

TURKEY: EARTHQUAKE

20 August, 1999

appeal no. 19/99

situation report no. 3

period covered: 20 August, 1999

With the disaster response now in its fourth day, the magnitude and scope of the earthquake in terms of lives lost, injured, and damage to infrastructure has surpassed the initial assessments, and the entire search/rescue and relief operation is struggling to cope with the overwhelming needs. With more than 70 International Federation Delegates now operational, the Red Cross/Red Crescent is focusing on the immediate provision of essential relief goods and activities, particularly the health situation which is emerging as a potential catastrophe. The response to the Preliminary Appeal has been extremely positive, but the Federation emphasises that the actual needs are far in excess of those initially reflected in the Appeal, and donors are encouraged to maintain the current strong level of support to meet both the immediate needs as well as the emerging mid-to longer term requirements. To assist in the operation, CNN is highlighting the Federation's Internet Website ([Help Turkey](http://www.ifrc.org)) at <http://www.ifrc.org> which provides updated information, specifies the evolving needs, and indicates cash and in-kind contribution requirements.

The disaster

On August 17 at 3:02 a.m. local time, a massive 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 Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS), followed up by launching a Preliminary Appeal to support the Society'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

Latest casualty reports indicate over 8,000 people dead and over 30,000 injured, but Turkish authorities have informed the relief organisations that an estimated 35,000 people may still lie under the rubble. Hopes of finding survivors are fading as rescuers report finding more bodies than survivors. The fire that broke out at the Tüpraş refinery in Izmit reportedly could continue to rage for another 48 hours

until it burns itself out. There has been no damage assessment yet as only very specialised fire crews have access to the site. Fire fighting planes from Turkey and donor countries arrived on Wednesday and Thursday are expected to resume operations today. Residents in the area were told to evacuate out of concern that the fire could reach a nearby chemical factory and 30 storage tanks loaded with more than 700,000 tons of crude oil. Airports are functioning, but several bridges have collapsed and railways have been closed. Central Istanbul was largely spared, but dozens of buildings in Istanbul collapsed, including a military barracks with as many as 200 troops trapped inside. With water lines and power cut to wide areas, health officials now regard diseases and possible epidemics as a great danger. To the southeast of Istanbul, the devastation was near total in some places. The area affected by Tuesday's earthquake accounts for roughly 35 percent of Turkey's gross domestic product.

The Federation's Relief Team reporting from the Izmit and Golcuk on 19 August, provided the following update:

- { Izmit: The crisis remains in an emergency phase, with the focus of activities on searching through the rubble for survivors and distributing essential food and drinking water to the thousands of people living out in the open, under makeshift tents (under sheets, blankets, umbrella's, or a piece of plastic strung between poles or trees). They are surrounded by a few personal belongings and are sleeping on thin mattresses thrown on the ground, in parks, city squares, and even highway medians. Inside the city, official and improvised teams of rescue workers are sifting through the piles of rubble, trying to locate survivors. Cranes are lifting heavy concrete slabs, and hundreds of people are clearing bricks and stones with any tools available, or with their bare hands in efforts to reach family members still trapped in the collapsed buildings. The TRCS has set up a donor centre in the city of Izmut next to the government crisis centre.
- { Golcuk: the city itself is devastated, with a destruction ratio of between 80-90%. Thousands of people remain trapped in flattened apartment blocks, and moans indicate some are still living. Given the highly charged atmosphere of crisis, it is impossible to verify figures on the number of dead, injured, and homeless. Dozens of rescue teams (international and national, some with trained search dogs) are at work on the piles of rubble, with picks and shovels, trying to locate survivors. On the sidewalks of the city, people in shock sit with whatever personal belongings they have been able to salvage from the wrecked buildings. Golcuk itself has a large navy base, and the base hospital is functioning with a capacity of 500 beds, but its is currently treating patients outside in the open air. The majority of injuries are broken bones and head injuries from falling wreckage.

The Federation's field mission to Golchuk and Izmut was one of the first to reach the disaster zone, but there are conflicting reports of the worst affected areas. The President of the Izmut branch of the TRCS indicated that the region north of Izmut and Golchuk (the towns of Bolu, Ada Payari/Sakaria, Karamursel, Yalova, derince, Yarimca, and Gebze) was the most severely affected, while the Chief of Staff at the military base confirmed that the worst hit area lay between Izmut and Golchuk.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

A 5-member Federation follow-up assessment mission (with sectoral specialists/representatives from both the Secretariat and PNSs) will arrive in the disaster area shortly to undertake a more detailed needs assessment leading to the launch of the Appeal.

