

TURKEY: EARTHQUAKES

19 June 2000

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period covered: 1 May 2000 - 31 May 2000

Red Cross Red Crescent activities in support of the Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRCS) and earthquake victims continued apace during the review period. A key highlight was the meeting in Ankara of the Disaster Response, Preparedness and Management consortium in mid-May.

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, centred on the industrial city of Izmit, on 17 August 1999, left 17,100 people dead and a further 44,000 injured. 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 death toll from a second major quake - in the Bolu/Duzce region, on 12 November 1999 - reached 845, with injuries to nearly 5,000 people. An estimated 400,000 buildings either collapsed or were badly damaged by the two earthquakes.

Update

Floods caused by heavy rain in the Black Sea regions of Samsun and Tokat killed at least two people, inundated hundreds of homes and knocked down bridges on Saturday, 27 May. According to the Turkish media, approximately 6,000 hectares of land were flooded in Samsun's Carcamba and Salipazari counties. The Government has sent tents to the region to shelter the victims forced to leave their homes and confirmed that a range of support will be provided to the affected population.

A team of Turkish seismologists has conducted a research of the fault line in Marmara Sea and some data regarding its length and depth were collected. Two ships were deployed for these latest seismic studies along 20 km of the fault lines between Tekirdag and Izmit Bay. However, despite the relevance of the recent findings, neither the magnitude nor the impact of another possible earthquake in the Marmara region can be predicted.

Meanwhile, the Turkish media has reported on a warning voiced by earthquake experts of a serious risk of a strong seismic activity which could occur at any time in the Aegean region. Several cities in the area, including Izmir, Manisa, Afyon, Denizli and Canakkale were advised to take measures to ensure the safety of the population in the event of a quake. Over the last 90 years, more than 50 strong earthquakes, measuring between five and seven points in the Richter scale, have occurred in the Aegean region.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Turkish Red Crescent

The TRCS has dispatched a rescue team of six people and relief items including 300 tents, 1,200 blankets, one mobile water tank, three mobile kitchens and ambulances to Turhal and Zile counties in the flood-affected region of north-eastern Turkey. In addition, the TRCS has also promptly sent an emergency health team comprising one doctor, one nurse and three support personnel to Samsun.

The TRCS President, Dr. Ertan Gönen, who was re-elected as President of the Society at the TRCS General Assembly on 28 April, will visit the International Federation's Secretariat and the ICRC Headquarters in Geneva from 25 through 29 June 2000.

Cankiri earthquake: As this report was being compiled, an earthquake rated at 5.9 on the Richter scale struck a remote area of Turkey, some 110 km north west of the country's capital, Ankara on the early morning of 6 June 2000, killing at least two people and leaving dozens injured. The TRCS rapidly moved into action, deploying some 40 volunteers and staff in the affected area. The National Society also dispatched a range of equipment and materials, including: one mobile hospital; two mobile health teams; seven mobile kitchens and food supplies for 10,000 people; 800 blankets; one ambulance; a doctor and two nurses; three trucks with relief supplies; and six generators. By the following day (7 June), the TRCS was dispensing hot meals to victims of the disaster and is continuing its assistance.

International Federation

Disaster response and preparedness management: A meeting of the consortium of PNS formed to work with TRCS in enhancing its disaster response, preparedness and management (DRPM) capacity and comprising the American, British, German, Hellenic, Netherlands, Norwegian and Swiss Red Cross Societies took place in Ankara on 16 May 2000; also in attendance were representatives from the Iranian Red Crescent (to extend the regional dimension) and the Japanese Red Cross, as an observer. The meeting record is being distributed to all attendees and PNS contributors to the International Federation appeal (no. 19/99). The primary purpose of the gathering was to review DRPM activity and progress since the planning and information meeting in Ankara on 18 February 2000, and identify further areas of support from consortium members. The agenda included an update from the Middle East Technical University, which is working with TRCS on its restructuring process, and a presentation on the DRPM framework, prepared under the technical leadership of the American Red Cross, in conjunction with the Turkish Red Crescent, International Federation and German Red Cross. Participants strongly supported the main tenets of the framework, which will form the basis for a detailed operational plan to be presented at the next consortium meeting provisionally scheduled for the second half of August.

Consistent with the DRPM objectives and activities, the International Federation is coordinating initiatives to enhance the preparedness of the various Red Cross and Red Crescent components in Turkey in the event of a further disaster in the coming weeks or months, ahead of longer-term DRPM implementation. As a first step, a planning meeting took place earlier this month involving the TRCS, the International Federation and all PNS in Turkey. Among other initiatives under active consideration is a proposal from the Finnish Red Cross to enhance TRCS skills in the deployment of field hospitals, as part of a wider emergency response training programme being developed by the German Red Cross.

