

## ***CENTRAL AMERICA/EL SALVADOR: EARTHQUAKE***

*16 January 2001*

*appeal no. 02/2001*

*situation report no. 1*

*period covered: 13 - 15 January 2001*

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*A major earthquake occurred off the coast of El Salvador on 13 January causing significant damage, particularly in the suburbs of San Salvador where the earthquake triggered a landslide burying some 400 houses in mud. Statistics relating to the effects of the disaster have been difficult to collate. However, it is estimated that around 1,200 people are missing. The Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC) immediately dispatched search and rescue teams and the National Society's ambulance and blood services are working around the clock. Distribution of relief items to earthquake victims has commenced and the SRC has also provided tents in order that hospitals may continue to function. Assessments of damage and of needs are ongoing and a full appeal to meet these needs will be launched.*

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### ***The context***

A major earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale occurred off the coast of El Salvador on Saturday, 13 January 2001 at 11:33 am local time (17:33 UTC). The epicentre of the earthquake was located at latitude 12.8 degrees north, longitude 88.8 degrees west, some 105 km south-southeast of the capital, San Salvador.

The earthquake caused major damage in the departments of San Miguel, Santa Ana, La Libertad, La Paz and San Salvador. The most severely affected area is the neighbourhood of "Las Colinas" in the

suburbs of Santa Tecla/Nueva San Salvador, where the earthquake triggered a landslide covering an estimated 400 houses with mud.

The President of El Salvador has declared a National State of Emergency and the National Emergency Co-ordination Centre (COEN) has been set up in the compound of the International Fair.

## *Latest events*

Search and rescue operations continue at “Las Colinas” and other areas where landslides have occurred; however, hopes of finding survivors are decreasingly rapidly.

More than 400 aftershocks have been registered, with at least 4 reaching a magnitude of more than 5.0 on the Richter scale. As a result, many people are afraid to return to their houses and are therefore currently without shelter.

As of the evening of 15 January, there were an estimated 1,200 people missing. Official figures on the impact of the disaster are summarised in the table below:

	<b>Dead</b>	<b>Injured</b>	<b>Evacuated</b>	<b>Houses damaged</b>	<b>Public buildings damaged</b>	<b>Shelters in operation</b>
<b>Global figures</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>1,893</b>	<b>17,941</b>	<b>25,081</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Local figures</b>						
<b>Santa Ana</b>	31	293	324	468	N/I	3
<b>Sonsonate</b>	78	594	197	494	N/I	N/I
<b>Ahuachapán</b>	21	91	150	100	N/I	N/I
<b>Chalatenango</b>	1	3	N/I	13	10	2
<b>La libertad</b>	452	70	N/I	4,314	N/I	5
<b>San Salvador</b>	17	7	N/I	N/I	8	N/I
<b>La Paz</b>	34	144	N/I	8,907	N/I	N/I
<b>Cuscatlán</b>	27	N/I	N/I	226	N/I	N/I
<b>San Vicente</b>	33	75	540	500	15	N/I
<b>Usulután</b>	18	36	N/I	3,905	N/I	N/I
<b>San Miguel</b>	7	144	N/I	N/I	N/I	N/I
<b>Others</b>						

Source: Salvadorean Red Cross Society / COEN

Last updated: 15 January, 21h00

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has reported that although some hospitals have suffered serious damage to infrastructure, the overall capacity to deal with the disaster victims is adequate and that, at present, there is no need for assistance as regards human resources. The MoH also states that there is no immediate need for additional medical supplies. The central “the Bloom” hospital in San Salvador is restricting admissions to emergency cases as a precautionary measure given the risk of further aftershocks. The Federation’s assessment teams continue to evaluate needs in all areas, including those relating to health.

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

### **Salvadorean Red Cross Society/Federation •**

Within minutes of the earthquake, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC) activated its contingency plan. First aid and search and rescue teams were dispatched to those areas most affected, assisted by over 100 volunteers. The SRC teams recovered a total of 48 corpses from the “Las Colinas” mudslide. However, only one survivor was rescued in a joint effort with other relief workers. The SRC ambulance service and blood bank have been working on a 24 hour basis throughout the disaster.

Distribution of relief items to earthquake victims has started. So far, a total of 4,555 families in 30 communities have received relief items including blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene sets and plastic sheeting.

