

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Chile: Earthquake

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This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available. The Chilean Red Cross (CRC) has determined that external assistance is not required at this time; however, as the situation is assessed, there may be a need for funding or other assistance from donors once more information is available on the impact of the disaster.

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

On 27 February 2010 at about 3:35 a.m. local time, an earthquake of magnitude 8.8 occurred in the moderately populated region of Bio-Bio in central Chile. The earthquake struck 90 kilometres north-east of the city of Concepción, the capital of Bio-Bio, and there have been many aftershocks. A tsunami alert has been generated in Chile and most of all countries on the Pacific Coast.

At least 100 people have been killed and many affected after the huge earthquake struck the Chilean coast and caused buildings to collapse in the capital, Santiago. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre informed that sea level readings indicate a tsunami was generated.

The Situation

The 8.8 magnitude earthquake that hit the coast of Chile has killed at least 100 people, flattening buildings and triggering a tsunami. This has been the country's largest earthquake for 25 years. A tsunami warning has been extended across the Pacific rim, including most of Central and South America and as far as Australia and Antarctica.

The earthquake hit near the town of Maule, approximately 350 kilometers southwest of Santiago, at a depth of 47.4 kilometers. The epicenter was just 90 kilometers from Concepción, Chile's second-largest city, where more than 200,000 people live along the Bio Bio River. This is a rural area with mud brick houses, increasing vulnerability from the effects of the earthquake. The Chilean President stated that a huge wave swept into the southern island of Juan Fernandez, and radio stations informed that this caused serious damage.

In Santiago, the country's capital, buildings have collapsed and phone lines and electricity were brought down, but the full extent of the damage is still being determined.

Several big aftershocks occurred afterwards in the south-central region, some measuring 6.9, 6.2 and 5.6. According to the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System, the potentially affected critical infrastructures are: a hydro dam in Chimburango located 189 kilometers from the province of Maule, several airports, including the main international airport and 9 ports, including the port of Concepción. The capital's international airport was forced to close, a highway bridge collapsed and chunks of buildings fell into the street. The border with Argentina is closed.

Potentially affected People

Population Data		
Radius (km)	Population	Density (people/km)
1	0	0

2	0	0
5	1,270	16
10	4,032	12
20	10,961	8
50	84,252	10
100	630,242	20
200	3,010,499	23

The population in the area of this earthquake is 10 people/km. Source: GDACS

The President has declared a National Emergency and helicopters have been sent to assess the affected areas. So far it is a national level response, but the government will hold a coordination meeting today at 12 noon with all agencies including the Chilean Red Cross to update information and decide if international assistance is required.

Earthquakes are relatively common in Chile, which is part of the Pacific “ring-of-fire” tectonic-plate boundary, and many buildings are built to withstand tremors. The largest earthquake ever recorded struck the same region on 22 May 1960. The magnitude 9.5 quake killed 1,655 people and left two million homeless.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the onset of the emergency the Chilean Red Cross National Relief Department has activated response mechanisms and is assisting those people affected by the earthquake. At present, the CRC National Intervention Team (NIT) and CRC volunteers are on alert. The CRC relief director is coordinating with the National Office of Emergencies and Information (Oficina Nacional de Emergencias e Información-ONEMI), which is dedicated to the prevention, organization, coordination and information relative to natural disasters. The affected region of Bio-Bio includes 29 CRC branches and there are 14 branches in the region of Maule, both affected by the earthquake.

The CRC informs the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) that the National Society is constantly monitoring the situation; however, communication is very limited and it has not been possible to communicate with the two affected regional branches of Bio-Bio and Maule. In addition, the IFRC Regional Representations in Buenos Aires and Lima have been in constant communication with the National Society and PADRU.

The IFRC Regional Representative from the Southern Cone in Buenos Aires will travel to Chile today if possible to provide support to the CRC. Information alerts have been issued for FACT, ERU and RDRT teams. In addition, PADRU has a team alerted and prepared for deployment.

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 the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The International Federation's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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[<map below; click here to return to the title page or contact information](#)



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