Logistics and Relief: The International Federation's warehouse located in Samandira, near Istanbul, has been down-scaled by 50%, to 1,500 sqm, as part of a streamlining of operations. The present lease will terminate on 30 June 2000, when all goods will be dispatched to the field or designated TRCS disaster preparedness stock. In the meantime, the International Federation has reached agreement in principle with TRCS on the allocation of dedicated storage and office space within one of the Society's existing warehouses.

A total of 36 units of multipurpose prefabricated buildings (30 units measuring 3.8m x 5m), and six larger facilities (measuring 11m x 20m), have been received into the Samandira warehouse, procured with Australian Red Cross funds. The supplier will provide training to assemble and erect these units with the participation of 12 TRCS staff. After the training the units will be stored in TRCS warehouses as part of the disaster preparedness stock.

During the first week of May, a total of 150 mt of various dry food items and new clothes were donated by the Italian Red Cross to the TRCS to be distributed to the earthquake-affected population.

Multipurpose social facilities: The delegation continues to work towards full implementation of a programme to provide recreational and social facilities in a number of temporary settlements for those left homeless following the earthquakes. Various pilot projects are already underway, including activities in the Yahya Kaptan prefabricated settlement in Izmit, involving the provision of furniture, computers and books for a newly opened study room and in the Fidanlik prefabricated city in Düzce, where the International Federation has donated furniture, computers and household appliances for a youth centre and a crèche, in cooperation with a Turkish NGO, Sivil Koordinasyon. The delegation is also procuring sports equipment for donation to four prefabricated settlements in Yalova where the municipality is providing sports' grounds. Funding for the programme as presently envisaged is being provided primarily by the Kuwait Red Crescent and Canadian Red Cross.

ECHO hygiene parcel programme: By the end of the reporting period, 249,518 ECHO-funded hygiene parcels had been introduced into the distribution network, with the remaining 482 parcels due for dispatch from the International Federation's warehouse in early June. Signatures collected at the distribution points confirm that 166,829 parcels have already reached the hands of beneficiaries, though the number of parcels distributed so far is significantly higher. Due to the down-sizing of the government's logistics support coordination centre operations in the affected areas, direct deliveries of the parcels to the respective communities are being increased. In the closing phase of the programme, with most distributions effected, activities will focus mainly on monitoring and surveying the impact of the programme in the field.

Health: The Turkey delegation's health department continues to provide medical equipment to several hospitals in the two quake-affected areas. Distributions carried out during this reporting period have included 100 crutches and 30 walkers to the Erenköy physiotherapy hospital, 500 baby hygiene parcels to the TRCS Akyazi branch and 15 emergency hospital beds to the Red Crescent nursing school in Istanbul for disaster preparedness purposes. In addition, the team of four health surveyors continue to assess outstanding needs in the field and to distribute relief items including blankets, baby parcels and 6,000 diapers for the elderly.

The two mobile clinics, donated by the Australian Red Cross and Danish Red Cross, currently serving the villages in the environs of Yalova, have assisted 900 outpatients since their deployment on 15 April, whereas two further mobile clinics operating in Düzce and surrounding villages, also donated by the Australian Red Cross, are being used mostly for vaccination campaigns, health surveillance and the provision of basic health care treatment.

First aid activities during the review period have concentrated on planning for a workshop to be attended by Red Crescent nursing school teachers and students and first aid trainers from TRCS branches in the Marmara region. The five-day workshop will take place in Istanbul at the end of June; the programme includes an overview of the various Red Cross and Red Crescent activities on behalf of

the earthquake victims in Turkey, a field trip to the disaster area, CPR training and a first aid competition. The workshop is being organised by the International Federation, in close consultation and cooperation with the Spanish and German Red Cross Societies.

Following a request by the TRCS, the Spanish Red Cross is providing two mobile blood collection units to support the Society's blood programme.

Psycho-social support: The first of four three-day training modules planned for the psycho-social centre in Avcilar was successfully completed at the end of May. The 15 participants were recruited in close consultation with the Avcilar local authorities and NGOs. The group comprised mainly individuals interested in psycho-social interventions within their community and who are committed to work at the centre as volunteers. The main objectives of this first module of a long-term training programme included the creation and consolidation of the participants as a group and identifying collective resources. The second training module in Avcilar is scheduled to take place in the first half of July.

