

TURKEY: EARTHQUAKES

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A key focus of Red Cross Red Crescent work in Turkey during the past month has been planning for the operation's post relief phase, with strong emphasis on disaster preparedness, health and reconstruction and rehabilitation. There has been good progress with the distribution of ECHO-funded hygiene parcels both by the International Federation delegation and the Italian Red Cross. Wide-ranging activities by PNS operational in Turkey have continued, including support for the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) food and blood programmes, the construction of prefabricated houses and relief distributions to children. Another highlight of the month was the staging of a disaster preparedness workshop in Istanbul, attended by some 65 Turkish and foreign medical students.

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 a second quake at 18h57 on 12 November 1999 which rated 7.2 on the Richter scale and shook the north-western province of Bolu, some 100 kms to the east of Izmit. According to the latest casualty figures, there is a confirmed death toll of 845, with nearly 5,000 people injured.

Update

Over the past month, several moderate quakes and aftershocks have occurred in different regions of Turkey. Tremors were felt in the quake-hit Marmara region and also in central, eastern and southern

Anatolia. According to Istanbul's Kandilli observatory seismologists, the activity outside the Marmara region, measuring between 3.6 and 4.1 on the Richter scale, is not linked to the two strong quakes that killed more than 18,000 people in August and November last year. No casualties or property damage have been reported as a result of these recent quakes and aftershocks.

The decision taken by the disaster area directorate - comprising governors of the affected provinces and including the TRCS - to end the provision of hot meals to earthquake victims and start a three-month dry-food distribution programme, is being implemented in the coming days.

Earthquake survivors in the two affected areas continue to move into prefabricated settlements as tent cities close down. According to the latest official figures, some 135,000 earthquake victims are living in more than 35,000 prefabricated houses, made available by the Turkish government and the private sector.

Reports in the local media indicate that the Istanbul Governor's office and the municipality are making contingency preparations in the event of an earthquake in the Marmara Sea. The municipality is putting in place an emergency plan and the Governor's office has requested help from central government ministries for the strengthening of public buildings and homes in Istanbul. Preparedness and preventive measures include the organisation of a 500-member rescue team to be managed by the Istanbul fire department, the identification of tent city areas and helicopter landing pads, and the definition of an emergency transportation and evacuation plan.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Turkish Red Crescent

As previously reported, the TRCS has initiated a comprehensive and long-term internal restructuring process which aims to modernise its management, train and develop human resources and adjust the financial structure to create a more efficient and effective Society, with an enhanced disaster response capacity. The modernisation of the TRCS's logistics systems, the construction of a disaster preparedness warehouse and the development of a broad blood programme are among the practical measures envisaged in this restructuring process. Meanwhile, the leaderships of the Society and the International Federation delegation remain in close contact following publication of a temporary law, yet to be promulgated, directed at the governance and management of the TRCS.

Over the reporting period, the Society has continued to distribute hot meals to earthquake victims throughout the two quake-affected areas. In addition TRCS volunteers and staff served soup to around 2,000 drivers caught in stalled traffic near Bolu on a mid-March day when unexpected snow created worsening conditions particularly for earthquake victims living in tent cities.

International Federation

ECHO hygiene parcel programme: A four-month extension to the programme to distribute 250,000 ECHO-funded hygiene parcels was granted in March. The Turkey delegation relief team continues to monitor the situation in the field, assessing outstanding needs and monitoring final distributions to beneficiaries in the two quake-affected areas.

During March, a total of 134,113 hygiene parcels were introduced into the distribution network with more than 82,000 distributed to beneficiaries living in tent cities, prefabricated settlements and ad hoc tent clusters. The number of parcels dispatched from the International Federation's Samandia warehouse since the start of the programme now stands at almost 200,000. In order to improve the efficiency in the programme's implementation, the International Federation is also dispatching hygiene parcels directly to an increasing number of final destinations with appropriate storage capacity.

In the November disaster zone, the beneficiary caseload is being widened to include identified vulnerable families indirectly affected by the earthquake, while in Gölcük, hard-hit by the August occurrence,

efforts are being targeted towards people living in unplanned tent clusters, with the Italian Red Cross focusing on those accommodated in tent cities and prefabricated settlements.

