



INDIA/GUJARAT: EARTHQUAKE

**Preliminary Appeal
no: 04/01**

26 January 2001

***THIS PRELIMINARY APPEAL SEEKS
CHF 2,000,000 TO ASSIST 50,000
BENEFICIARIES WITH IMMEDIATE
RELIEF***

Summary

At the request of the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), the International Federation is appealing for contributions in support of the Society's emergency relief operation in aid of victims of the earthquake which struck the west of the country in the early morning of Friday, 26 January. This preliminary appeal will be followed by a full appeal once needs assessments have been completed and more detailed information becomes available.

The Federation has immediately released CHF 200,000 from its disaster relief emergency fund (DREF) in order to facilitate the Indian Red Cross Society's relief response.

The Disaster

At around 08h50 (local time) today, a series of powerful earthquakes struck Gujarat state in western India, peaking at a massive 7.9 on the Richter scale, with tremors being felt across several states, in Delhi and Bombay and in the neighbouring country of Pakistan. According to New Delhi's meteorological department, the quake is the worst to hit India since 1956. In human terms, it may prove to be on a parallel, or worse than the Maharashtra disaster of September 1993, which killed more than 7,500 people. According to latest reports of today's event, the death toll is currently estimated at 1,000 persons, although this figure is expected to increase significantly in the coming hours and days. To date no official casualty details have been given.

The epicentre of the quake was the Rann of Kachchh, which lies about 50 kilometres north-east of Bhuj city, in one of the most inaccessible parts of western India. At present, much of the information emerging from the stricken region remains sketchy and anecdotal, pending the arrival of rescue and relief teams in the worst-hit areas. Adding to the complications created by difficult communications, today is Republic Day in India - a national holiday. However, deaths are known to have occurred in Ahmadabad, the Gujarat state capital, with media reports of collapsed buildings, mine cave-ins, train derailments, broken water-pipes and failed power and 'phone lines. There has also been damage to the Bhuj airfield according to an Indian air force spokesman. In the city itself, an unconfirmed report says that 150 people died in one building alone.

The population of Gujarat is put at just over 41 million, an average density of 211 persons per square kilometre. One third of the population (14 million people) live in urban areas.

In Pakistan, where a senior official from the Geneva Secretariat is on mission, the quake was felt in Karachi, Islamabad, Quetta and Peshawar. So far there are reports of four deaths in Hyderabad and Badin and 38 injuries.

The Response so far

Government Action w

The government of India has activated the Disaster Management Control Room at the Ministry of Agriculture to coordinate national relief efforts. As with similar emergencies in the past, Indian government agencies, including the military and civil authorities, are deploying resources.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

The International Federation's regional delegation in Delhi was quickly into action and is liaising closely with the Indian Red Cross headquarters to obtain hard information from the local Red Cross branch, which is already responding to the disaster, in conjunction with the authorities. In Geneva, the International Federation Secretariat has released CHF 200,000 from its disaster response emergency fund (DREF) and is responding to media queries. FACT (field assessment coordination team) and ERU (emergency response unit) alerts have been issued and an eight member FACT team is currently being mobilised. A relief delegate has been deployed from the Bangladesh delegation and a reporting delegate, with previous experience of working in India, will arrive in Delhi on Tuesday next.

A number of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have already reacted to the crisis, including those in Spain, Finland, Britain, the United States, Italy, the Netherlands Japan and Sweden; ECHO (European Community Humanitarian Office) and Oxfam have also been in touch with the International Federation.

As a result of disruptions in communications, contact has yet to be established with the IRCS state branch in Ahmadabad or with the district branch in Bhuj which was closest to the epicentre of the quake. However the IRCS has been maintaining close contacts with government counterparts in Delhi and the Society's chairman has been liaising directly with the chief minister (CM) in Gujarat.

At this stage, it is anticipated that the role of IRCS staff and volunteers in the area will extend to assisting the authorities in primary relief activities as well as transporting the wounded to local medical establishments and blood collection. Medical facilities in Ahmadabad are already overstretched and according to the CM, there is an urgent need for medical supplies and blood.

Co-ordination w

Since the onset of the emergency the International Federation has been in close contact with the Indian Red Cross Society and will work closely with the National Society to coordinate all international Red Cross Red Crescent assistance. The Indian government is coordinating relief, from national to local level, while the IRCS national headquarters is ensuring that its relief operation is coordinated with national and local efforts.

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs •

An International Federation assessment team, comprising the deputy secretary of the Indian Red Cross Society and the regional disaster preparedness and information delegates will be deployed to Ahmadabad, arriving early tomorrow morning (Saturday). From there, the group will make contact with the IRCS state branch and local authorities and then travel to Bhuj, an eight hour overland journey, expecting to reach there by nightfall. Following a request from the Gujarat CM (see above), the team will carry an unspecified amount of blood from the IRCS blood bank in Delhi to supply hospitals in the state capital.

In Pakistan, the International Federation is in direct contact with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society which will organise a needs assessment exercise shortly, in conjunction with the respective authorities. Details of any specific requirements for earthquake victims in Pakistan will be communicated when these are to hand.

Local capacity of National Society •

Despite limited capacity, the IRCS in Bhuj is well versed in disaster response having been involved in the Federation supported relief operation following the cyclone that struck the coast of Kachchh in 1998. In addition, the branch is currently implementing the ECHO funded drought relief operation in the district with support from the International Federation.

Red Cross Red Crescent Objectives •

- { In this initial stage of the relief operation, the first priority is to immediately provide adequate funds to the Indian Red Cross Society to enable it to go ahead with purchasing urgently needed relief items. Most or all of the supplies required can be purchased locally.
- { Subsequently, funds may be required for rehabilitation and reconstruction; replenishment of the Indian Red Cross disaster preparedness stocks; and to enhance and improve still further, the Society's capacity to respond to disaster situations.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

This is the most destructive earthquake to hit India for many years, with deaths, damage and casualties likely to approach or even exceed the country's last major quake in Maharashtra State in 1993. This disaster has left tens of thousands of people in urgent need of emergency assistance. Donors are urged to respond rapidly with cash donations, to enable the Indian Red Cross Society to continue to respond to the needs of the injured and homeless. All contributions should be made to the International Federation, in its coordinating capacity for all Red Cross Red Crescent international assistance. ***Details of contact persons are shown on the page below:***

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		ANNEX 1
BUDGET SUMMARY (preliminary)	APPEAL No. 04/2001	
India earthquake		
TYPE	VALUE	
RELIEF NEEDS	IN CHF	
Shelter & constructions	350,000	
Clothing & textiles	300,000	
Water and sanitation	100,000	
Medical & first aid	200,000	
Utensils & tools	100,000	
Other relief supplies	365,000	
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS		1,415,000
CAPITAL EQUIPMENT		
Various equipment	25,000	
PROGRAMME SUPPORT		
Programme management	134,860	
Technical support	40,370	
Professional services	44,770	
TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS	125,000	
PERSONNEL		
Expatriate staff	120,000	
National staff	40,000	
Personnel (support costs)	15,000	
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES		
Travel & related expenses	5,000	
Information expenses	8,000	
Administrative & general expenses	12,000	
Assessment	15,000	
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS		585,000
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES		2,000,000
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		
NET REQUEST		2,000,000