

CHINA: EARTHQUAKES

28 January 2000

appeal no. 02/2000

situation report no. 1

period covered: 26/27 January 2000

Since the launch of the International Appeal, a further earthquake has hit the Province of Yunnan, in south west China. This latest disaster caused only one fatality but has added to the numbers of homeless in need of help. Local fund raising efforts are enabling the RCSC to meet part of the needs, but major international support is urgently required to bring prompt relief to those affected.

The context

A series of earthquakes struck three provinces of China in late 1999 and in January this year. The most serious of these occurred in Yunnan Province in mid January. The others, in Liaoning and Shanxi Provinces, while not causing the same levels of destruction as the Yunnan quake, nevertheless affected close to 180,000 people and left over 40,000 homeless. Through the Appeal launched on 26 January, the International Federation, in conjunction with the Red Cross Society of China, intends to provide essential relief assistance to the worst hit counties in all three of the affected areas for a period of three months

Latest events

An earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale occurred in Yunnan Province, southwest China, at 4.55 am yesterday, Thursday 27 January. The quake was centred in the counties of Mile and Quibei, close to the borders of Vietnam, some 100 kms south east from the capital Kunming. The quake damaged 2,060 homes in the area. Initial reports give the casualty figures as one dead and two injured.

The temperature in all of the areas is below zero degree Celsius, and heavy snowfalls are predicted in the next few days.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The Deputy Head of the Relief Department of the Red Cross Society of China along with a Federation Field Delegate left Beijing today on an assessment mission to gather further information on the latest

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Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The Deputy Head of the Relief Department of the Red Cross Society of China along with a Federation Field Delegate left Beijing today on an assessment mission to gather further information on the latest

earthquake. The team will also travel to the area affected by the 15 January earthquake, which left five dead and 1,272 injured.

The Provincial Red Cross in Yunnan reports that food, winter clothing and quilts are the highest priorities.

Stocks of relief material continue to be distributed from the Regional Disaster Preparedness centres closest to the three affected Provinces. This includes clothing, tents and medicines. Quantities are far from enough, but all provincial branches are actively involved in local fund-raising to finance further distributions.

The first priority is the supply of warm winter clothing and quilts, using CHF 300,000 from DREF (the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund) that is currently on the way to the country. These funds will be sent directly to the Provinces concerned to allow for the rapid local purchase and distribution of these essential relief supplies. The Yunnan branch has already been able to deliver relief goods valued at RMB 210,000 (CHF 40,000) including food, tents and a small amount of medicines. Funds from The Hong Kong Branch totalling 200,000 RMB have already enabled the purchase 20 Mts. of rice, 1,000 quilts, 1,000 coats and 30 tents.

In Liaoning, the local branch is continuing to raise funds, on top of RMB 170,000 already collected, from its branches in the province. These funds will help provide quilts, warm clothes and medicines. An additional RMB 100,000 has been provided by the HQ of the RCSC to procure additional supplies.

The Shanxi Provincial Branch, which received RMB 100,000 from the HQ of the RCSC, is now buying emergency supplies of food to supplement the quilts and coats already provided.

Outstanding needs

Given the scale of the disaster, there are still outstanding needs for immediate relief goods, especially in Yunnan. Because of the numbers involved, the Red Cross cannot assist all the homeless, but the RCSC and Federation will identify the worst hit counties in the affected provinces in order to target its assistance. Together with clothing and quilts, food will also be purchased as funds become available.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The earthquakes throughout the China have had major coverage in news reports in the past week. Significant media interest about the Red Cross' relief efforts in China has been dealt with by the Federation representation office in Beijing. A number of embassies in Beijing have been in contact with the representative, expressing interest in supporting the current appeal.

A UNDMT (United Nations Disaster management team) meeting was held to discuss how the UN and Red Cross could best co-ordinate their efforts. As yet, the UN is not planning to launch an appeal in support of the victims of the latest earthquakes, although future assistance cannot be ruled out.

Contributions

The contribution list will be available with the next Situation Report.

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Conclusion

Donor support is urgently needed, and more information can be obtained by contacting Marcel Fortier, Desk Officer, on + + 4122 7394268. Email: fortier@ifrc.org.ch

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