

TURKEY: EARTHQUAKE

1 September 1999

appeal no. 19/99

situation report no. 10

period covered: 31 August -1 September 1999

Sporadic tremors again hit the disaster area yesterday (Tuesday), centred on Izmit and causing further deaths, injuries, and damage to buildings and infrastructure, as well as increasing fears among an already traumatised population. The Red Cross Red Crescent responded by placing the existing emergency response health and medical facilities on alert, and stepping up assistance efforts. More generally, conditions in the Turkish Red Crescent camps are reported to be improving. Meanwhile, discussions with the Turkish Red Crescent are continuing on how to best shape the full appeal to meet the still evolving needs. At the end of August, more than CHF 600,000 was outstanding in cash pledged to the appeal and due to be received during the month. To assist the Federation's cash-flow planning for the operation, donors are urged to meet the commitments underwritten in the pledge management notes.

The context

On 17 August at 03h02 local time a massive earthquake measuring between 7.4 and 7.8 on the Richter scale and lasting 45 seconds hit northwestern Turkey. Hundreds of aftershocks have since been reported, some as high as 5 on the Richter scale. Izmit, an industrial city of one million in western Turkey, was nearest the epicentre. But the force of the tremor was felt as far away as Ankara, the capital, some 500 km to the east, and across parts of the Balkans. Geophysicists described the quake as one of the most powerful this 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 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. This Preliminary Appeal will be followed by a full appeal, whose scope and direction is currently being established with the TRCS.

Meanwhile, estimates of the cost of rebuilding Turkey could be 16 times higher than the reconstruction bill for Kosovo, according to the country's business leaders. Tusiad, one of Turkey's leading business organisations, has published the first estimate of the costs of the devastation, saying that the country

needs at least 20 billion USD of aid to effect a recovery -- or 10% of gross national product. By comparison the World Bank estimates that the reconstruction of Kosovo following the conflict earlier this year will cost 1.23 billion.

Update

Tremors continued to hit the quake region and in one of the largest aftershocks on Tuesday one person was killed by falling debris and at least 166 were injured in Izmit and the nearby town of Dernice. The tremor was also felt in Adapazari, where 75% of the buildings have been damaged either by the original earthquake on 17 August or aftershocks. Hundreds of people jumped from windows and balconies as already damaged buildings swayed and crumbled. The main bus company brought in extra vehicles to cope with a new exodus and traffic backed up on the main highway out of Izmit.

Red Cross hospitals were put on alert and treated hundreds of injured and traumatised people. The local crisis centre asked the Japanese Red Cross medical team to keep their clinic open through the evening. Increased numbers of injured came to the Norwegian Red Cross Emergency Response Unit (ERU) hospital. The nearby university hospital had been approved for re-use but medical personnel abandoned the facility fearing it could not withstand another quake. Shelves loaded with medical supplies tipped over at the German Red Cross ERU field hospital. The Belgian Red Cross medical team was sent to Golcuk and Izmit by the local crisis centre, accompanied by a Mexican rescue team, but returned to their clinic in Sarayli by late afternoon and prepared to receive injured.

The Seismic Hazards Department at the British Geological Survey in Edinburgh has said that the problem of aftershocks is unlikely to end for many months, compounding the damage and hampering rescue work. According to a spokesperson for the organisation, the North Anatolian fault is very much prone to large aftershocks.

The Turkish government Tuesday promised to step up civil defence training and form rescue teams to deal with natural disasters, and announced its intention to make it easier to adopt children orphaned by the quake. The government estimates that up to 600,000 people were left homeless by the earthquake, with most living in tents and shelters scattered throughout the quake zone. According to the latest official statistics of confirmed deaths, the 17 August quake killed 14,202 people.

Turkey has begun concerted efforts for a reconstruction drive that aims to provide prefabricated shelter for the homeless. The government has requested that all funds collected in the many relief campaigns be transferred to a central account, and has begun marshalling domestic and foreign resources to provide housing for quake survivors. The prime minister said the government was considering issuing special quake bonds to finance reconstruction. He is also quoted as saying the foreign ministry will be seeking to purchase from abroad more all-weather tents to replace most of the emergency tents now being used by thousands of homeless living in tent cities and makeshift camps.

