

TURKEY: EARTHQUAKES

31 January 2000

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period covered: 21 January 2000 - 28 January 2000

The Red Cross Red Crescent programme in Turkey is entering a transitional phase, shifting its main activities from emergency relief into longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction, health and disaster preparedness initiatives. Preparations are underway for the planning and information meeting to be hosted by the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) in Ankara on 18 February 2000. However, relief activities and monitoring continue. During the period covered in this report a total of 428 mt of shelter-related, medical and water-sanitation relief supplies, provided through the International Federation, has been dispatched to the affected areas and a distribution plan for the ECHO-funded hygiene parcels is being implemented.

The context

In the second half of 1999, north-western Turkey, the country's most densely populated region and industrial heartland, was struck by two massive earthquakes in less than three months. The first, on 17 August 1999 at 03h02 local time, measured between 7.4 and 7.8 on the Richter scale and lasted 45 seconds. Izmit, an industrial city of one million in western Turkey, was nearest the epicentre. The official death toll stands at over 17,100, with some 44,000 people injured, nearly 300,000 homes either damaged or collapsed, and more than 40,000 business premises similarly affected. On the day of the catastrophe, the Turkish government declared a state of emergency and requested international assistance. The International Federation immediately launched a Preliminary Appeal, followed by a full Appeal for CHF 65 million on 8 September 1999. The disaster was followed by more than 1,300 aftershocks, culminating in the second quake at 18h57 on 12 November 1999 which rated 7.2 on the Richter scale and shook Düzce and Kaynasli counties in the north-western province of Bolu, some 100 kms to the east of Izmit. The jolt was felt both in Istanbul (some 260 kms to the west) and Ankara, the nation's capital, 300 kms to the east. According to the latest casualty figures, there is a confirmed death toll of 845, with nearly 5,000 people injured.

Update

Another strong aftershock, measuring 4.1 on the Richter scale, occurred on Thursday 21 January at 12h36 local time; mainly felt in the Bolu area. Once again there was widespread panic among the population, but there are no reports of casualties or any major damage. Some persons who had returned to their partially-damaged houses affected in the November earthquake, decided to move back to tent cities fearing future shocks.

The earthquake zones have been hard hit by recent snow storms. Electricity was disconnected in some tent cities and the extremely cold conditions added to the misery of quake survivors. With temperatures

dropping to minus 16 Celsius, snow depth reached up to 24 centimetres in Bolu city centre. According to the Turkish media, an earthquake survivor who was living in a summer tent died due to cold weather.

The Turkish government continues to urge earthquake victims still accommodated in tent villages to move into prefabricated houses. Recent government figures indicate that 27,074 prefabricated houses are ready, from a planned total of 44,160. All prefabricated settlements should be finished before the end of February. However, despite continuous efforts to convince the tent population to move into the new facilities, only 19,378 houses have been occupied to date, while 7,696 remain empty. A possible explanation for the reluctance of tent city population to move into vacant prefabricated houses centres on concerns over rent allowances and other benefits.

World Bank representatives are visiting north-western Turkey. The Turkish media reported this visit as a preliminary step to the Bank's five million dollar project to provide permanent housing for earthquake victims. The funding provided by the World Bank is targeted at the construction of 23,000 houses and 30,000 business premises in the quake-hit regions.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Turkish Red Crescent Society

As indicated in the last situation report (no. 35), the TRCS will host a planning and information meeting in Ankara on Friday, 18 February 2000, to which all Red Cross Red Crescent contributors to the International Federation Appeal have been invited. The main focus will be on proposed programmes for 2000 and beyond, covering health, disaster preparedness, and rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The TRCS continues to provide three hot meals a day to some 70,000 persons throughout both quake-hit areas. Distribution of relief goods is still ongoing, with items provided recently including tents, blankets, sleeping bags, beds, stoves, generators, and food supplies.

International Federation

With the need for relief items in the disaster zones slowly decreasing, the attention of the International Federation delegation is now concentrated mainly on the post-relief phase and the progressive shift into longer-term rehabilitation and construction, health and disaster preparedness activities. As previously reported, in the near future, the delegation will be transferred from Istanbul to Ankara, where the Turkish Red Crescent headquarters are located. The International Federation will maintain offices and field representatives in the areas affected by the earthquakes, to ensure close monitoring and support to ongoing programmes implemented by the TRCS.

