

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 SPECIAL FOCUS ON RECONSTRUCTION

5 July 2004

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

Emergency Appeal No. 25/03; Operations Update 14 – Special Focus on Reconstruction

Appeal coverage: 64.2% ([click here to go directly to the Contributions List](#)).

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 26 November 2004.

The above chronology shows the evolution of the Federation's international support to the Bam earthquake response of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) since the day of the disaster. This Operations Update signals a significant, but linked, change in the Federation's approach. Now that the emergency response phase is over, the Federation is focusing on assisting with the reconstruction of the educational and social infrastructure in Bam, in support of the town's population.

As indicated above, the Federation will issue a final report on the emergency phase of appeal 25/03 in November. However, reconstruction activities in Bam will continue beyond that date and this update contains an outline plan of action that will guide the Federation's work during this phase and into 2005 (*detailed project proposals and budgets will be ready by mid-July*).

Outstanding needs : CHF 18,584,854

Reconstruction contributions sought: CHF 12,253,000 (USD 9,694,000) – Based on estimates for priority Federation/IRCS projects

Operational Summary: Rehabilitation and reconstruction remain of paramount importance, now that the emergency phase of the Bam Operation is over. Most people have moved from tented accommodation into temporary prefabricated housing. An overall governmental Master Plan for the reconstruction of Bam is being finalised and the Government of Kerman Province has made a public appeal to the international community for reconstruction projects in the cultural, social, religious and educational arenas. Given that 85% of buildings in Bam were destroyed, the needs remain great. For life to return to a semblance of normality, reconstruction of schools, medical facilities and social infrastructure must begin soon and happen fast. The field hospital, now being run by IRCS, is still being operated out of tented facilities. Plans are however well underway to replace this with a containerised hospital, which will continue to act as the main primary healthcare facility in Bam until such time as permanent facilities have been rebuilt – most likely from 6 months to a year. In addition, the greatest unmet needs are currently in the educational sector, where IRCS wishes to focus its energies. However, the IRCS, through the on-going Federation appeal, is awaiting confirmation of firm donor intent prior to committing itself to a final list of reconstruction projects.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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

Rehabilitation and reconstruction

Objective: Coordinated international Red Cross Red Crescent efforts have effectively fed into IRCS work to assist with the reconstruction of Bam's health, educational and social infrastructure and improve the lives of its population.

Background

Since the devastating earthquake in Bam six months ago¹, the humanitarian response has shifted from emergency to rehabilitation and reconstruction. According to the authorities, more than 26,000² people were killed, 30,000 injured and up to 75,600 left homeless. About 85% of housing and infrastructure was destroyed – including all schools, health and social facilities. Of the few buildings which remained standing, most are unsafe and must be rebuilt. In a matter of seconds, the city of Bam ceased to exist. Its physical infrastructure was turned to dust.

During the first four months following the earthquake, massive resources were mobilised both internally and through the support of the international community to meet the emergency needs of the population. Thereafter, efforts began to focus on re-housing the affected population in prefabricated housing – representing an acceptable temporary alternative to the tented camps. Both the relief phase and the relocation phases have, at this time, been completed.

As of the end of April, attention has focused primarily on rehabilitation and reconstruction requirements. Indeed, as early as February 2004, the Federation/IRCS Recovery Advisory Team undertook an initial assessment of rehabilitation and reconstruction needs. At the same time, the Iranian authorities began working on a Master Plan for the reconstruction of Bam – a draft of which has been made available to the IRCS - and which is currently awaiting final approval. In addition and linked to this, the Government of Kerman Province has identified the key health, social, religious and educational facilities requiring reconstruction. Based on this information, and in close cooperation with the authorities, the IRCS and the Federation identified a preliminary list of priority projects for Red Cross and Red Crescent participation. This information formed the basis of the Federation presentation to donors on 20 April 2004 and the follow-up communication of 28 May 2004.

This list has now been refined, based on an assessment of current needs, other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and government commitments, and the potential for value-added contribution on the part of Red Cross and Red Crescent. More precise costing and project planning is being prepared by the Federation's Construction Delegate and should be made available to donors by mid-July.

¹ A major earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale devastated Iran's south-eastern city of Bam on 26 December 2003, at 5:28 local time.

² At the end of March, Iran's official Statistics Centre announced the final and definite death toll as 26,271. The discrepancy with initial official estimations of up to 43,200 people killed is claimed to be mainly due to double counting during the initial chaos caused by the disaster.

At the present time, the IRCS and the Federation are working together to identify the strength of donor interest in the proposed multi-lateral reconstruction programme, prior to making any firm commitments to the authorities for undertaking specific projects.

Current Situation

For the people of Bam, time is of the essence. The climate is harsh – be it the exhausting heat of summer or the chill of winter months, approaching rapidly once again. Although individuals are attempting to rebuild their shattered lives, their hands are tied to a certain extent both by the extent of the devastation and by the need to link their efforts to the Government's overall Master Plan for the reconstruction of Bam.

