed actors for access by Movement partners to vulnerable people with the purpose of delivering neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance.

In addition to IFRC and the ICRC, other Movement partners with presence in Afghanistan are Canadian Red Cross Society, Norwegian Red Cross and Qatar Red Crescent Society. Danish Red Cross, Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Red Cross Society of China and Turkish Red Crescent Society do not have offices in Afghanistan but are supporting the earthquake response through bilateral arrangements.

The ARCS, IFRC and ICRC are working in close coordination through regular meetings at Kabul and field levels as per need. A coordination meeting was held on Saturday 31 October 2015 at the ARCS headquarters in Kabul and was chaired by the National Society's secretary general; IFRC, Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Qatar Red Crescent Society were represented in the meeting. A follow up meeting was held on Sunday 1 November, in which IFRC and ICRC participated. Both meetings provided updates on the ongoing response operational situation, efforts and commitments from partners.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

Afghan Red Crescent Society:

- Mohammed Naim Dindar, secretary general, email: naimdindar7@gmail.com
- Abdulrahman Kalantary, director of disaster management, email: abr99@yahoo.com

IFRC Afghanistan Delegation, Kabul:

- Pat Laberge, head of delegation; email: pat.laberge@ifrc.org
- Ebrahim Faghihi, programme coordinator; email: ebrahim.faghihi@ifrc.org

IFRC South Asia Office, Delhi:

- Daniel Bolanos, programme coordinator; email: daniel.bolanos@ifrc.org

IFRC Asia Pacific Office, Kuala Lumpur:

- Martin Faller, head of operations; +60 3 9207 5700; martin.faller@ifrc.org
- Alice Ho, operations coordinator, mobile: +60-13-360-0366, email: alice.ho@ifrc.org
- Patrick Fuller, communications manager; mobile: +60-12-230-8451, email: patrick.fuller@ifrc.org

For planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) enquiries:

- Peter Ophoff, head of PMER, email: peter.ophoff@ifrc.org



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How we work

All IFRC 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 the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace**.