

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

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CHILE: EARTHQUAKE

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 185 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to achieve the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- **Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.**
- **Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.**
- **Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.**
- **Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.**

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

On November 14, 2007 at 12:40 local time, a strong earthquake measuring 7.7 on the Richter scale hit the north coast of Chile (source: United States Geological Survey). The epicentre was located in Quillagua, 40km east of the coastal town Tocopilla and 175km north of the city Antofagasta. The earthquake was caused by the release of pressure caused by the subduction of the oceanic Nazca plate beneath the South American plate.

The worst affected areas are in the II Region of Antofagasta. Two lives were lost in the town of Tocopilla, and some 150 people have been injured. In Tocopilla alone 115 people were injured, of which 89 women, 19 male and seven children. In Iquique, two people were also reported injured. Over 5,000 homes have been destroyed and other infrastructure has been damaged, with some power, water and phone lines cut off.

The towns of Tocopilla and Maria Elena were the worst affected, with populations of 24 thousand and 7 thousand inhabitants respectively. It is estimated that at least 40 percent of homes have been damaged by the earthquake in Tocopilla, and up to 70 percent of homes have been damaged in Maria Elena.

A group of construction workers were rescued from a tunnel where they were carrying out reparation works. Two miners have been reported missing since the earthquake. Mining activity in the area, a major source of employment and income for local populations, has been temporarily paralyzed.

On 15 November, the Chilean government through its National Emergency Office (Oficina Nacional de Emergencia – ONEMI), sent 14 tonnes of relief items including camp beds, mattresses, blankets, kitchen kits, tents, cookers and water tanks to assist those in need. In addition, the government has confirmed that it will provide 1,000 temporary homes in the coming hours and has also installed 100 chemical toilets. The Chilean President and four cabinet ministers have visited Antofagasta and other affected areas. The Interior minister has formally declared the region a catastrophe zone, a measure which will help speed up the delivery of aid. Private companies have offered to support efforts by contributing building materials.

Since the quake, two major replicas were registered measuring 6.2 and 6.8 on the Richter scale (source: United States Geological Survey). At least two to three replicas are being felt every hour causing significant stress amongst the local population.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the onset of the emergency the Chilean Red Cross (CRC) National Relief Department has activated response mechanisms and is assisting those people affected by the earthquake. At present the CRC National Intervention Team (NIT) is on alert and CRC volunteers from the northern I and II Regions are on alert. With the support of 40 volunteers displaced to the affected areas, immediate relief activities are taking place.

As water systems have been cut off, firemen have been distributing water, although this is mostly murky and undrinkable. The CRC has been encouraging local populations to use this water appropriately and promoting personal hygiene through local radio spots. In the capital Santiago, the CRC has launched a campaign for the donation of food items. At the request of the CRC, the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has deployed a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specialized in Water and Sanitation to assist operations in the field.

The recurrent replicas are causing continued stress amongst the already emotionally traumatized population. The Chilean Red Cross was the first institution on the ground providing psychosocial social support to people affected by the earthquake in Tocopilla.

The collapsed hospital in Tocopilla has received 120 people with medium and serious injuries. The CRC has installed two tents to provide additional medical care and psychosocial support. The armed forces also have installed temporary hospitals.



Left: Medical posts have been set up by the Chilean Red Cross to assist those injured by the earthquake and to provide psychosocial support.
Source: Chilean Red Cross.

The CRC is participating in coordination meetings. ONEMI organized the first coordination meeting on 15 November, with the participation of CRC. During the meeting the CRC was recognized as a key actor in sanitary support (also by law) and that the National Society could support response efforts in the areas of pre hospital healthcare, first aid and water and sanitation.

The National Relief Coordinator has been deployed to the affected area to evaluate the situation on the ground and coordinate activities. The CRC is preparing a Plan of Action based on the needs of the affected population, which will be ready shortly. The Federation's Regional Representation in Lima is supporting the National Society and has offered to activate all regional response mechanisms including the allocation of funds from the Federation Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and the mobilization of Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members.

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