

# **TURKEY: EARTHQUAKE**

*19 August, 1999*

*appeal no. 19/99*

*situation report no. 2*

*period covered: 19 August, 1999*

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*The earthquake relief operation remains in high gear, with Turkish government agencies (including the military and civil authorities) coordinating the rescue and assistance efforts. Despite the response efforts underway, the general population is expressing some frustration with the delay in reaching some of the stricken areas. The Federation is continuing to play a central coordinating role, in support of the TRCS's auxiliary relief function.*

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## ***The disaster***

On August 17 at 3:02 a.m. local time, an earthquake measuring between 7.4 and 7.8 on the Richter scale and lasting 45 seconds hit northwestern Turkey. More than 300 aftershocks were reported, some as high as 4.2 to 4.5 on the Richter scale. Izmit, Turkey, an industrial city of one million in western Turkey located approximately 104 kms east-southeast of Istanbul was nearest the epicentre, but the force of the tremor was felt as far away as Ankara, the Turkish capital, some 500 kilometres to the east. It was felt as far east as Ankara, 200 miles away, and across parts of the Balkans. Geophysicists also described the quake as one of the most powerful recorded in the 20th century, nearly rivalling the 7.9-magnitude earthquake that devastated San Francisco in 1906.

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***

The earthquake is estimated to have affected some 30% of Turkey, in an area with 45% of its population. People who are desperately trying to locate missing relatives are displaying increased concern over the lack of access to some of the outlying areas. Assessments on the number of victims, people affected, and damage to infrastructure continue, with the latest reports confirming the death toll at over 4,000, over 18,000 more injured, and many times that number made homeless. The casualty figures are expected to climb further as the operation is still under way and bodies continue to be recovered from the ruins.

Izmit is reportedly 70% destroyed, including 2 of the main hospitals which collapsed on the patients and staff. In many destroyed areas the people trying to find family members are still digging with no tools or equipment. Approximately 5 kilometres of land has been evacuated around the burning Turpsum oil refinery, which is reportedly still out of control. Details on damage to infrastructure or progress in

restoring electricity and communications grids remains difficult to verify, but various sources report that electricity is being restored piecemeal (the main east-west transmission line had collapsed in the Duzce Prefecture of Bolu province east of Istanbul). Natural gas distribution in some affected areas was shut down to avoid the potential of leakage or fires in buildings. Authorities evacuated eight villages near the town of Altinova, 175 miles southwest of Istanbul, because of a leak at a damaged natural gas station there. The number of evacuees from the villages is not yet confirmed.

Although central Istanbul was largely spared -- including no visible damage to historical sites in the city -- there are reports that dozens of buildings in Istanbul collapsed, including a military barracks with as many as 200 troops trapped inside. In addition, the outskirts of the city revealed the potential hazards of hastily built housing. With water lines and power cut to wide areas, health officials worried Tuesday about diseases and possible epidemics. To the southeast of Istanbul, the devastation was near total in some places. With inoperable communication facilities, no electricity, and impassable roads in some areas, international rescue teams may face logistical problems in reaching remote villages and Istanbul shantytowns.

The Turkish Coordination Council for Relief, operating under the leadership of the Prime Minister, is overseeing all relief operations in the affected region being carried out by national forces, Turkish Red Crescent, and volunteers. A Crisis Task Force is meeting regularly, and the priority remains search and rescue teams (including sniffer dogs), rehydration supplies, and medical teams and field hospitals. The Turkish military have taken over rescue efforts in many areas, bringing in helicopters and heavy equipment to move heavy beams from collapsed buildings.

Two Federation delegates today visited Golcuk which is 80-90% destroyed, and a senior representative of the Mayor's office spoke of 'real fears' of an epidemic due to the heat and number of dead bodies.

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

### **Federation w**

Within its main coordination function, the Federation is focusing on the following:

- { Coordinating all Red Cross/Red Crescent relief supplies arriving in Istanbul;
- { Supporting the TRCS branches, in coordination with the TRCS Headquarters;
- { Participating with the TRCS in all government coordination meetings, along with UN agencies and NGO's.

A Federation follow-up assessment mission (with representatives from both the Secretariat and PNSs) will arrive in the disaster area next week to undertake a more detailed needs assessment leading to the launch of the Appeal.

### **Health, and Water/Sanitation w**

With the current Federation emphasis on supporting all local health facilities, the immediate health needs are space or capacity to treat the injured. Initial assessments indicate that the number of injured are 20 times greater than the available hospital beds; therefore additional beds (cots), mattresses, and tents are urgently required, and the Norwegian and German Emergency Response Units (ERUs) currently on their way to Turkey will include more beds in their emergency stocks. In addition, it is expected that the heat and sanitation conditions caused by broken sewage pipes contaminating drinking water sources will potentially result in outbreaks of cholera and diarrhoea, and the following are therefore urgently required:

- { oral rehydration salts (ORS) and intravenous drips.
- { Albumin/gama-globulin and Factor 8 (blood coagulating agents).

