

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

China: Earthquake

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Red Cross Society of China, with the support of the International Federation, has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

[<click here to view the map of the affected area, or here for detailed contact information>](#)

The Situation

A major earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale jolted Wenchuan County, Aba Prefecture in southwest China's Sichuan Province at 0628 GMT (2:28 p.m. local time) on Monday 12 May, causing several buildings to sway and residents rushing out into the streets. According to the U.S Geological Survey, the quake struck at a depth of 29 km, with the epicentre of the quake located at 31.104 degrees north latitude and 103.270 degrees east longitude.

Minutes later, at 2:35 p.m. local time, an earthquake measuring 3.9 on the Richter scale jolted Tongzhou District in east Beijing. According to the State Seismological Bureau (SSB), the second quake's epicentre was 39.8 north latitude and 116.8 east longitude. Tremors were felt as far as Bangkok, some 3,300 km away.

Initial reports are coming in of some casualties. Five people are confirmed dead in southwest China's Sichuan Province and Chongqing Municipality after the earthquake toppled two school buildings and a water tower. Four students died in Chongqing's outer Liangping County when the earthquake toppled the Wenhua Township primary school at about 2:30 p.m. At least 100 children were injured according to the local government. More than ten students were injured, two seriously, at the Central primary school of Lirang Township in Liangping County.

In neighbouring Sichuan Province, one death was reported after a water tower collapsed in Santai County, in the city of Mianyang. According to a spokesman for the provincial seismological bureau, more people were feared injured or dead in Sichuan as many houses had collapsed in Dujiangyan City, near the epicenter in Wenchuan County. In Aba, there has been one casualty reported so far and eight people injured.

Communication and road transportation has been totally cut off in Wenchuan, Lixian, Maoxian County of Aba prefecture. Chengdu Airport is closed at this moment. Most domestic flights now change to land in Chongqing. Collapsed houses, landslides and other damages were also reported in another seven counties in Aba. There are no signs that the earthquake had affected the Three Gorges dam.

It was reported by China Central Television that the earthquake also affected Chongqing, Hunan, Hubei, Yunnan, Guizhou, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Ningxia, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Jiangsu and Shanghai Provinces/ Municipalities.

With a population of 111,800, Wenchuan lies in the southeast part of the Tibetan-Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Aba, 146 km northwest of Chengdu, the provincial capital of Sichuan.

Wenchuan is home to the Tibetan and Qiang minorities and also home to the Wolong Nature Reserve, China's leading research and breeding base for endangered giant pandas.

The National Disaster Contingency Plan has been mobilized and China's Premier Wen Jia Bao is on his way to Wenchuan. The SSB has sent out a 180-person emergency rescue team to Wenchuan. The Chinese Air Force has sent two helicopters to assist with relief work in the quake-stricken areas. The Chengdu Military Area Command has dispatched troops to help with disaster relief work in the earthquake-stricken area.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

Establishing communication with the local Red Cross in Wenchuan is difficult at the moment. Members of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) and the International Federation's regional disaster management coordinator in East Asia are on their way to Wenchuan for emergency assessment. Information will be updated on DMIS.

How we work

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.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet 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.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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