

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

IRAN: BAM EARTHQUAKE

8 April 2004

FOCUS ON RELIEF, HEALTH AND WATER-SANITATION

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 25/03; Operations Update no. 11; Period covered: 15 March to 31 March 2004;

Appeal coverage: click below for live update on coverage and needs:

http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?03/1-2-3%20-%20ap2503.pdf

Appeal history:

- Preliminary Appeal Launched on 26 December 2003 for CHF 15,409,300 (USD 12,290,337 or EUR 9,886,505) for 6 months for 200,000 beneficiaries.
- Revised Appeal launched on 8 January 2004 for CHF 51,913,000 (USD 42,006,534 or EUR 33,119,207) for 6 – 8 months for 210,000 beneficiaries .
- Final Report is therefore due on November 2004.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: N/A

Operational Summary: The handover of the various ERUs (emergency response units) to the Iranian Red Crescent (IRCS) has progressed well and will be completed as planned at the end of April. IRCS is taking over increased responsibility in running the Federation hospital and basic health centres while the Federation is shifting away from the role of implementation and management to that of monitoring and long-term programming support. The long New Year holidays towards the end of March have however slowed down the implementation of various sectors of the operation. Nonetheless, with more IRCS permanent counterparts in place, various training initiatives are underway. Given the ongoing needs of the tent population in Bam, distribution of hygiene kits will continue and some specific locally procured non-food items are also in the pipeline for distribution. IRCS stock replenishment, one of the disaster preparedness objective in the appeal, has been initiated.



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Background

A major earthquake registering 6.5 on the Richter scale devastated Iran's south-eastern city of Bam, Kerman province, at 05:28 (local time) on 26 December 2003. According to the official estimates announced in February, 43,200¹ people were killed, 30,000 injured and up to 75,600 left homeless. About 85 percent of the housing and infrastructure have been destroyed. The UN estimates that the number of people affected by the loss of economic activity and damage to property and infrastructure is as high as 200,000. 525 people are still missing according to Iran's official statistics centre.

Operational developments

Overall objective: The basic living conditions of some 155,000 people in tent camps and/or pre-fabricated housing are maintained and a strategy, led by IRCS with support from the Federation, is prepared to integrate relief operations into longer-term recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes.

Despite increasing signs of a return to normality, the situation in Bam had volatile moments during the month of March. There were public arguments over the distribution of funds from the government as well as local frustration at the perceived slow pace of the relief programme and pre-fabricated housing which turned at one point into a riot in the town on 4 March. The Federation field hospital treated at least nine cases of gunshot wounds.

The tented population is struggling with the dust, sandstorms and the rising heat which are becoming intolerable day by day. In many parts of the city, the debris is still to be removed. Many survivors are still reluctant to move away from the ruins of their homes and into tented camps. A small number have started working the land around their homes – restoring undamaged orchards or building temporary dwellings near their destroyed homes. Although there are no reports of cholera or other epidemic type incidences, the number of water-related diseases, especially diarrhoea, has increased significantly as water quality in town pipes is decreasing. On 14 March, some 40 tents were burnt down in a fire accident in one of the camps. Although no casualty was reported, the incident has caused concerns over the living conditions of the camp population as the hot season approaches.

Concerns are also growing among the local population and aid agencies whether the prefabricated housing units can be ready by mid April as planned by the government. Humanitarian organizations have been working closely with the authorities to ensure timely interventions to complement government efforts to provide basic infrastructure in the prefab camps. It is believed that the long-awaited master plan for the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bam will be available in the second week of April.

The IRCS continues to take the lead in the relief distributions in Bam. The Federation is procuring locally a number of non-food items including hygiene kits, propane stoves, cold boxes and washing buckets. These items will soon be in the pipeline for distribution. The plan of action for replenishment stock starts to be implemented. Meanwhile, IRCS has gradually taken over the management responsibilities of the Federation hospital ERUs and the three basic health care clinics. Starting 1 April, IRCS will assume complete responsibility of running these services. At the same time, the Federation and the IRCS are engaged in the planning for the construction of a semi-permanent hospital. Until the complete handover at the end of April, the Federation will provide monitoring and technical support to IRCS. With IRCS counterparts becoming stabilized also in other aspects of the operation, a number of training initiatives including water and sanitation ERU training and warehousing have become possible and are underway. The ERU expatriates are in the last rotation and the total expatriate complement, currently at around 40, will further reduce as planned towards the end of April. British Red Cross is supporting the IRCS in alternative relief applications such as the coupon-based alternative to mass food distribution.

