

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

PANAMA: EARTHQUAKE

14 August 2003

Information Bulletin N° 01/03

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued

for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The Situation

At 3.29 hours on 13 August, an earthquake measuring 5.3 on the Richter scale occurred in Panama; the epicentre of which was 10 km. from the city of Colón in the northern region of the Caribbean coast. Fortunately, no-one was killed or injured and the tremor caused only minor damage; three houses in Colón were totally destroyed and seven have been condemned for demolition. These old houses in poor condition accommodated 80 families made up of 340 people of modest means. Since tremors are infrequent in Panama, panic broke out amongst residents of Panama City, Colón and its outskirts. However, there were no interruptions to water, electricity or telecommunications services. Nine minor aftershocks have occurred since the tremor.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Damage assessments carried out by national and local authorities have ascertained that the infrastructure of certain old buildings in Colón was damaged, and the infrastructure of several commercial buildings in Colón's Free Trade Zone was also affected. The Colón branch of the National Society, given that it is a 51 year old building, also incurred damage. The Red Cross Society of Panama branch in Colón undertook search and rescue activities immediately after the quake hit and also assisted in calming residents affected by panic. The Red Cross Society of Panama, in coordination with the local government, is assisting with the management of a temporary shelter for the 340 people who lost their homes. Relief items and food rations have been provided for a six day period. Through its operations centre, the headquarters of the Red Cross Society of Panama is maintaining constant communications with its Colón branch. The National Society is also in contact with both the Pan American Disaster Response Unit and the regional delegation. The immediate and effective response ensured by the Red Cross Society of Panama following the tremor was enhanced by the relief training provided through the Federation.

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

Panama: Earthquake; Information Bulletin no. 1

For further details please contact:

- *The Red Cross Society of Panama in Panama City, Phone (507) 315 13 89; Fax number (507) 315 14 01; email cruzroja@pangb-net.net*
- *Nelson Castaño, Head, Pan American Disaster Response Unit, Phone (507) 316 10 01; Fax (507) 316 10 82; email: ifrcpa07@ifrc.org*
- *Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Phone (41) 22 730 42 74; Fax (41) 22 733 0395; email luis.luna@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.

