

AFGHANISTAN/ TAJIKISTAN BORDER: EARTHQUAKE

6 February 1998

Information Bulletin N° 01

The Disaster

A violent earthquake rocked northern Afghanistan and southern Tajikistan on 4 February at 14:33 GMT. Measuring a magnitude of 6.1 surface wave, the epicentre was at 37.07N and 70.20E, at a depth of 33 kilometres.

Preliminary information is sketchy due to the location of this earthquake in conflict ridden Afghanistan. The Embassy of the Islamic State of Afghanistan in Doshanba, Tajikistan issued a bulletin on 6 February reporting a significant loss of life occurred in the north-eastern district of Rustaq in Takhar Province, but these figures contradict other reports that there were no casualties.

The closest air strip was reported to be 60 kilometres from the disaster area and the area is sparsely populated. Most of the inhabitants of this area live in mud and brick houses that are known to not have the structural ability to absorb the impact of an earthquake of this magnitude.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Tajikistan Red Crescent Society and the Federation Delegation sent an assessment team to the affected areas in Tajikistan today although it will take a day or two to get the information. They will determine what, if any aid is needed in Tajikistan and across the border in Afghanistan. The well-being of any victims could be significantly affected by the cold winter weather.

Several Federation Delegates in Kabul felt the earthquake. Kabul is about 280 kilometres south of the epicentre. No Federation Delegates were in the area of the quake at the time it struck. Local officials in Kabul expect several strong aftershocks to follow.

The Europe and Asia & Pacific Departments are jointly following these events and will co-ordinate any relief action in Afghanistan with the International Committee of the Red Cross. For further information contact Kris Hurlburt, Desk Officer at 41.22.730.42.69 or hurlburt@ifrc.org

Needs *Further information will be provided as it becomes available.*

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