A World Bank team has toured flattened areas of western Turkey to assess how much foreign aid would be needed to help rebuild tens of thousands of homes. The teams will develop reconstruction plans, including energy, water and transportation projects. The European Union has pledged 40 million euros in housing aid. Japan and the Netherlands have offered to provide prefabricated homes and Israel has pledged to help with the reconstruction of the infrastructure of Golcuk. A group of Turkey's leading contractors have announced they could build 60,000 prefabricated homes in three months.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Turkish Red Crescent •

The TRCS operates programmes through 640 branches, 27 blood centres and six warehouses. Since the emergency began the TRCS has performed rapid co-ordination of customs clearance, transport and some delivery of Red Cross Red Crescent relief aid. The Society has distributed some 35,000 tents and

about 70,000 blankets, set up several camps for thousands of homeless and provided hot meals and drinking water in the camps and throughout the quake area.

The TRCS has distributed medical equipment, blankets, kitchen sets, hygiene materials, food and tents. All available tents were rushed in to give the homeless a minimum of shelter in the hours following the earthquake. Unfortunately, there was no time to prepare the ground and waterproof the tents with plastic ground covers, and there were unseasonably early rain storms to add to the misery of the victims.

Logistics •

New shipping instructions: These are shown in Annex II and are applicable with immediate effect. This version cancels and replaces those issued on 20 August, 1999 attached to Situation Report No. 3. Donors are asked to ensure that these instructions are shared with all staff involved in the Turkey earthquake relief operation.

With regard to consignments delivered by truck, the Federation's Logistics Coordinator in Istanbul requests that the trucking company should be instructed to contact the following Federation delegates prior to arrival in Istanbul :

Sergio Fernandes, Logistics Coordinator - Mobile phone No. +41-79-217 33 58

or

Peter Claney, Logistics Delegate - Mobile phone No. +41-79-217 33 57

It should be noted that trucks may park at Sultan Beylo T.I.R. park, on the right side of the road just after the Toll at the end of the motorway from the border to Istanbul. From there the driver or responsible officer should call the Federation delegates at the above numbers for further directions.

It is important to include a goods received note form (as per the copy attached) to the required documentation. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact the Federation's Logistics Service in Geneva.

Tracing •

The American Red Cross has set up family link services in four tent centres to bring communication services to those with little access. These are in Yalova, Izmit, Golcuk and Adapazari. The Adapazari team is in the tent city of 5,000 people run by the TRCS. This is expected to expand to 10,000 people. In Golcuk, which is still very chaotic, they established a base at the German Red Cross field hospital. The team consists of five American delegates and 15 local staff. The service offers free two-minute use of a cellular or satellite telephone to contact relatives abroad. The team has to be very mobile and coping regularly with difficult travel conditions. Many calls have been made to Germany. There have been a total of 400 calls made, and 95% have been successful in linking families. Meanwhile efforts to implement a 'traditional' Red Cross Red Crescent message system continue.

Health •

The joint German Red Cross and Macedonian Red Cross ERU field hospital which became operational on 23 August and admitted its first in-patients the next day is working under very demanding conditions of rain alternating with summer heat. The out-patient department is running well and has treated 563 patients in the first six days. These include: 136 for physical trauma, 104 for respiratory tract infections and 27 for psychological trauma. There were 24 admissions including 10 surgical operations and two births. There has been only one death in the hospital. The 80-bed field hospital was established near Golcuk, an area badly affected by the earthquake, and could be extended to 120-bed capacity. Just outside the hospital compound there is a mass grave for hundreds of people who died on 17 August. The eventual goal is for the field hospital to be staffed fully by Turkish doctors and nurses.

Meanwhile, at the Norwegian Red Cross ERU field hospital there are on average up to 300 patients seeking consultation in the emergency room. There have been 34 admissions, 20 of them for operations, and two births. The Austrian Red Cross water-sanitation ERU, working in cooperation with a specialist from Oxfam continues to provide clean water to five camp locations in Golcuk and in the town itself.

A six-person Belgian Red Cross medical team arrived on 22 August and are providing out-patient medical care to about 70 people a day at Sarayli. The team includes three doctors and one nurse and expect to leave in a week. The Society brought 100 all-weather tents from Belgium and have received 220 more locally.

Global fundraising •

As noted in previous situation reports, the Federation has received and accepted approaches from global media wishing to support its Turkey earthquake operation through various complimentary publicity initiatives. In the days following the quake, CNN encouraged its viewers to make online donations via the Federation's website, while the International Herald Tribune ('the world's daily newspaper') has run a series of advertisements with details of how funds can be donated; Newsweek magazine has also offered a similar facility, due to appear in the forthcoming edition.

Outstanding needs

A list of needs will be reflected in the full appeal, whose content and direction will be finalised in the coming days. In the meantime, please refer to previous situation reports.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details

For further information please contact the following:

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