Water-sanitation: The TRCS has formally agreed to the implementation of the Kandira water pipeline project, funded by the Swiss Red Cross, and a letter of intent has been signed between the International Federation and the Turkish authorities responsible for water and sewerage works in rural areas. The water and sanitation team is now preparing a memorandum of understanding and identifying several subcontractors for the actual implementation of the project, scheduled for completion in April 2001.

Construction: The construction of the extension to the Izmit State Hospital, funded by the Singapore Red Cross, was 90% completed by the end of May, with inauguration due shortly. Work on finalising core memoranda of understanding (to be signed with the health and education ministries) continued and these texts, essential for safeguarding the interests of the International Federation and its donors, are almost complete. Nine International Federation construction projects, four hospitals and five schools are ongoing, funded by the Japanese Red Cross and Kuwait Red Crescent Societies.

The Belgium Red Cross construction project of 35 prefabricated houses in Gölcük is nearing completion. So far, over 120 families have expressed an interest in occupying the 70 available units. The selection of beneficiaries will be undertaken by the Belgium Red Cross in cooperation with the Municipality authorities. The Belgium Red Cross representative in Turkey has announced that the Society will terminate its activities in the country during June.

The French Red Cross construction works of an elementary school and a crèche in Akyazi are progressing according to schedule. The crèche was due to be completed earlier this month and the school's foundation is well underway. A ceremony for the placement of the first stone of the school and for the inauguration of the crèche will take place towards the end of June. Meanwhile, the invitation to tender for the construction of a hospital in Gölcük was issued during the last week of May. In addition, the French Red Cross has also financed the rehabilitation of the TRCS local branch offices in Akyazi. The work included rebuilding the sanitation system damaged by the earthquake, as well as improvements to the interior of the building.

The Italian Red Cross is conducting a tender for the construction of an ECHO-funded 800 meter semi-permanent health centre in Düzce. Construction works are scheduled to be completed in four months.

Telecommunications: The International Federation telecommunications delegate has visited several TRCS local branches to assess the Society's telecommunications capacity and to identify areas of improvement as a part of the DRPM process. The need to install repeaters in key locations to enhance the reach of the VHF radio receivers was recognised as a first step to expand the TRCS radio network, particularly the Society's warehouses and blood centres which must be linked to the national headquarters as well as to each other. The International Federation intends to assist the TRCS in enhancing its overall telecommunications capacity and will also provide training sessions for all Red Cross and Red Crescent personnel involved in using telecom equipment.

In addition, the delegation is currently negotiating an agreement with Ericsson, the Swedish-based global telecommunications provider, to gain access to a fail-safe communications network in the event of a network collapse Turkey, as well as the provision of additional telecommunications equipment and services.

Youth: The Italian and German Red Cross Societies are cooperating on an initiative to support a youth summer camp organised by the TRCS branch in Izmit; planned activities include training for National Society staff in rescue at the sea. The Italian Red Cross will also donate a hydro-ambulance to the local branch of Kandira, enabling the TRCS to provide a permanent rescue service in that area.

Education/Training: Working closely with the TRCS and the German Red Cross, the International Federation organised a training for trainers workshop, targeting Red Cross and Red Crescent local staff. This event took place in Istanbul from 22 to 29 May, resourced by two trainers, from the International Federation and the ICRC. The 13 participants are now charged with organising a programme to train and educate their Turkish colleagues in main principles, precepts and structures of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Swiss Red Cross intends to finance two training programmes to be implemented by the Turkish foundation, Meksa. The first project will comprise courses for the managers of prefabricated cities aimed at strengthening their management skills, including conflict resolution. A second activity will offer courses in computer literacy, English and a range of office-based skills for inhabitants of prefabricated settlements in Izmit. Another potential project, still at the planning stage, is to establish a prothesis workshop in Izmit, in cooperation with the local representatives of the Turkish health ministry.

Evaluation: The independent, in-depth assessment of the Red Cross and Red Crescent operation in Turkey (17 August 1999 through 30 April 2000) is being finalised for printing and will be distributed to International Federation members contributing to the appeal during July.

Publicity materials: With the first anniversary of the 17 August quake imminent, the International Federation is preparing a range of publicity materials to mark the event, including an eight-page 'Insight' publication (in Turkish and English), video footage and a CD encapsulating key documentation and images.

Outstanding needs

The International Federation is working with the TRCS to agree to a programme of activities, consistent with the Society's priorities, particularly DRPM, blood, first aid, telecommunications and automation. A plan and budget is close to completion and will be shared with donors in the coming weeks. Meanwhile, work will continue on committed projects, including construction and water-sanitation, though there are no plans for extending these programmes. Unearmarked cash contributions to the International Federation's Turkey earthquakes appeal continue to be welcome.

Contributions (Please see Annex 1 for details.)

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