Health: In the last week of March, the delegation's health team, in conjunction with the Turkish Medical Students International Committee, organised a workshop aimed at facilitating an open forum for discussion on disaster preparedness issues between medical professionals and disaster specialists. The seven-day event took place in Istanbul and was attended by some 65 Turkish and foreign medical students, who travelled from a number of earthquake-prone territories, including Mexico, Greece, the USA and Taiwan. Representatives from the TRCS and relevant government ministries were also present. A key outcome of the workshop was the launch of an international network for disaster preparedness information-sharing.

The Turkey delegation health department has donated a computer and printer to the Istanbul based TRCS nursing school, which has just been upgraded to a high school for nurses and meets European Union norms and standards. In addition, the delegation will shortly begin training courses for the TRCS nurses to ensure that three emergency response unit (ERU) field hospitals donated to the Society by the Norwegian Red Cross can be deployed and utilised effectively, as needed, in future.

Steady progress is being maintained in the implementation of the International Federation's psycho-social programme, including the deployment of two office containers where activities will take place. A pilot psycho-social centre will be established shortly in the Avcilar area of Istanbul, which sustained considerable damage and loss of life in the August quake. A number of key meetings took place in Ankara during March with local partner organisations, including the TRCS and the Turkish Psychologist Association.

Water-sanitation: A tendering process for the selection of sub-contractors for the implementation of the Kandira township water pipeline and pumping station project - to be funded by the Swiss Red Cross - has been prepared by the delegation's water-sanitation team. Due to start later this month, the project will upgrade and repair an earthquake-damaged water system - from source to the secondary networks - which provides water in a locality housing a significant influx of families displaced by the disaster, also including farming and fishing populations in the smaller municipalities around Kandira.

Over the past month, some 160 washing machines, 50 drying machines, 520 garbage bins, two bladder tanks and one shower container have been distributed to tent cities/clusters in both disaster zones. In addition, a total of 10 mt of calcium hypochlorite tablets and a large quantity of water-sanitation ERU materials have been directed towards the TRCS disaster preparedness stock.

Construction: The construction of the Izmit State Hospital extension, funded by the Singapore Red Cross, is well underway with the first floor structural work almost finished. The programme schedule is being maintained and is on course for completion in June 2000.

Meanwhile, the delegation's construction team is working closely with the relevant ministries and local authorities to advance 11 health, education and community projects for which confirmed donor pledges or cash transfers have been received. A comprehensive plan of action for the implementation of the reconstruction and rehabilitation projects to be managed by the delegation has been prepared and is being reviewed by the International Federation's Legal Affairs Department in Geneva.

The funding status of all the proposed Red Cross Red Crescent activities in the post relief phase, including rehabilitation and reconstruction, is shown in Annex 2.

Disaster preparedness: Representatives from the consortium of participating national societies (PNS) - from Britain, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United States - established at the Ankara planning and information meeting in February to assist the TRCS in enhancing its disaster preparedness capacity, held two telephone conferences during March. Draft terms of reference for an assessment mission building on the exercise of last December have been prepared, pending the

outcome of discussions between the TRCS and the Middle East Technical University, which is heavily involved in the Society's restructuring process described earlier in this report.

The International Federation's delegation in Turkey is now based in Ankara, located near the TRCS headquarters, at the following address: Ziya Gokalp Jaddesi, Adakale Sok, No 27/8 Kizilay, Ankara. Tel: +90-312-435-7728 (or 7729/7730/7731).

Participating National Societies:

American Red Cross: The Society is currently working closely with the TRCS and the International Federation to develop a contingency response plan. Working out of Ankara, this two year programme will include: response planning and management, replenishment of response stocks for 100,000 persons, warehouse automation, computerisation and training in disaster services. The American Red Cross is also initiating close relations with selected universities and institutions on hazard mapping and demographic analysis. In addition, the Society is directing financial support to the TRCS feeding programme.

