

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CHINA - EARTHQUAKE

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This Bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time but this may change according to circumstances.

The Situation

The Xinhua News Agency has reported this morning that "A strong aftershock measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale hit Bachu county in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region at 8:27 a.m. on Tuesday. Bachu and its neighboring county Jiashi were seriously affected by a 6.8 degree earthquake on February 24 which killed more than 260 people. No casualties from the aftershock were reported in Bachu where disaster relief work is still ongoing in snowy and wet conditions."

At yesterday's United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) meeting, Mr. Zhang from the Ministry of Civil Affairs provided the following information:

- The updated figures are as follows:
 - 268 dead
 - more than 4,000 injured, 2,058 of them seriously – 800 still in hospital
 - 510,000 people affected, out of whom 100,000 seriously
 - 70,000 rooms collapsed
 - 103 schools, 900 class rooms collapsed
 - 16 township health clinics destroyed
- By 26 February the rescue and search operation had been almost completed. The immediate needs of the affected population, i.e. food, clothes, drinking water and temporary shelter have been met.
- The government has provided 450 tons of wheat flour, 352 tons of instant food, 120,000 bottles of mineral water in addition to water tanks, 46,000 pieces of clothes and blankets and 17,000 tents.
- The main remaining problem is the reconstruction of the houses that will continue until June/July 2003. The local government has a rehabilitation plan but is short of funding.
- Transportation is, in general, unaffected. The impact on cultural sites has not been recorded.
- The impact on agricultural production is estimated to be insignificant due to the earthquake occurring during winter.
- The central government has given 11 million RMB for the relief operation, the Government of the Xinjiang Autonomous region 5.5 million RMB, and the local governments have mobilized about 20 million RMB.
- The Chinese government welcomes assistance from the international community.

In addition to the International Federation, the following agencies provided information about their response:

- Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) has sent their team to the affected area. Their information is similar to that provided by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. MSF also noted that the local health clinics have requested medical supplies and that more food assistance will be needed because many families lost their food reserves. The absence of safe drinking water sources may lead to an increased risk of water related diseases. Snowing in the last two days has made the situation more difficult for people without adequate shelter.
- Japan has donated about USD 250,000: USD 150,000 in cash and the rest in kind (tents, quilts, water tanks)
- UNICEF has sent a team to the area. The Hong Kong UNICEF Committee has donated 2 million HK.
- The Greek Government was the first to announce its humanitarian assistance amounting to 200,000 euros.
- The US Government has donated USD 100,000 to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. This will most likely be used for food.
- AusAID is interested in providing assistance but is still waiting for more information on the situation.
- WHO has received a list of medical needs from the Ministry of Health.
- Oxfam Hong Kong has assisted one village with blankets.
- Save the Children has been in contact with the local Civil Affairs Office and will send a team to the area to study the situation relating to schools and orphanages.¹

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Red Cross assessment team found that in Jiashi County, most people are well prepared for earthquakes and had built shelters in advance. Besides the small tents for families, big tents are needed for school use. Also the area lacks medicines. The Red Cross internal appeal has raised closer to 8 million RMB of which 3 million in cash and rest in kind (e.g. medicines from pharmaceutical companies).

The Xinjiang Red Cross has confirmed some delay in the distributions mainly due to the inability to access some remote villages.

The priority is now on reconstruction. The International Federation has not received any request for international assistance.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact :

- *Richard Grove-Hills, Head of Regional Delegation, Beijing; Cell Phone +86 1350 120 5973 ; Fax +86 10 65 327 166.*
- *Aurelia Balpe, Phone 41 22 7304352; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email aurelia.balpe@ifrc.org*

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

John Horekens
Director
External Relations

Simon Missiri
Head
Asia Pacific

¹ Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the UN Disaster Management Team, 3 March 2003.