The SRC has also provided large tents to the majority of hospitals which have been damaged. Operations are taking place in temporary sites outside the hospital buildings given the fear of further damage by after shocks. A further 20 tents were donated to a children’s home. Since the onset of the disaster, 203 patients have been treated in the Red Cross emergency clinic in San Salvador.

Six assessment teams are evaluating damage and needs in the most affected areas, and detailed reports are expected. As access remains difficult in some areas, two teams have also carried out assessments by helicopter. The Federation Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) team in San Salvador will be complete on 16 January and will be made up of representatives from Spanish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, the Colombian Red Cross Society and the delegates from the Federation Secretariat who are part of the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU).

The Federation’s team in San Salvador is supporting the Salvador Red Cross in the coordination of its relief activities and external relations with authorities, Red Cross partners and other donors, as well as with the media.

Daily coordination meetings are held with the SRC and PNSs. All PNSs have expressed their desire to work in a coordinated approach under the leadership of the SRC. In addition to the development delegate and health coordinator who were already based in San Salvador before the disaster, a regional intervention team was deployed consisting of a logistician, an information delegate, a relief coordinator and a relief/disaster preparedness delegate. In addition, there are 3 local support staff working in finance and administration.

Four Federation vehicles have been mobilised from the region: Honduras, Nicaragua and Belize in order to support the operation. The Federation office in El Salvador is well established, and the Federation has a full status agreement, which will greatly facilitate the current operation. The Guatemala regional delegation is providing technical, logistical and finance and administration support.

The ICRC has made a 4x4 vehicle available to the Federation to support the operation. It has also offered technical and financial support for tracing activities.

## ***Outstanding needs***

Whilst the preliminary appeal covering the immediate needs for search and rescue and emergency relief has received a positive response, a full and broader appeal covering all needs based on the results of the ongoing needs assessments and the agreed plan of action will be issued.

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

The SRC is one of the partners in the National Emergency Response Centre (COEN), and continues to play a key role. Relations with the authorities are excellent and information is shared on a constant basis. A coordination meeting with the Ministry of Health, PAHO (WHO), the Salvadorean Red Cross, MSF and other agencies will take place on 16 January.

There has been much media interest both in the region and worldwide, and the Red Cross Movement has been prominent. As part of its advocacy role, the Federation has stressed the need for disaster preparedness and mitigation in general, and has highlighted environmental degradation as one of the contributing factors leading to the high death toll in recent disasters in Central America, including the "Las Colinas" landslide.

## ***Contributions***

The Netherlands Red Cross, the American Red Cross, the German Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the Colombian Red Cross and the Guatemalan Red Cross have committed in-kind contributions or cash contributions. Soft pledges have been received from the British Red Cross, the Norwegian Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross, the Italian Red Cross, the Austrian Red Cross and the Irish government. Pledges continue to reach the Secretariat and coverage including soft pledges now exceeds the amount requested in the preliminary appeal.

Ericsson Salvador has made 4 vehicles available to the Federation and has provided a number of cellular phones. They have also offered technical support in telecommunications. In addition, Ericsson has pledged USD 70,000 to the relief operation.

Annex 1 gives full details of hard pledges received from the Japanese Red Cross, the Icelandic Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross and the Finnish Red Cross.

## ***Conclusion***

Search and rescue teams continue their work in the hope of finding survivors of the disaster. At the same time, relief is being distributed to victims of the earthquake, many of whom are without shelter having lost their houses during the landslides or who fear to return to dangerous areas which may be affected by after shocks. The results of damage and needs assessments will shortly be available and, on the basis of these findings, a full appeal to assist the victims of the earthquake disaster will be launched.

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

<b>Central America / El Salvador, earthquake</b>						ANNEX 1
<b>APPEAL No. 02/2001 Prelim.</b>		<b>PLEDGES RECEIVED</b>			01/16/01	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>1,112,360</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 20.4%</b>
CASH CARRIED FORWARD						
FINNISH - RC		43,729	EUR	65,773	15.01.01	
ICELANDIC - RC		1,000,000	ISK	19,411	15.01.01	
JAPANESE - RC				37,000	16.01.01	
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		600,000	SEK	104,580	15.01.01	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				226,764	CHF	20.4%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%
<b>ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
<b>THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:</b>						
PSV507						