Relief and logistics: To date, 6,024 mt of food items, shelter-related, medical and water sanitation relief goods provided by the International Federation have been distributed throughout the affected areas. This figure includes 14,743 winterised tents, 53,128 blankets, 66,821 hygiene parcels and a wide variety of other relief items.

Local procurement has been completed and the external pipeline of relief supplies will terminate in the coming weeks. According to the Turkish government, all needs for winterised tents have been met and therefore remaining tents stocked in the International Federation warehouse will be retained for the TRCS disaster preparedness programme.

A team from the International Federation's logistics department will visit the TRCS warehouse in Ankara soon to assess the facility and discuss current logistics systems in view of the upcoming move of the delegation to the Turkish capital.

Health: The International Federation's health department has initiated a surveillance programme to assess the outstanding needs of the population living in tent cities and prefabricated settlements. Three surveillance staff are gathering information related to health issues, water sanitation conditions, and

relief distributions in the surveyed areas. The programme is currently covering the cities of Yalova, Degirmendere, Karamursel, Izmit, Gölchük, Bolu and Düzce and will be soon extended to Adapazari and Akiazi.

The Federation continues to provide valuable assistance to over 20 hospitals, focusing particularly on the rehabilitation of facilities and provision of medical equipment. The International Federation has maintained its coordinating role among local health authorities, PNSs, Turkish and international health institutions. Recent distributions include 74 wheelchairs (a further 97 will be distributed directly by the Turkish Red Crescent), 111 walking aids, and 590 pairs of crutches.

An international training programme on disaster preparedness for medical students will take place in Turkey from 20 to 25 March 2000. The International Federation is helping with the organisation of this workshop in close cooperation with the TRCS and local medical institutions; several International Federation and PNS representatives will be in attendance.

Water and sanitation: Distributions of essential water sanitation equipment continue. A total of 60 latrines and 70 shower containers have been delivered to various tent cities in both earthquake regions. In addition, 15 mt of calcium hypochlorite has been delivered to the Adapazari municipality.

Construction: Construction of the extension to the Kocaeli University Hospital, funded by the Japanese Red Cross, is expected to be completed in the coming weeks, returning the facility to its full capacity. Work on a Federation-funded prefabricated unit for the Izmit State Hospital has also started.

Telecommunications: All International Federation vehicles have now been equipped with VHF radios. A delegate is also working closely with the TRCS, following a request for advice and assistance in setting up a computerised stock control system for the Society's warehouses.

ECHO-funded programmes

The International Federation is currently distributing 250,000 ECHO-funded family hygiene parcels in the two quake-struck areas. To date, a total of 50,000 have been dispatched from the main warehouse and the International Federation's relief team is committed to ensure that all these parcels are distributed within an agreed timeframe. Field delegates are monitoring the parcels' final distribution to beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, over the coming weeks needs will be continuously assessed and distribution plans flexibly established to respond to the constant changes in the situation, particularly the movement of the tent-city population into prefabricated settlements. Effective coordination between the delegation, the ECHO representative in Turkey, and other ECHO-funded organisations distributing hygiene parcels is also crucial to ensure that all beneficiaries are assisted and to avoid duplication; regular meetings to this end are planned. The following PNSs are currently implementing ECHO funded projects in Turkey:

National Society	Project	Period
French Red Cross	Emergency shelter items*, medicines, two mobile clinics, food for children and clothes	From 12 November to 12 February 2000
Italian Red Cross	50,000 hygiene parcels	1 October to 31 March 2000

* 800 tents and 450 heaters with gas supplies for four months

In addition, the Netherlands Red Cross has distributed winter clothes and shoes financed by ECHO to 4,000 persons in Gölchük. The Spanish Red Cross has also completed two ECHO-funded projects providing relief shelter items, including tents, beds, mattresses and heaters, mainly in the environs of Bolu and Adapazari.

Outstanding needs

Further resources and support needed to implement the plan of action for 2000 will be detailed at the forthcoming planning and information meeting in Ankara, set for Friday 18 February 2000. Sourcing of all the goods and services required to undertake the International Federation's programme, as set out in the appeal of 8 September 1999 and subsequently confirmed, is now complete. Unearmarked cash contributions continue to be welcome and will be directed towards implementation of activities scheduled for the coming year.

Contributions

Please refer to the list issued with Situation Report no 35, issued on 24 January 2000

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