Similar constraints apply to IRCS, Federation and Participating National Societies (PNS) efforts in the rebuilding of basic social and educational infrastructure - as well as to other NGOs involved in reconstruction - all of whom are awaiting the finalisation of this governmental Master Plan to receive confirmation of land allocation and building permission. Nevertheless, even under such difficult circumstances, there has been progress. A certain number of projects have been embarked on by PNSs and the Federation is moving ahead with plans to replace the IRCS Hospital with a containerised hospital, to serve the general medical needs of Bam's population until such time as the permanent hospitals have been rebuilt. Furthermore, IRCS/Federation have recently been given a definite commitment from the local authorities that land could and would be allocated without delay for any 'firm' reconstruction projects. This is in contrast to the situation of most NGOs, who are still struggling to obtain the necessary commitments for reconstruction projects from the relevant authorities - primarily in the area of health.

Current public reconstruction needs and related commitments can be summarised as follows:

- **Health Facilities:** According to the Ministry of Health (MoH) all 95 health houses, 14 rural health centres, and 10 urban health centres were destroyed or damaged beyond repair - as well as general governmental hospitals (with a total bed capacity of 240). These general hospitals were providing health and curative services to an estimated population of 240,000 from the city itself and the surrounding area. Damage varies from one facility to another, but generally speaking, immediately after the earthquake no health facilities were functional due to the extent of the destruction. This gap was filled and continues to be filled by the IRCS Hospital (previously the Emergency Response Unit Field Hospital), and the Basic Health Care Units (BHCUs), whilst reconstruction of medical facilities proceeds on a priority basis.

It is important to note in this context that major health reconstruction projects have been taken up on a bi-lateral basis by the French Red Cross, German Red Cross, Italian Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross, in addition to expressions of interest for multi-lateral participation. Furthermore, other humanitarian organisations, as well as the Iranian Government, have committed to a number of rehabilitation projects in the health sector. Reconstruction needs in the health sector are considered to be well covered – although it must be noted that no building has actually begun and many contractual hurdles remain before projects can proceed.

Federation involvement is therefore concentrating primarily on the installation of the containerised hospital, to replace the ERU field hospital (handed-over to IRCS since end of May) - which continues to operate out of tented facilities. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Federation and the IRCS was signed on 20 June and contracts between Geneva Secretariat and the building contractor were signed on 21 June. It is now anticipated that the new facilities will be in place by August. Funding is still being sought.

- **Educational Facilities:** Based on the latest available information from the field, the greatest unmet needs are for educational facilities. According to the Ministry of Education in Kerman Province, all 131 schools in Bam and the surrounding villages were destroyed or damaged (to the extent of being unusable) by the earthquake. Officials estimate that 18,000 to 20,000 students are in need of school facilities and teachers. Other than expressions of interest from the German Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross for the reconstruction of 2 secondary and 2 primary schools respectively in the context of the joint IRCS/Federation Plan, there have been few commitments for reconstruction in this area. Local authorities have repeatedly stressed the urgent need for schools, given the impact on education and on the longer-term

future for the already traumatised children of Bam. This is where IRCS has therefore decided to focus its efforts and for which the Federation is seeking donor support.

- **IRCS Disaster Management Capacity Building Facilities:** The Iranian Red Crescent has a number of buildings in and around Bam that were either destroyed or damaged in the earthquake. Some of these buildings can be repaired although most will require reconstruction. These were focal points for overall IRCS Bam Branch operations, youth activities as well as relief and rescue efforts in and around the city. Some donors have already expressed their interest in IRCS Bam Branch capacity building. Remaining priority projects include the construction of roadside relief and rescue centres (6), relief depots (3) and the Bam Chapter Relief Base (1). There remains scope for multilateral involvement to ensure that IRCS capacities in Bam are sufficient to meet current and future needs in this disaster-prone area.

Next steps

A Federation Construction Delegate arrived in Bam at the end of June and - in close collaboration with the IRCS Construction Department - is focusing on the preparation of detailed project documents for the joint Federation/IRCS programme, which will be made available to prospective donors by mid-July. To boost Federation construction expertise in the field, two additional experts are expected to join the Construction Delegate during the first week of July. Furthermore, the IRCS has assigned four engineers to work with the Federation's construction team.

Once donor interest has been confirmed, IRCS and the Federation will confirm the level and extent of Red Cross and Red Crescent interest to the governmental authorities. Land allocation, MoUs with relevant governmental ministries and building permits will then be pursued through IRCS, followed by a selected call for tender with the chosen architectural / engineering firm, with the Federation acting in an advisory and facilitating capacity. Although a number of PNSs are pursuing projects on a bi-lateral basis, IRCS has expressed a clear preference for a multi-lateral approach to reconstruction projects in Bam. Indeed, there is an evident risk of over-loading the IRCS's capacity – potentially leading to delays as projects await approval and compete for limited and over-stretched IRCS resources.

This in turn could hinder the initiation and completion of essential reconstruction projects which are desperately needed by the people of Bam.

One cannot overestimate the scale of reconstruction of the socio-economic infrastructure required and the extent to which this presents a major challenge for all concerned. The task is an enormous one and will continue to be so for years to come. There is scope for on-going and well-coordinated Red Cross and Red Crescent involvement in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bam, so that life can move on from the heaps of rubble and back to a more structured and settled normality.

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