¹ Iran's official statistics centre announced at the end of March the final and definite death toll of 26,271. The huge difference was claimed mainly due to the double counting of bodies and the chaos caused by the disaster.

Meanwhile, the Federation and the IRCS are working closely on further developing direction and plan of action for the reconstruction phase, which will be shared with the PNS (partner national societies) in April in Geneva. Singapore Red Cross has expressed interest in reconstruction projects and a team will visit Iran on 10 April to identify the project area with the Federation and the IRCS. On the other hand, following the visit of the South Korean Red Cross president to the IRCS in early March, a bilateral project to build 100 prefabs for the quake-affected families is underway and construction of permanent houses will follow for the same families in the second phase. Swiss Red Cross has also positioned a bilateral delegate in Bam to plan projects in the area of reconstructing permanent facilities of health and education.

Coordination

To optimize the use of human resources, the administration delegate has been relocated to Tehran at the end of March. This will be followed by the reporting delegate and the information delegate in early April. The recruitment of a programme coordinator, a disaster preparedness/response (DP/DR) delegate, and an HR/administration delegate is in the process. A team leader replacement for the current head of field operation has been identified and will be in Bam late April. The regional disaster management delegate from the Amman Regional Office is seconded to the Federation Iran Delegation to assist in the management of Bam earthquake relief and rehabilitation programme for three months.

With the emergency phase over, the coordination of bilateral projects including service agreements has become crucial for the earthquake operation. While IRCS welcomes bilateral cooperation, the national society prefers multilateral approach through the Federation.

Meanwhile, the Federation continues its mandate to mobilize resources for the Bam operation. Despite reduced international media interest in Bam, the recovery and reconstruction of Bam has been one of the main focuses at the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) conference from 14-18 March attended by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in the region, the Arab League, UN agencies and many other humanitarian organizations. It was discussed that the Bam operation will be a catalyst for regional DP/R development. The Federation and IRCS will present a concept paper for further development into a plan of action on recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bam at the Federation MENA donor information-sharing meeting in Geneva on 19-20 April.

Before the MENA conference, high officials from Jordan and Qatar Red Crescent societies visited the IRCS headquarters on 11 March. Accompanied by the Federation Secretariat head of MENA region and the head of Iran delegation, the group met with the IRCS president and senior officials and exchanged viewpoints on ongoing relief operation and future disaster response programmes in Iran.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Emergency relief (food and non-food items)

Objective: basic food and non-food item needs of 155,000 most vulnerable beneficiaries are met, enabling them to start rebuilding their future.

Progress/Achievements:

- **Some 155,000 beneficiaries, including particular vulnerable groups, received basic food assistance.**

The IRCS continues to issue new ration cards in coordination with the government. The new ration card data are being stored in a central database. The estimated final number of affected families in Bam is around 25,000. All WFP (World Food Programme) food commodities allocated for March have been distributed by IRCS as planned. The second distribution has been cancelled after a decision by the government to distribute cash coupons through the IRCS to the Bam residents to improve the local economy. Distribution will start on 7 April.

- **Some 155,000 beneficiaries allocated with non-food items.**

The Federation continues to distribute locally purchased and in-kind donated hygiene kits. The hygiene kits distribution will continue up to another three months. Distributions of other items have slowed down although there still may be a need for targeted distributions of certain items like jerry cans and plastic sheeting. The procurement of other local items for distribution is continuing, including plastic pans for washing and cold storage boxes for food and beverage. Ice is

now available throughout Bam. The cold boxes will provide a short-term solution to food and beverage storage in tents, until all families are moved into prefabricated housing.