A list of essential drugs and medicines is available upon request.

The self-contained/self-sufficient ERU's will be established in the Izmit vicinity, but the exact location remains to be determined after the German Red Cross Team Leader has finalised his site selection. The first 6 person German Red Cross ERU team will arrive in Istanbul this afternoon (19 August), with a 4-5 person team due to follow in the evening. The IL-76 cargo plane (currently loading the ERU supplies) is due to arrive in Istanbul (enroute to Izmit) with vehicles, trucks, an x-ray machine, an operational theatre, and blankets. A road convoy (also German Red Cross) containing the main hospital equipment formerly used in Macedonia has already arrived in Izmit. The Norwegian Red Cross ERU convoy has departed from Skopje to Izmit this morning with 3 Norwegian Red Cross light vehicles, 1 Federation truck, 1 ICRC truck, 1 technician, 1 translator, and drivers, as well as the Emergency Relief Coordinator. The convoy is transporting 4 New Emergency Health Kits (NEHK), 20 dressing kits, 5 hospital kits, 20 paediatric kits, 4 injection kits, 2 surgical kits, 4,400 blankets, and 7,000 portions of high protein biscuits (BP-5). The Norwegian Red Cross personnel team and equipment will arrive in Istanbul between this evening and tomorrow afternoon. A Federation Health Coordinator (provided by the Finnish Red Cross) will be deployed to Izmit shortly.

### **Tracing w**

The Federation is in discussions with the TRCS regarding tracing services and facilities which, although urgently needed due to the overwhelming context of the disaster, may not be available for some days.

### **Food w**

At this point, food availability is not an immediate cause for concern, but with the damage caused to infrastructure, distribution and logistics systems, in the longer-term food shortages may occur and the Federation will undertake preliminary preparations for Ready-to Eat-Meals if they are needed.

### **Logistics w**

The Federation has been assured by Turkish authorities that there will be no delays in customs clearing the ERU equipment arriving at the Istanbul airport. Coordination has been initiated with the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) logistics cell which will lend clearance assistance if needed. The TRCS has established an airport logistics cell and a Federation logistics delegate is due to arrive in Istanbul later today. The Federation's four vehicles despatched from Brussels yesterday are due to arrive shortly. Logistics delegates to assist with transport and customs clearance will also be in place shortly.

### **Participating National Society Action w**

- { The Italian Red Cross (IRC) have indicated that they are sending by boat from Pisa today (arriving Gulcuk tomorrow) a consignment including: tents, blankets, basic drugs, bottled water, as well as a distribution team of seven people and two trucks. The IRC is also providing a dog team.
- { The Hellenic Red Cross is sending a C-130 cargo transport plane (arriving tomorrow) with 200 tents, 1,000 blankets, 1,000 bedlinen sets and a medical team of seven (including two Turkish speaking drivers).
- { The Swiss Red Cross are despatching by plane Saturday morning: blankets, generators, medical supplies, lanterns, empty blood bags, cool boxes and large tents.
- { The Spanish Red Cross are sending a consignment of bagged first aid kits (200) and 500 replacement kits.
- { The Netherlands Red Cross is sending tomorrow two emergency kits (for 10,000 people), 10 power generators, five dispensary tents, 100 family tents and 6,000 blankets. On Saturday, a charter flight will leave Amsterdam with: four more large emergency health kits, 10 generators, five dispensary tents, 500 family tents, 230 bales of blankets, 200 jerrycans and 1.1 million water purification tablets.
- { The ICRC has also made available the following items from their Skopje warehouse to assist in the Turkey operation: 10,000 blankets; 4,500 tarpaulins; 7,400 sleeping bags; 49 rolls of plastic sheeting (6.50 meters) and 20,000 pieces (100 grams), and sanitary towels.

## ***Outstanding needs***

The Federation emphasises that cash contributions remain the most effective way to contribute to the operation, however with further information becoming available it is estimated at this time that the following needs exist:

- { Blankets: 100,000.
- { Family tents: 7,500.
- { Hospital tents (30 sq. meters): 10.
- { Generators: 5 (30 KVA) and 5 (15 KVA).
- { Jerry-cans (collapsible): 20,000.
- { Mobile field kitchens: 5

All contributions should continue to be made to the International Federation in its coordinating capacity for all Red Cross Red Crescent international assistance. Additional Delegates (Logistics and Reporting/Information) are required for a 3-month assignment.

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

Contacts and effective coordination continue with operational UN relief agencies, including OCHA-Geneva, UNHCR (for possible access to emergency stocks located in Turkey) and the UNDAC Team. The Federation response continues to receive extensive media coverage.

## ***Contributions***

All donors are encouraged to complete and submit Pledge Management Notes (PMNs) when a cash or in-kind contribution has been made or sent.

***For further information please contact the following:***

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