

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

MOROCCO: EARTHQUAKE

25 February, 2004

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 over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal (Preliminary) no. 06/04; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 24 - 25 February 2004; Appeal coverage: note: contributions are now being recorded in the Federation's systems, and will be reflected in the next Operations Update (no. 2) to be issued shortly.

Appeal history:

- Launched on a provisional basis on 24 February 2004 for CHF 2,832,000 (USD 2,282,852 or EUR 1,799,553) for 6 months to assist 30,000 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 75,000.

Outstanding needs: CHF 2,832,000 (USD 2,282,852 or EUR 1,799,553)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: 2004 Annual Appeal for North Africa (no. 01.88/2004)

Operational Summary: The Moroccan Red Crescent (MRC), supported by the Federation, has effectively responded to the immediate needs during this rescue and relief stage of the operation. Despite the challenges of the area (mountainous), efforts are underway to assess the damage, continue rescue efforts, treat the injured, and deliver relief items. Within the region, the Algerian, Egyptian, and Tunisian red Crescent are providing in-kind support, and the Spanish Red Cross is delivering 1,000 blankets, 100 hygiene parcels, 130 First Aid kits, and 100 camp beds (due to arrive shortly). At this point of the operation, the Federation emphasizes the critical need for cash contributions to support this operation.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

Background

An earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale hit northeastern Morocco at approximately 02:30 on Tuesday, 24 February 2004. The epicentre was reportedly located in the Strait of Gibraltar, approximately 15 kilometres west of the Mediterranean port city of Al Hoceima (185 miles or 295 km east-northeast of the capital Rabat). This is the most powerful earthquake to have affected this area since 1964 when a similar quake registering 6.0 occurred near Al Hoceima.

Operational developments

Latest reports indicate that the death toll has climbed to nearly 600, with thousands injured and an estimated 200,000 homeless. Dozens of aftershocks have hit the area, limiting rescue and relief efforts. Thousands of people

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slept outdoors overnight, fearing further tremors. While damage to Al Hociema was apparently limited, the mountainous nature of the surrounding area makes access to gather information and treat the injured difficult.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

CHF 75,000 was allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the Moroccan Red Crescent (MRC) in assessments and to facilitate the relief and assistance operation. In coordination with the national society, a four-person Federation Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT), along with three other Federation support persons, has been deployed. Initial reports from this team are expected shortly. The MRC immediately responding to the disaster by mobilizing staff and volunteers, including medical personnel (doctors and nurses); dispatching relief items (2,000 blankets and 100 tents) from central and regional warehouses; deploying ambulances to the disaster site; and opening three advance posts (medical, etc.). The Federation responded to a request from the MRC for international assistance by launching an Emergency Appeal intended to deliver the following items to the beneficiaries:

- 1,500 family tents (5 persons per tent);
- 20 large tents (for medical facilities);
- 12,000 plastic sheets/tarpaulin;
- 15,000 mattresses;
- 30,000 blankets;
- 12,000 jerry cans;
- 6,000 kitchen sets;
- 100,000 water purification tablets;
- heaters (kerosene);
- kerosene (local procurement);
- food for 30,000 persons (pasta, vegetable oil, sugar, and tea);
- tool kits;
- clothes (mixture of male and female, adult and children) for 30,000 persons.

MRC action:

- the MRC is setting-up camps in Al Hoceima (200 tents) but are facing constraints with the very low number of tents available. Rain and cold weather in Al Hoceima and the region is making difficult conditions for the homeless population forced to live outdoors.
- MRC volunteers and staff are making psycho-social efforts to calm the population (due to the repeated tremors).
- the MRC is discussing additional facilities for storage, transport, distribution) with the authorities.
- A Red Cross and Red Crescent logistics cell has been installed in Al Hoceima Airport and one will soon be in place in Nador Airport. Logistics support is required by the MRC. A list of goods mobilized and distributed by the MRC is under preparation.

The MRC has benefited from local mobilization through public collections and donations, as well as from diplomatic missions and embassies (e.g. Canada, Japan China, etc. There is also effective mobilization within the region from sister national societies, including:

- Tunisian Red Crescent: sending planes this afternoon (25 February) with relief supplies (blankets, food items, clothes, medical items);
- Algerian Red Crescent (with Government support): is sending 20 Mt of basic food items, clothes, bed sheets, jerrycans, soap, hygiene products, mattresses, cooking utensils, baby kits. An offer was extended to send teams of volunteers to assist in search and rescue, pending acceptance from the MRC.
- Egyptian Red Crescent is planning to send some relief items (tents, blankets, clothes).

Pledge Management Notes (PMN's) will be prepared for all items.

Among these and other relief supplies currently being mobilized and enroute to Morocco, the Spanish Red Cross is also delivering 1,000 blankets, 100 hygiene parcels, 130 First Aid kits, and 100 camp beds (due to arrive shortly). At this point of the operation, the Federation emphasizes the critical need for cash contributions to support this operation.

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The MRC is working in close coordination with the Protection Civile and the Moroccan royal army (for logistics support). Reports from Moroccan medical personnel indicate that the villages hit by the quake are among the poorest in the region, and there will be a significant need for social and rehabilitation support.

ECHO funding

Following an indication from ECHO that a Primary Emergency Decision amounting to EUR 500,000 will be approved for the Morocco earthquake operation, a teleconference organized by the Federation and assisted by the EU/RC Liaison Office took place today (25 February 2004) with the participation of the Spanish, German, and French Red Cross. Each national society agreed to present three proposals to ECHO to support the initial needs in relief items and basic health support to hospitals and clinics, as follows (EUR 150,000 for the Spanish Red Cross, and EUR 350,000 to be divided between the German Red Cross and the French Red Cross.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The MRC and Federation have been positively portrayed in the international media, and the relief efforts undertaken to date have been effectively captured in press reports.

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