

## ***AZERBAIJAN: EARTHQUAKE***

*14 February  
2001*

*appeal no. 35/00*

*situation report no. 1*

*period covered: December 2000 - January 2001*

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*The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRCS), supported by the Federation delegation, will conclude the emergency phase of the earthquake response during February. As a result the targeted families will then have access to proper water/sanitation facilities, heating, blankets, mattresses, bed sets, buckets, cooking facilities and candles, thereby improving basic living and accommodation conditions. Efforts will also be made to assess the extent of the damages in the original settlements as well as selected health and social institutions, in close cooperation with the Government Emergency Commission, for a possible phase II of the earthquake response.*

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### ***The context***

On Saturday 25 November 2000 at 22:10 local time (18:10 GMT), Azerbaijan was struck by an earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale, followed by a quake a minute later measuring 6.3. According to the US Geological Survey, the epicentre was in the Caspian Sea, 25 km to the south south-east of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. The earthquake was felt as far away as Georgia's capital Tbilisi, 600 km north west of the epicentre.

The earthquake affected the northern-eastern coastline of Azerbaijan, with the main damage occurring between the Absheron peninsula and the Russian border. Baku is situated on the south side of the Absheron peninsula which stretches into the Caspian Sea. While minor earthquakes are a common phenomenon in this area, this earthquake is the strongest experienced in 150 years and the first to hit Absheron in many years. Absheron, including Baku, is the home of approximately 4 million people, half the country's population. This is a very densely populated area that has grown substantially over the last 10 years in terms of population but not housing, which means the number of occupants per housing unit has grown. Many of the refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) from the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh have found refuge here.

Immediately after the earthquake 100 buildings were found unsafe and 3,500 people (800 families) were evacuated by local authorities. These families have been accommodated in old hotels without running water and heating. A total of 5 IDP collective centres are also evacuated with 400 families forced to move. These families have been accommodated in old factories and administration buildings not designed for human habitation, with negative public health implications. In Sumgayit, an industrial town just north of Baku, 100 families were moved into old train wagons from two damaged hostels. Most of these families are IDPs as well.

Based on the preliminary survey results following the earthquake, the Federation delegation and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society (AzRCS) planned a relief operation and launched an appeal on 6 December, 2000 targeting assistance to the most vulnerable IDP families accommodated in the worst public buildings. The primary objective was to ensure proper water/toilet facilities, heating, cooking facilities, hygiene articles and mattresses. .

## ***Latest events***

A team of construction specialists have assessed the situation with the damaged buildings where the evacuees lived before the earthquake. The government has evacuated a further 77 buildings found unsafe after the earthquake. Most of the affected families are accommodated with relatives, friends and in hotels. The office of the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society collapsed on Friday 15 December, killing one person -- an indication of how fragile some of the buildings are.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

### **Emergency phase •**

CHF 75,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to provide immediate support to the Federation's activities. The DREF allocation, in addition to other contributions from donors, has enabled the Federation to provide a total of 258 families (approximately 1,200 evacuees) living in dire conditions with immediate assistance in the form of heating, mattresses, bed sets, cooking facilities, water/sanitation facilities and hygiene articles. The following activities were implemented in December and January by the Red Crescent Society and the Federation delegation:

- Immediate procurement of heaters, cooking utensils, blankets, hygiene articles (soap, laundry soap, tooth paste and brush, sanitation towels), mattresses, bed sets, candles and jerry cans to assist the most vulnerable evacuees.
- Water and sanitation facilities were rehabilitated in 8 sites with a further 2 sites to be completed within the first week of February. To date, 30 toilets and 20 tap stands have been rehabilitated and connected to the city water supply and sewage system. A further 4 toilets and 2 tap stands will be completed in the nearest future.
- Improvement of roofs is completed on 6 sites to date. Two sites have also received electricity.
- The Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society has assisted 20 additional families, that were recently moved to one of the targeted sites, with the same items as the others. Further 60 families living in railway wagons in Surakhani district on the Absheron peninsula received assistance as well.

A longer-term objective is to assess the need for the repair of 6 health and social institutions and 5 IDP collective centres (approximately 2,000 people considered affected) with the aim of assisting in the reconstruction and rehabilitation. An in-depth assessment of selected damaged structures is currently underway, to identify possible future reconstruction/rehabilitation needs for the most vulnerable population. The Federation's Caucasus Regional Construction delegate has the overall responsibility for this phase which started in the first week of January. When all the information is compiled, a prioritised list of institutions will be prepared and a detailed list of required materials issued as a basis for an appeal for long-term rehabilitation/reconstruction.

## ***Outstanding needs***

The response to the Appeal to date, while limited, has allowed the Federation to respond to the most immediate and acute needs, focusing most particularly on the water/sanitation improvements in all targeted sites, which should be over by end of February. Further funding will be required in order to start work on the next phase, the rehabilitation of identified institutions.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The Government of Azerbaijan (GoA), through its Emergency Commission led by the Prime Minister, has assisted some of the victims of the earthquake. However, the issue of assisting the IDPs is a sensitive one as long as most of them live in Baku without proper *propiskas* (residence permits). The main target by the GoA has been to secure public buildings in the downtown area. The Federation delegation and the Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society are cooperating closely with the Emergency Commission and share information on a regular basis.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator's office has collected information on the national and international response to the earthquake and issued several information bulletins aimed at informing potential donors. The Federation and the AzRCS are the only operational organisations providing assistance to the victims.

Media coverage has been extensive and very positive towards the Federation and the AzRCS effort. The PNS and other donors have been mentioned in regular press releases and press conferences held. The awareness of the Red Crescent Society has increased substantially, with a more positive attitude from the Government.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

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**This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>**

<b>AZERBAIJAN EARTHQUAKE</b>						ANNEX 1
<b>APPEAL No. 35/2000</b>		<b>PLEDGES RECEIVED</b>				02/13/01
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>312,438</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 37.6%</b>
AMERICAN - PRIVATE EXXON		10,000	USD	17,700	07.12.00	
AZERBAIJAN - PRIVATE CHEVRON		5,000	USD	8,850	11.12.00	
FINNISH - RC		25,228	EUR	38,400	22.12.00	
ICELANDIC - RC		200,000	ISK	4,055	14.12.00	
JAPANESE - RC		1,000,000	JPY	16,322	12.12.00	
MONACO - RC		20,000	FRF	4,586	06.12.00	
SWEDISH - GOVT		150,000	SEK	26,415	15.12.00	
SWISS - PRIVATE		601	USD	1,000	28.12.00	
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH</b>				117,328	CHF	37.6%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES</b>				0	CHF	0.0%
<b>ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED</b>				0	CHF	
<b>THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:</b>						
PAZ570						