



CENTRAL AMERICA/ EL SALVADOR: EARTHQUAKE

*Preliminary Appeal
02/2001
14 January 2001*

***THIS PRELIMINARY APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,112,360
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES FOR 1 MONTH***

The Disaster

An earthquake measuring a magnitude of 7.6 to 7.9 on the Richter Scale occurred off the coast of El Salvador on 13 January 2001 at 11:33 am local time (17:33 UTC). The epicenter of the earthquake was located at latitude 12.8 degrees north, longitude 88.8 degrees west, or about 65 miles (105 km) south-southeast of the capital, San Salvador (around 55 km south of the Pacific coast at Playa Los Blancos). An aftershock of a magnitude of 4.7 on the Richter Scale occurred at the same location at 14:56 local time (20:56 UTC), and many significant tremors have been registered since then in San Salvador.

The earthquake was also felt in the neighboring countries of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and as far as Mexico City, and efforts are underway to assess victims and damage in those countries. The earthquake measured 5.8 degrees in the Richter scale in Guatemala, with the departments of Santa Rosa, Jalapa, Jitiapa most affected. Minor damage is reported in Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica.

Updated figures from the Salvador Red Cross (SRC) indicates over 381 dead in El Salvador, with over 1,336 injured and over 1,200 missing. Communications and electric lines and infrastructure throughout the region have been severely damaged, and hampered the immediate search and relief effort. In El Salvador, the following updated information is available:

- The following departments are directly affected by the earthquake: San Miguel, Santa Ana, La Libertad, La Paz, and San Salvador.
- The most affected areas with severe damage are La Libertad and La Paz. In La Libertad, in the community of "Las Colinas" a landslide buried between two hundred and five hundred houses.

The President of El Salvador has declared a National State of Emergency, and the National Emergency Co-ordination Centre (COEN) has been set up in the compound of the International Fair.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Salvador Red Cross (SRC) has activated its emergency contingency plan with search and rescue teams consisting of 200 first aiders and relief workers operating in the most heavily affected area of Santa Tecla, supported by over 1,000 volunteers who are taking part in search, assistance and relief activities and working in close co-ordination with the Salvador Red Cross headquarters and with the support of the International Federation. Another 30 relief workers are working in Comasagua (La Libertad Department). The SRC's own headquarters has reportedly suffered considerable damage to walls and infrastructure.

USD 100,000 (CHF 170,000) has been released from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the immediate emergency response. The Federation has despatched a Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) to assist the Regional Delegation and the Salvador Red Cross in the damage and immediate needs assessment process in El Salvador. In addition, a team already in place in San Salvador is providing immediate logistics, health, water, disaster preparedness, and relief support to the operation, and the Regional Delegation also has a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) on standby comprised of regional specialists in all the relevant areas of disaster relief.

Through its existing delegation, the American Red Cross has released immediate financial assistance along with pre-positioned relief supplies such as blankets, plastic sheets, comfort kits, and water containers. The Spanish Red Cross delegation is providing similar support.

National Red Cross Societies in the region have offered their support to the SRC. All national societies in the region are on standby pending the preliminary results of the SRC's and Federation's damage and needs assessments. The British, Danish, Netherlands, and Norwegian Red Cross have also offered support and assistance.

In Guatemala, the Special Immediate Response Unit of 18 search and rescue specialists and 48 volunteers has been maintained on alert.

The SRC's Red Cross blood bank service is now working 24 hours a day, and the tracing, first aid, and ambulance services are in full operation. The ICRC (Guatemala) has provided support with one vehicle.

Needs and Preliminary Budget Summary

Pending the results of the more thorough damage and needs assessment currently effort underway (expected shortly), this preliminary emergency appeal is being launched with the following needs:

- **Support to the Search and Rescue effort : CHF 350,000**
- **Emergency Shelter Materials and Food Component : CHF 450,000**
- **Health and Water Sanitation Material: 150,000**
- **Regional Delegation/National Society assessment effort:: CHF 40,000**
- **Programme Support Budget (PSB): CHF 122,360**

Total Preliminary Appeal Budget: CHF 1,112,360

A full appeal will follow shortly, providing an update of the situation and further details on specific needs.

Jean Ayoub
Director
Disaster Management and Coordination Division

Didier J. Cherpitel
Secretary General

This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>