Up to 25 March 2004, the IRCS has distributed from the Appeal stock 5,388 tents, 94 large tents, 96,680 blankets, 14,567 hygiene kits, 7,179 heaters, 9,360 stoves, 14,958 kitchen utensils, 3,816 jerry cans and 7,976 lanterns. Updated and cumulated relief distributions of IRCS are being collected and will be reported in the next operations update.

According to the IRCS, the government will purchase 30,000 refrigerators, 30,000 small stoves, 30,000 water heaters and 30,000 air conditioners. The items will be distributed for use in the prefabricated housing currently under construction.

- **Continuous support on relief, logistics and procurement provided to IRCS.**

The Federation relief/logistics team has been able to clear containers from the Bandar e Abbas port. Supplies currently en route to Bam include 10,000 in-kind hygiene kits. Other Federation pipeline relief items have been cleared from the customs in Teheran, including plastic sheeting, jerry cans and blankets. Meanwhile, the plan of action for replenishment stock has started to be implemented in Bandar e Abbas.

The Federation facilitated relief coordination meetings are continuing among aid agencies. Meetings are held weekly with focus on targeting of relief activities in various sectors by NGOs and statistics with details of distribution items and locations. All information received is coordinated with the UN coordinator. The meeting is also a forum to discuss relief ration standard for non-food items including hygiene kits. The Federation relief/logistics coordinator seconded from the American Red Cross Relief ERU will depart the operation on 3 April.

Health, Water and Sanitation

Objective: The population in Bam have adequate access to health care, water and sanitation services before the restoration of permanent health, water and sanitation infrastructure and facilities.

Objective (Health): People in Bam receive sufficient health services including psychological support

The general health situation of the population in and around Bam continues to be relatively stable with no alarming signals of any particular pathologies or epidemics. According to the ministry of health (MoH) and WHO (World Health Organization) data and statistics, the epidemiological situation in the earthquake-hit region is considered to be satisfactory. The situation is carefully monitored by the MoH and necessary preventive measures are exercised to deal with potential risk factors.

Progress/Achievements:

- **Gaps in the health system between the emergency and the long-term solutions are bridged through the field hospital and BHC ERUs**

Referral hospital: The Finnish/Norwegian Red Cross ERU hospital remains the only operational hospital facility in the area. The Iranian New Year period was generally calm with an overall reduction in the number of attendance in the ERU healthcare units during the holidays. However, towards the end of March there was notable increase in the OPD (outpatient department) admittance of the ERU field hospital getting the daily outpatient caseload back to the old volume of 500-600. With the closing of the Indian hospital, more emergency cases are expected to arrive in the ERU hospital. The hospital service is currently run by Iranian specialists while expatriate doctors exercise an advisory support role. The transitional structure at the field hospital before the complete handover was put to a severe test on 30 March when 18 people with serious burnt wounds were brought in from a village about one hour drive from Bam. Other delegates from the Federation camp were also called to give support. The response was well managed and demonstrated successful cooperation between the Iranian and expatriate staff.

Ongoing deliberations are well underway with the IRCS regarding a proposed structural reinforcement of the tented hospital into a prefabricated facility. This plan will incorporate a revised role, profile and bed capacity for a transitory prefabricated hospital to fill the gap until a permanent hospital is in place to serve the needs of the people in Bam.

Basic Health Care Centres: Both the German and the Japanese Red Cross supported Basic Health Care units have maintained their regular daily tasks at their identified locations. The services now are run independently by the IRCS medical teams with the advisory support of the Federation and the two national societies.

- *German Red Cross BHC:* The daily activities at the German Red Cross basic health units continue with their usual average of 30-40/day patient caseload. The services include general medical and mother and child care. The

percentage of hospital-referred patients amounted up to 10%. Since the beginning of activities in early January, more than 7,279 patients have been treated. German Red Cross donated one emergency health kit to the field hospital.

- *Japanese Red Cross BHC*: During the reported period, the Japanese Red Cross supported ERU health centres maintained their regular tasks by providing daily outpatient care and treatment in general medicine, mother and child care, also psychiatric care and psychological support. A total of 8,790 patients have received medical care and treatment in these centres during the last three months. The Japanese Red Cross medical team completed their mission on 26 March with the handover of the clinic to the IRCS.

