

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

MEXICO: EARTHQUAKE

23 January 2003

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- *This bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Appeal.*

The Situation

At 20.08 hours on 21 January, a major earthquake, magnitude 7.8 on the Richter Scale, struck off the coast of Colima state in the west of Mexico, 50 km east of Manzanillo and 500 km west of Mexico City. Continuous aftershocks are taking place and the government declared a state of emergency in Colima on the morning of 22 January. This is the strongest earthquake to hit Mexico for seven years and significant tremors were also felt in Mexico City, causing damage to buildings in the capital.

Reports from the state of Colima which has a population of 590,000, indicate that the worst affected city is Colima, the capital of the state, and that major damage was sustained in the towns of Villa de Alvarez, Pueblo Juarez, Coquimatlan, Lo de Villa and Zacualpan. Buildings have collapsed, several hospitals have been damaged and there are power outages, gas leakages and damage to the road infrastructure. As of the morning of 22 January, 24 people are reported to have died and 150 wounded. There are difficulties in reaching isolated communities in the mountainous regions of the state where it is feared loss of life and damage have also occurred.



The Mexican Red Cross immediately mobilized 50 members of the National Society's search and rescue brigade from the capital and the branch in Jalisco. The National Society is working in close collaboration with CENAPRED, the national centre for disaster prevention, which is carrying out search and rescue operations with the use of dogs. At the Colima branch, four Red Cross urban search and rescue teams and two Red Cross teams specialized in search and rescue in collapsed buildings are currently working in the affected areas. The National Society's relief coordinator, together with five members of Mexican Red Cross staff, travelled to Colima on 22 January to support the damage and needs assessments taking place. The branches of Jalisco and Michoacan have made available emergency teams, together with supplies. An interdisciplinary advance team was also dispatched from Guadalajara to Manzanillo, however, there are difficulties in reaching the affected area, given damage to the road network. The National Society branch in Colima, together with staff from the Jalisco branch, is providing first aid services, medical attention and psychological support. Some 150 volunteers and 16 ambulances are involved in assistance to those affected by the earthquake.



The Federation's regional communications delegate based in Mexico City is ensuring liaison with the National Society headquarters. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Federation's recently established regional delegation in Panama, are ensuring coordination with the Mexican Red Cross and other actors. The emergency operations support centre of the Canadian Red Cross is on standby and has offered to supply 40.5 tonnes of relief goods. The American Red Cross international disaster response unit will make available a member of staff who is based in the Pan American Disaster Response Unit, to work in the assessments of damage and needs. The German Red Cross has deployed its disaster response team member and the Italian and Japanese Red Cross Societies have contacted the regional delegation and the Secretariat.

Further information will be provided as soon as possible once details of the assessment are available. The Mexican Red Cross expects that the damage and needs assessment will be completed on Friday, 24 January. The Mexican Red Cross has scheduled a meeting with all PNS and donors on 24 January to release findings from the assessment and initiate a coordinated response to assist the most vulnerable affected by the disaster.

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

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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.

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