

# 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***

24 January 2003

*Information Bulletin N° 3*

- *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, an earthquake, magnitude 7.8 on the Richter Scale, occurred off the coast of Colima state in western Mexico, 50 km east of Manzanillo and 500 km west of Mexico City. This is the strongest earthquake to have hit Mexico for seven years. Significant tremors were also felt in Mexico City, however no major damage has been reported to date. Continuous aftershocks are occurring. To date, initial reports indicate a total of 25 dead and 324 injured.

The Federal government declared a state of emergency in the municipalities of Colima, Coquimatlan, Villa de Alvarez, Tecoman, Ixtlahuacan, and Armeria in Colima, enabling access to the national disaster fund. Colima is a predominantly rural state, characterized by many low income villages with houses made from adobe. Consequently, it is anticipated that there will be an urgent need for housing in these areas. For example, there are unconfirmed reports that all housing in the village of Suchitlan was destroyed.

The Mexican President and members of his Cabinet visited the Colima branch of the National Society, and plan to visit the three most affected municipalities. An account has now been opened by the government for the receipt of donations.

Based on the results of initial assessments which have been undertaken, the situation in the affected areas is as follows:

#### Colima City

- 10 dead and over 100 injured; with 15 requiring emergency surgery
- Hospitals being inspected for structural damage
- 155 persons in shelters
- 17 reports of gas and water leaks
- 176 houses destroyed, and 300 damaged.

#### Municipality of Armería

- 40 injured
- 75 per cent damage to the facilities of the MRC branch
- Damage sustained to homes, but not yet quantifiable, as assessment is pending
- Preventive evacuation carried out in coastal areas of Cuyutlan and Paraiso.

#### Municipality of Comala

- 1 death and 3 injuries reported
- 10 homes destroyed, 83 damaged
- Electricity and water services being restored

#### Municipality of Coquimatlan

- 1 death, 25 injuries
- Two temporary shelters were opened, but have now been closed
- Damage reported to public buildings

#### Municipality of Ixtlahuacan

- 2 dead, 8 injured
- 50 homes destroyed, and 50 damaged
- Reports of collapsed roads
- 1 night shelter opened, and expected to be closed by tomorrow

#### Municipality of Cuahutemoc

- 3 serious injuries

#### Municipality of Villa de Alvarez

- 6 deaths and 37 injuries
- Approximately 2,000 homes with varying degrees of damage (further details on completion of assessments)
- Reports of 150 gas and water leaks
- Damage to municipal facilities, as well as to a health centre

#### Municipality of Manzanillo

- Damage to homes yet to be quantified
- Damage sustained at the docks, but loading and unloading activities have continued
- Navigational activities disrupted due to damage sustained in the facilities
- Partial damage to water distribution facilities

#### Municipality of Minatitlan

- Damage to homes yet to be assessed
- Limited access by road due to structural damage.

***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Mexican Red Cross (MRC) headquarters dispatched a total of 50 tonnes of relief goods to Colima city. The preliminary assessments by the MRC teams in the field revealed that the need for food, clothing and shelter are being met by family members and local resources. The National Society has used its links with local firms to procure relief goods for use in the operation.

An intervention unit (comprising 16 ambulances, 4 rescue units, 2 vehicle maintenance units, and one rescue unit for collapsed structures) from the Jalisco branch have been deployed to the affected areas. Emergency operation centres were established in Colima and Jalisco to coordinate activities of the four urban rescue units and the two units for search and rescue in collapsed structures. A total of 100 volunteers from the Colima branch, 45 from the Jalisco branch, and 200 external volunteers are engaged in the operation. MRC personnel continue to provide psychological support and first aid care.

The National Society continues to work closely with CENAPRED, the national centre for disaster prevention, other government authorities, including the Civil Protection and the army; as well as other local actors.

The Federation's regional communications delegate based in Mexico City continues to liaise with the National Society headquarters, as well as coordinate with Participating National Societies and other actors within Mexico. The Panama regional delegation continues to coordinate with the Mexican Red Cross; while the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) maintains contact with regional representatives of disaster response organizations. The American Red Cross delegate who is based in PADRU is on location in Mexico, and has held coordination meetings with potential donors.

The Mexican Red Cross, supported by the regional communications delegate, will convene a meeting with Participating National Societies and donors to explore areas for possible cooperation to reinforce humanitarian assistance, as well as explore alternatives for the rehabilitation phase, based on the findings from the damage and needs assessment currently underway.

The Japanese, British, Spanish Red Cross as well as DFID and ECHO were among the first to contact the Mexican Red Cross and Federation in the aftermath of the disaster with offers of support.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see [www.ifrc.org](http://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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