Cumulated activities at the Red Cross/Red Crescent Health Facilities

	Referral hospital Finnish/ Norwegian RC	IRCS health centre and posts	German RC BHC	Japanese RC BHC	Saudi Arabia RC Field hospital	Total patients treated
Period	1 Jan- 27 March	ongoing	Ongoing (being handed over to IRCS)	Ongoing (taken over by IRCS)	1- 12 Jan (closed)	
Outpatients	42,882	66,940	7,279	8,790	1,849	127,740
Other services/ Activities	8.9% <5y 377 Surgeries, 71 Caesarian sections, 350 deliveries, 6094 lab-tests, 4019 X-rays, 1235 Admissions, 999 Discharges 319 Transfers, 35 Death cases	18% <5y Psychosocial support & home visits	6.8% <5y Home visits around the clinic area	8.4% <5y Mother -and- child care, Psychosocial support & home visits	105 Lab-tests, 150 X-rays, 437 Surgeries 400 Cases airlifted, 20 Transfers 270 Vaccinations	

- **ERU health facilities and equipment handed over to the IRCS by the end of April 2004**

The handover process of the ERU healthcare activities to the IRCS has already started in line with the recommendations of the agreements signed in Bahrain on 16 March 2004 between the Federation, Finnish Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and IRCS. On 1 April, the IRCS assumes complete responsibility of running the services at the ERU field hospital and the BHC centres. Necessary arrangements have been put into action to facilitate and support the IRCS in its work. The main issue remains to be the recruitment of the permanent medical and non-medical staff, which would ultimately assure the running of the healthcare services in these facilities.

- **The suffering and risks for development of severe trauma, of 20,000 quake survivors are reduced (ECHO funded: Danish/Icelandic Red Cross)**

The PSP (psychosocial support programme) delegates from Danish and Icelandic Red Cross societies have reached an agreement with the IRCS. The agreement will be signed in early April. Necessary resources have been allocated in Tehran and Bam to continue and upgrade the ongoing psychosocial (PS) activities and debriefings of volunteers. IRCS have been allocated eight sectors for these activities, covering tent-to-tent visits, group activities in three camps located in sector 4 and various referrals for medical treatment. A draft manual to streamline debriefings, have now been drafted and will be implemented as a part of the debriefing systems to be integrated with IRCS rescue and relief organization. The previous PS volunteers who have been part of the emergency operations in Bam will also receive the upgraded debriefing through their local branches. A debriefing session will be conducted through professional volunteers (psychologist) when the debriefing manual is complete.

As also part of the IRCS PS programmes, IRCS has reopened its library in Bam with 3,000 volumes of various books, training brochures and CDs in the areas of relief and first aid activities, voluntary services, as well as scientific, literary and artistic subjects. The aim is to promote the knowledge of the youth members and encourage them to participate in humanitarian activities. The library has 40 members at the moment. IRCS has also re-established the summer movies in Bam to reactivate its youth affairs centre, to fill the leisure time of youth and to develop cultural activities in the quake-stricken Bam. This programme will be extended to IRCS relief camps shortly.

Federation Coordination: The role of the Federation has been important in terms of ensuring support to the ERU field hospital and the BHC units and for a better assessment of the ongoing operational objectives in the course of the

emergency and post emergency phase of the current operation. This role has become even more crucial during the hand over period. Internal coordination meetings are held with the PNS teams and the IRCS on a regular basis to follow-up the course of the health activities and deal with pending technical and staffing issues.

Objective (water and sanitation): Outbreak of water-borne epidemics is prevented in Bam and its surroundings through the installation of adequate and safe water supply and sanitation facilities.

Progress/Achievements:

- **7,500 people in four selected prefabricated camps have sufficient hygiene units and increased hygiene knowledge (ECHO: French/ Spanish / Swedish Red Cross)**

An agreement with the IRCS is prepared and waits signing. The tendering for the hygiene facilities will be finalized shortly. A total of 1,500 shower/low flush toilets will be constructed in Rashestan camp in the east of Bam town.

