

PERU : EARTHQUAKE

28 November 1996

appeal no. 21/96

situation report no. 1

period covered: 16-27 November 1996

The numbers affected by the earthquake of 12 November have now reached over 66,000, compared to initial estimates of 39,000. Damage is also much greater. The Red Cross relief operation is distributing supplies and expanding in scope, although no revision of the appeal total is anticipated. Further funding, to ensure the appeal is totally covered, is however urgently needed, so that at least the most affected 10,000 victims can receive a better assistance than initially planned.

The context

Progress in the official damage assessment shows that in the three most affected departments (Ica, Arequipa and Ayacucho), 66,420 persons were affected, 14 killed and 585 injured, while at least 9,691 houses were damaged or destroyed. Most of the damaged houses are in rural or semi-rural areas, because of the weakness of their structures and materials used (mainly "adobe"). In many of these areas destruction is from 90 to 100%. All these figures are provisional, given access difficulties to many areas and the displacement of inhabitants.

As of 21 November several miners were still trapped in mines which were continuing to cave in, making rescue difficult. Moreover, many disaster victims were living in streets and other public sites. The precariousness of their situation has caused an increase in sanitation problems, as well as in the number of upper respiratory and diarrhoea cases, although according to an UN/DHA report the health situation seems under control. Schooling is still suspended, as half the schools are damaged.

Latest events

Over 300 tremors have occurred since 12 November, according to the Peruvian Geophysical Institute. On 27 November, according to a Carleton University (Ottawa)/USA National Earthquake Information Service bulletin, there was a 5.0-Mb-magnitude tremor near the coast.

Help to the victims is arriving slowly and is insufficient, partly because of difficulties in access to many areas and the large increase in the number of identified victims and needs. Road reconstruction is opening up several districts in the province of Huancavelica and a dozen other villages.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The Peruvian Red Cross (PRC) is maintaining its main operation centre in Nazca and is operating in coordination with the Civil Defence, which has its own centre in the same

town. The PRC has opened another operation centre in Acari for victims in Arequipa Department. Nine volunteers and staff members are coordinating the whole RC operation from the Lima HQ, while 50 volunteers are assisting victims with shelter and the distribution of food, clothing, blankets and other relief articles, many of them contributed as part of the national response to PRC's internal appeal.

The Spanish Government in-kind donation, representing ESP 20'887,125 (about CHF 209,936) , mentioned in the Federation appeal and channelled through the Spanish RC, has already arrived in Lima and is about to be transported to the disaster area. It includes 150 tents, 1,500 blankets, 820 trousers and shirts, and medicines. The Bolivian RC and Chilean RC in-kind donations mentioned in the appeal have also been received.

The Federation Delegation, composed of two delegates from the Spanish R.C. and the Colombian RC, and helped by the ICRC delegate (Norwegian RC), continues to provide technical support to the PRC. Their main task is now to place orders for local purchases following the reassessment of needs, and help organise the assistance to be provided with PRC and community leaders.

Outstanding needs

Because of new findings in the needs assessment, it was necessary to enlarge the operation to a total amount of CHF 1,122,936. Fortunately it was not necessary to increase the appeal budget, thanks to the above-mentioned Spanish Government / Spanish Red Cross donation of items that have covered this extension of the operation. However, the appeal target itself is still 23,5% (CHF 214,467) uncovered, while RC volunteers in the disaster area are under great pressure, both because of the victims' expectations and the deadline for their return to their professional commitments.

External relations

The national and international support from RC has been positively received by the authorities, the victims, the media and the public at large. Now they are looking to the Federation to achieve its appeal target.

Contributions

See list in annex 1.

Conclusion

Given the expectations raised by the appeal and the additional pressure created by the increase in the numbers of identified victims and in the damage, new contributions are urgently required in order to completely cover the appeal target. Donors are thanked for their contributions and others are invited to provide support.

Luis Luna
Desk Officer
Americas Department

Santiago Gil
Director
Americas Department