Belgium Red Cross: The construction of prefabricated houses in Gölcük is progressing well. The structures of 11 houses have been completed and foundations for another eight are now ready. The project is scheduled for completion in early June, when the 35 prefabricated houses will be delivered to 68 families.

French Red Cross (FRC): The FRC delegation is based in the town of Akyazi, where most of the Society's operations are concentrated, sharing an office with the TRCS local branch. A contract has been signed with a local company for the construction of a school for 1,000 pupils in Akyazi; work started in the first week of March. Also during the month, in close cooperation with the TRCS, the FRC has distributed new clothes, toys, school material, baby food, baby hygiene parcels and pampers to some 4,000 children. In addition, 5,000 family hygiene parcels and 700 blankets were distributed by the Society in March. A French Red Cross boat which is visiting several Mediterranean National Societies arrived in the southern Turkish town of Marmaris in mid-March and was greeted by the FRC programme coordinator in Turkey and International Federation and TRCS representatives.

German Red Cross (GRC): The Society continues to implement a wide range of projects in the two quake-affected areas. The containerised field hospital located in Yeniköy has been handed over to the TRCS and the following construction projects were completed during March: a health centre in Döngel; two elementary schools in Hamyide and Hisyrn in the Gölcük area; a 300 sq m blood bank in Düzce for the TRCS; and a physiotherapy centre in Kocaeli University. The GRC has also agreed officially with the Turkish Ministry of Health to open a blood centre for fractionalisation activities and the production of blood derivatives in Istanbul and will provide one building for health emergency services in Izmit. In addition, the GRC has recently donated medicaments costed at USD 100,000 to the Gölcük State Hospital. The Society continues to provide dry food to 300 families in Kerpekefken and Cecipin and hot school dinners to various schools in the Gölcük area. The GRC has also established six kindergartens to tented schools in Düzce and, over the past month, more than 150 psycho-social counselling sessions have taken place at the Yeniköy field hospital.

Italian Red Cross: The Society's ECHO-funded hygiene parcels programme is progressing according to schedule and to date over 40,000 parcels have been distributed in the August earthquake zone, with particular focus during March on Izmit and Gölcük. The programme is due to be completed later this month, with the distribution of the remaining 10,000 parcels. Meanwhile, the Italian Red Cross is starting to implement a second ECHO-funded project for the construction of a multi-functional health centre and a women and children health care unit in Düzce. The project has already been presented and approved by the regional representative of the Ministry of Health and an agreement signed with the Düzce Governor and the TRCS. The construction is scheduled to start in the coming days and will take approximately three months. In addition, a total of eight mt of dry food and a similar quantity of new clothes have been shipped from Italy and will be donated to the TRCS for distribution to quake victims.

Spanish Red Cross: The Society's Turkey representative, working closely with the International Federation's construction delegate, has contracted the services of an external consultant - regarding technical specifications, drawings and preparation - to facilitate the tendering process for the following construction projects: a 1,400 sq m school in Adapazari; a 700 sq m hospital and a 160 sq m policlinic in Karamursel; and a 600 sq m health centre in Kaynasli. The Society is operating within the framework proposed by the TRCS and the two Societies are due to sign a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the agreed programmes to be implemented by the Spanish Red Cross (SRC). In addition, the SRC plans to support the TRCS blood programme through the provision of two mobile blood collection units and will assist the first aid programme, focusing mainly on the TRCS Nursing School, in close cooperation with the delegation's health team.

Swiss Red Cross: The Society's newly-appointed country representative assumed her responsibilities at the start of this month, based in Izmit.

Outstanding needs

Further resources and support needed to implement on-going Red Cross and Red Crescent activities in Turkey were detailed at the planning and information meeting in Ankara and the relevant documentation also mailed to those Societies contributing to the appeal but unable to attend. A revised plan and budget will be shared with donors in the coming weeks. As indicated in previous situation reports, 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 months.

Contributions

Please see Annex 1 for details.

For further information please contact the following: International Federation, Geneva: Charles Eldred-Evans; tel: +41 22 730 4320; mobile: 41 79 217 3363; email: <eldred@ifrc.org>

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