Health w

With the disaster now in the crucial 3-5 day time period, a potentially lethal combination of heat, decomposing bodies, and broken sewage main pipes contaminating clean water sources are creating a severe public health risk, and the threat of outbreaks of epidemics (typhoid and cholera) are increasing by the hour, as well as skin diseases. The situation is exacerbated as people pull bodies from building with their bare hands. With the Federation supporting all local health facilities, updated immediate health needs include the following:

- { oral rehydration salts (ORS) and intravenous drips.
- { Albumin/gama-globulin and Factor 8 (blood coagulating agents).
- { Antibiotics (long action), vaccines, and disinfectants.
- { Body bags to bury the dead.

The Federation is attempting to determine with greater detail the operational capability of the health and medical facilities list of essential drugs and medicines remains available to donors upon request.

Two self-contained/self-sufficient Emergency Response Unit (ERU) referral hospitals from the Norwegian and German Red Cross will be in place over the weekend. The entire German ERU team and equipment have arrived, and a site at Adapazari has been determined. The Norwegian Red Cross ERU will be fully assembled and locating a site in Izmut by this evening or tomorrow morning (see previous Federation SITREP 2 for the full details of ERU equipment and supplies arranged).

Shelter w

Tents for temporary housing and shelter remain essential.

Water/Sanitation w

At this point, water needs are being completely satisfied by the Turkish bottled water industry, there therefore there is no need for water contributions at this time. There is an urgent need for portable/chemical toilets or latrines, and the lack of such facilities will increasingly present a major health risk for the entire population.

Tracing w

The German Red Cross has agreed in principle to lead a project Delegation in Turkey to handle all Red Cross/Red Crescent tracing requests, working with TRCS. A senior Federation official will visit in Bonn early next week to confirm details. Federation is discussing tracing services and facilities with the TRCS and various PNSs. Although urgently needed due to the overwhelming context of the disaster, may not be available for some days.

Food w

Food availability is becoming an increasing concern, with the damage caused to the infrastructure, distribution and logistics systems. People are subsisting on cheese, bread, tea, tomatoes, melon, and fruit, but hot meals will soon be necessary and field and mobile kitchens will be needed. The Federation is now making plans to transport 2 planeloads of Ready-to Eat-Meals.

Logistics w

Authorities (police, customs, border officials) are full facilitating the flow of relief goods into the country, thereby maximising the relief efforts. The absorption capacity of the Istanbul airport facilities are however overwhelmed, and the Federation has made plans to shift deliveries to the Ankara airport if needed, for onward transport by road to the affected area. Instructions have been issued that the Turkish Airlines are to assist the Red Cross/Red Crescent relief effort by transporting relief goods at no cost. Effective coordination continues with the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) logistics cell.

See attached Federation Shipping Instructions for guidance on the consignment of in-kind contributions.

Participating National Society Action w

In addition to PNSs action noted in previous SITREPs, the Bulgarian Red Cross has despatched an SAR dog team to Turkey while a Romanian Red Cross convoy is enroute to the disaster are with 2,000 blankets.

Outstanding needs

While many in-kind contributions haven been made available, given the nature of the evolving situation it is difficult at this time to specify the exact quantities of outstanding needs. However, the generosity of donors has enabled the Red cross/Red Crescent to respond effectively and flexibly to the emerging needs. It is anticipated that the Federation assessment team will provide more detailed needs in their forthcoming report. All contributions should continue to be made to the International Federation in its coordinating capacity for all Red Cross Red Crescent international assistance.

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

See Annex 1 attached for an updated List of 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.

Contributions

The response to date from Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies to the Federation's preliminary appeal has been rapid, generous - and much appreciated by the TRCS. However, there are very real concerns regarding the overload on facilities at Istanbul airport and the consequent constraints on the Federation delegation's capacity to monitor and report adequately on incoming Red Cross Red Crescent shipments and subsequent delivery to the beneficiaries. PNS are urged strongly to consider carefully the scheduling of consignments and to continuing checking with the Federation both in Geneva and the field on optimum timing. The full ramifications of this huge disaster are yet to unfold - and humanitarian needs will expand still further in the weeks to come.

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