

# **TURKEY: EARTHQUAKE**

18 August, 1999

*appeal no. 19/99*

*situation report no. 1*

*period covered: 18 August, 1999*

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*Responding to the most destructive earthquake to hit Turkey for many years, the Federation is coordinating support to the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS). A Preliminary Appeal was launched on 17 August, and the initial response has been very positive, enabling the TRCS to continue to respond to the needs of the thousands of injured and homeless. All contributions should continue to be made to the International Federation in its coordinating capacity for all Red Cross Red Crescent international assistance.*

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## ***The disaster***

One of the world's most severe earthquakes registered in 20 years struck northwest Turkey at 03.02 hours local time on Tuesday, 17 August, with a magnitude measured between 7.4 and 7.8 on the Richter scale. The epicentre was near Izmit, an industrial town located 104 kilometres east of Istanbul, but the force of the tremor was felt as far away as Ankara, the Turkish capital, some 500 kilometres to the east. Assessments on the number of victims, people affected, and damage to infrastructure continue, with the latest reports from the Ministry of Health confirming that there are now 3,500 dead, thousands more injured, and many times that number made homeless. The casualty figures are expected to climb further as the quake struck a heavily populated area in the early morning hours when most people were still sleeping. The operation is still under way and bodies continue to be recovered from the ruins. The Turkish government declared a state of emergency and requested international assistance.

The International Federation first issued an Alert on Tuesday morning (17 August), and at the request of the TRCS, followed up by launching a Preliminary Appeal to support the TRCS's emergency relief operation in aid of victims of the earthquake. This Preliminary Appeal will shortly be followed by a full Appeal once the needs assessments have been completed and more detailed information becomes available.

## ***Latest events***

A major relief operation has quickly moved into high gear, with Turkish government agencies (including the military and civil authorities) coordinating the rescue and relief operation and fighting against time to try to rescue those who remain trapped under debris, and to assist thousands who lost their homes. In addition to significant quantities of relief supplies despatched and currently enroute, a considerable number of countries have responded with technical assistance in the form of earthquake search teams accompanied by specially trained dogs to help with search and rescue operations, survivor detection equipment, and rubble removal machines.

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

The TRCS is operating in an auxiliary capacity to the relief operation being coordinated by the government. The Society is liaising closely with the Federation's Head of Delegation in Turkey who reports that main items required to support the TRCS relief effort include tents, blankets, first aid kits, and water purification tablets. Over the next 36 hours, there is also a need for specialist search and rescue teams with dogs but it is emphasised that if these are to be effective, deployment in the disaster zone is essential within the next 24 hours.

With an initial CHF 250,000 released from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), the Federation is placing a major emphasis on coordination efforts and implementing an effective relief structure in an effort to channel the worldwide Red Cross/Red Crescent outpouring of help for victims of the earthquake.

The Head of the Macedonia Delegation and an Information Delegate were rapidly re-assigned to initiate contacts and coordination, and the Federation currently has a three person team operational (including a film and photo delegate) which will be reinforced shortly with an administrative/finance delegate, an information/reporting delegate, and a logistics delegate. A Senior Liaison Delegate is also arriving in Ankara today to coordinate efforts with the TRCS Headquarters. A delegation office is also now in the process of being set up in Istanbul, and the Federation is participating in the Foreign Ministry Task Force meetings dealing with the earthquake.

Many Participating National Societies (PNSs) have contacted the Federation and pledged immediate support in order to assist the local disaster relief and assistance operations (see list below).

#### **Health, Water/Sanitation and Psycho-social Support w**

The first 72 hours following an earthquake are considered crucial in locating and providing assistance to survivors, but there are also longer-term concerns related to orthopaedic treatment and infections. The size of the earthquake and resulting number of injured has overwhelmed the local hospital and health facilities, and based on a request from the TRC, two Emergency Response Units (ERUs) referral hospitals from Norway (40 MT) and Germany (relocated from Skopje, Macedonia with three Federation and one German Red Cross trucks) are currently enroute. These ERU's will provide immediate support to the local hospital/health facilities in Izmit for an initial period of 1 month, with the possibility of extending the assignment. Looking beyond the emergency phase, water/sanitation and psycho-social support needs are also being considered.

#### **Logistics w**

The Federation has despatched four vehicles overland from Brussels, due to arrive shortly. Logistics delegates to assist with transport and customs clearance will be in place shortly.

#### **Relief Supplies w**

As part of an ECHO-funded contract in response to Turkey's Adana earthquake in June, 1998, 10,000 blankets, 2,550 tents, 2 field kitchens, and 2 generators which had arrived in Turkey in April 1999 for the DPP warehouse are being used for the current relief operation. The release of DREF funds from the DREF has enabled the Turkish Red Crescent to proceed with purchasing urgently needed relief items or to begin replenishing those already distributed. All the supplies required can be purchased locally.

#### **Anticipated PNS Support w**

- { The Japanese Red Cross are sending a medical team of four, due to arrive later today.
- { The German Red Cross have deployed a SAR dog team, and blood products, arriving today.
- { The Austrian Red Cross are deploying four SAR teams (16 dogs and 19 staff) plus equipment and sending 1,000 bottles of humanalbumin, arriving this evening.
- { The Spanish Red Cross are sending 'first aid kits' on today's Iberia flight to Istanbul (with TRCS the consignee), and they have indicated a desire to supply water purification tablets.

- { The Swiss Red Cross are sending a specialist from the International Cooperation Department to assist in the operation.
- { The American Red Cross have sent a team with specialist search equipment.
- { The Italian Red Cross have been in direct touch with the Turkish Red Crescent and have already despatched 4,000 blankets, 50 tents and various medicaments (aspirin ).
- { The Danish Red Cross has applied for DKK 500,000 in an application to the Foreign Ministry.
- { The Swedish Red Cross will provide 1.5 million kronor (approximately CHF 300,000).
- { The Belgian Red Cross (Flanders) is considering BEF 1m (CHF 40,000) as cash to replace TRCS tents and DPP stocks.
- { The Netherlands Red Cross will despatch on Friday a consignment of goods including tents, blankets, generators and advanced first aid kits, which fall within the remit of the preliminary appeal operation.
- { The British Red Cross expect to provide £500,000 from DFID.
- { The Netherlands Red Cross expects to provide CHF 540,000, plus an in-kind offer of tents and blankets.
- { Negotiations are underway for a large ECHO contribution to the Federation's Preliminary Appeal.
- { The American Red Cross has indicated \$150,000 for the Appeal, and \$150,000 of direct support to the TRCS, as well as delegates.

## ***Outstanding needs***

Please refer to the Preliminary Appeal.

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

Contacts have been made with operational UN relief agencies, including UNHCR for possible access to emergency stocks located in Turkey. The initial Federation response has received extensive media coverage.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

Peter Rees-Gildea  
Director  
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Renny Nancholas  
Director  
Africa Department