

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

New Zealand: Christchurch Earthquake

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time.

At 12.51 pm (NZDT) on 22 February 2011, the South Island of New Zealand was struck by a 6.3 magnitude earthquake. The earthquake struck at a depth of 5 km and the epicentre of the earthquake was about 10km south-east of the city of Christchurch (population 340,000). This earthquake has exacerbated existing damage which occurred during the earthquake of September 2010.



New Zealand Red Cross distributing relief items
Photo:New Zealand Red Cross

The Situation

The earthquake has been followed by several aftershocks ranging between 4.5 to 5.7 magnitudes. The death toll has reached 75 and is expected to rise. Between 200 and 300 people are estimated to be trapped inside the collapsed buildings. There is widespread damage throughout Christchurch, including collapsed buildings in the centre of the city and damage to roads and bridges. Around 2,000 people have been displaced in evacuation centres. Electricity supplies have been cut to about half of the city and Christchurch airport is closed for commercial flights. All rail travel in the region has been suspended. Medical facilities are operational. The Prime Minister has declared a national state of emergency.

National agencies have been activated and are being coordinated via the National Crisis Management Centre. As the scale of the disaster unfolds, the priority for the authorities is focused on search and rescue and the evacuation of casualties to medical facilities. Requested international search and rescue teams have arrived into New Zealand from around the globe. Assessments continue to identify if additional external assistance is needed. So far, the only international assistance accepted in the country are the rescue teams (eight teams have been deployed to New Zealand).

[<click here for contact details or a map of the affected areas>](#)

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The New Zealand Red Cross has activated the national emergency operations centre (NEOC) at their national office in Wellington. Eight ERT teams (34 people) have been deployed to Christchurch providing first aid at triage centres, welfare and evacuation centres. The National Society is also assisting in urban search and rescue as required and helping with logistics. The New Zealand Red Cross teams are working with Civil Defence, New Zealand Police, the local councils and agencies to assess the needs and determine how the Red Cross can best assist. Six welfare centres have been opened around Christchurch. 40 tonnes of non-food items have been released from the Auckland based warehouse and transported to Christchurch. This includes blankets, water containers and tents. The Red Cross has provided first aid and welfare assistance and has begun distributing relief to affected persons. The Red Cross has started Restoring Family Links activities and a National Missing Persons call centre has been established in conjunction with the New Zealand Police and Ministry of Civil Defence. Telecommunications equipment from ERU stocks including satellite phones and portable VHF repeaters have been deployed to Christchurch. More than 400 international requests have been received to restore family links. Red Cross (Porirua team) in Wellington has been working alongside MFAT by registering foreign nationals as they arrive back into Wellington on board emergency flights out of Christchurch.

The Australian Red Cross will provide some bilateral assistance based on the existing bilateral agreements with the New Zealand Red Cross. One person has been deployed from Australian Red Cross to support on coordination with media, two people are being deployed to support the Restoring Family Links activities. Further deployments are pending. The IFRC Disaster Management Unit in Kuala Lumpur is coordinating closely with the New Zealand Red Cross and has offered assistance if required. A number of National Societies have offered assistance to New Zealand Red Cross and to the Federation. The ICRC central tracing agency has offered support and has disseminated a tracing bulletin.

New Zealand Red Cross has also launched the "New Zealand Red Cross 2011 Earthquake Appeal" to support those affected by the recent Canterbury earthquake. Contributions from Partner National Societies and donors are welcome through this New Zealand Red Cross national appeal.

More information about donations can be found at www.redcross.org.nz/donate.

All funds will be used towards the New Zealand Red Cross response to the disaster to assist the affected populations and ongoing requirements.

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

IFRC'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.

IFRC'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 nonviolence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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