- **ERU watsan equipment handed over and IRCS personnel well trained to maintain, install and operate it.**

The Austrian Red Cross ERU continued to supply sufficient and treated water to the three compounds (ERU hospital, IRCS and Federation compounds) for drinking, cooking, showers, laundry and communal kitchen. More water point connections to the hospital have been undertaken. Daily consumption rates increased to 35 m³. Desert coolers were installed in the hospital and the Federation compound. Meanwhile, the Spanish Red Cross water ERU continues to supply water to the German supported BHC clinics and the Khomeini hospital. The treatment unit in the Japanese BHC was removed, packed and stored in the Federation compound.

On 28 March 2004, three technicians from IRCS headquarters arrived in Bam to assist the ERU teams. It was agreed at the initial meeting that they undertake on-the-job training and some additional specific training to enable them to run the ERU equipments smoothly.

- **20,000 people from Bam are assisted with water supply in tented camps and prefabricated camps (Federation and French / Spanish / Swiss Red Cross)**

The Federation will assist the water supply reticulation systems of Gullistan prefab camps or may assist with storage facilities. Discussions were undertaken with the head of the Bam Task Force and the governor of Bam in order to define further assistance for water reticulation systems and/ or storage facilities for the 21 prefab camps that are currently under construction. Unfortunately, the design of these camps is not uniform, as each assigned province is continuing with the zone assistance approach in its own way. Nevertheless, the government through the IRCS requested Federation's assistance for the water reticulation system in Rashestan camp. In the mean time the water authorities assure that the water supply network will have sufficient pressure, quantity and quality to guarantee a good water supply for these camps. Other sources don't expect this to happen soon, as assistance is sought at the same time to buy 800 litre storage tanks that would be installed in front of the prefab units.

Federation coordination:

The watsan coordinator attended several meetings with the UNICEF (UN Children's Fund) environmental section as well as with the Bam Task Force, the water authorities and the governor of Bam. Although the Bam water supply is improved, there is still a lot of uncertainty, whether the system may cope with the increased water demand. Information has also been somehow contradictory and made planning difficult.

Disaster Preparedness and Capacity Building

Objective: the IRCS capacity in disaster management (disaster preparedness and disaster response) has been strengthened at the national, regional, and community levels.

Progress/Achievements:

- **IRCS disaster preparedness capacity strengthened at national, regional and branch level**

The process of recruiting a DP/DR delegate is ongoing. The regional DM delegate based in Amman has been seconded to the Iran delegation. He will, in three months, engage in the operational liaison with the IRCS on the ongoing relief programme, assist IRCS in reshaping relief programmes and improve their monitoring and reporting skills. He will also support IRCS in close coordination with the Federation team in Bam in developing and implementing IRCS phase-in plan.

The IRCS branch in Bandar e Abbas has requested the support of the Federation in trainings for logistics and response systems. The Federation will be planning the trainings in coordination with the IRCS headquarters in Teheran.

The plan of action for stock replenishment has started to be implemented as the Federation pipeline relief items have been cleared from the customs in Teheran, including plastic sheeting, jerry cans and blankets.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Objective: The ongoing and long-term needs of the quake-affected population in Bam are advocated for through enhanced media coverage and profile of the Red Cross/Red Crescent intervention.

Progress/Achievements:

- **Donor interest in the long-term needs has been sustained and visibility and profile for Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies increased**

Despite evidently decreased media interest in the disaster, the city of Bam is still a field of ruins and the long-term needs of the quake-affected demand continuous advocacy for soonest recovery. Efforts are made to profile Bam as a 'forgotten but continuing disaster' and to maintain media interest through the Federation website with continuous publications of news stories and production of audio-visual material. The special web page allocated to the operation has been updated. One Austrian and ten German daily newspapers and one youth magazine published the news stories prepared by the information delegate. Four field trips were also organized for one printed and three electronic media. Around ten interviews were conducted for the international media. The Federation Bahrain MENA conference in March has drawn substantial donor interest in the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bam and the magazine 'Bam is still alive' prepared for this occasion received positive feedback. The information delegate continues to provide picture service for journalists and PNS. Posters on the Bam operation are being printed for both the donor meeting in Geneva in April and other advocacy opportunities.

The IRCS maintains a website (www.rcs.ir) both in English and Farsi which provides the latest information, operational updates, reports, interviews and news on the Bam operation to the public.