

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

CHINA: JIANGXI EARTHQUAKE

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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

Operations Update no. 01; Period covered: 26 November to 4 December, 2005

This Minor Emergency Update no. 1 is being issued based on the situation described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 130,000 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to respond to the needs in this operation by releasing supplies from the Chinese Red Cross disaster preparedness stocks that have been distributed to the affected population. This operation is expected to be completed by the end of December 2005. Replenishment of DREF by un earmarked contributions is welcome and needed.

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) 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>

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Background and current situation

According to the latest statistics, 26 November's earthquake which affected Jiangxi (Ruichang city and Jiujiang county), Hubei and Anhui provinces left at least 16 people dead with more than 8,000 people seeking treatment for earthquake-related injuries. In Jiangxi, some 600,000 residents were evacuated due to the quake which destroyed 150,000 houses. In Hubei, 7,500 people were evacuated following the quake, while in Anhui, where 32 homes were destroyed, the number of evacuees was lower. Over the past week, there have been 116 recorded aftershocks close to the earthquake's epicentre in Ruichang city.



Some 150,000 houses were destroyed in Jiangxi.

The vast majority of quake survivors in Ruichang city and Jiujiang county are still living in tents provided by the government (6,000), the Red Cross Society of China (270) or constructed by themselves using pieces of tarpaulin and other materials gathered from their homes. Local authorities in Jiangxi province announced plans on 2 December to build new apartments in Ruichang city and five other sites in the surrounding rural areas for some 6,000 quake-affected families. In order to ensure safe and proper living conditions for displaced families living in tents over the months to come, one of the main priority needs identified by a joint Red Cross Society of China (RCSC)/ Federation assessment is access to short-term sanitation facilities.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Following the Federation’s release of CHF 130,000 from DREF on 27 November, RCSC headquarters authorized the release of 200 family tents, and 2,000 quilts from the RCSC’s nearby regional disaster preparedness centre in Xiaogan in Hubei province. The items were immediately delivered by the RCSC to the affected area by truck, with the county branches distributing the quilts on 28 and 29 November. Remaining DREF funds will be used by the Jiangxi provincial branch to purchase bottled water for communal facilities. RCSC headquarters also released RMB 60,000 (CHF 9,500) to the provincial branch to purchase relief items.



The Chinese Red Cross head of relief division distributing blankets to quake-affected people in Ruichang city, Jiangxi

Schools and major medical facilities were damaged by the earthquake and will have to be rebuilt. At the moment, these facilities are being housed in clusters of tents provided by the government and the RCSC.

On 28 and 29 November a joint RCSC/Federation assessment team led by the head of the RCSC’s relief division visited the affected area. The earthquake came as an especially harsh blow for the residents of both Jiujiang county and Ruichang city, which were affected by severe floods and landslides in May and a destructive typhoon in September. Only two weeks prior to the earthquake, some 260,000 people were affected by floods in Jiujiang city. Most of the households visited by the assessment team had lost their crops during the season’s two waves of floods in May and September.



Temporary shelter and sanitation facilities remain the priority needs in the quake-affected areas.

Most people in and around Ruichang city (population 420,000) are living outdoor having abandoned their homes. Ruichang Lake, which is in the centre of Ruichang city is now a small tent city. The government has organized everyone in tents but there is a shortage of tents. The assessment report indicates that up to 20 people are housed in one tent and many have to sit up all night due to limited space. Sanitation in China is always a challenge, and in the assessed area, there are currently no basic shower or sanitation facilities.

Although reconstruction plans have already been announced, it is likely that thousands of these families will have to remain in temporary shelter over the next two to three months. At the time of the assessment, businesses in Ruichang city housed in buildings which

had not been deemed safe were closed.

The government has been inspecting houses to see if they are fit for habitation. Many of the buildings, such as hospitals and schools, have been deemed unfit despite not fully destroyed. The RCSC has provided hospitals and schools with tents which are being used to house inpatients and as sleeping quarters for teachers. Government tents have also been put up at the Yang Ling Lake primary school in Ruichang as temporary class rooms.

Jiangxi's rural villages are mostly inhabited by the elderly and their grandchildren, as many of China's working age villagers seek work opportunities in big cities. As the team walked through the area they were approached by numerous elderly villagers who were still traumatized by the earthquake.

The floods of September had already claimed thousands of homes in Ruichang. With the devastation of the earthquake, there is a huge and long-term need for helping the affected population to rebuild their lives. The city is filled with stories such as the one told to the team by a farmer who lost her crops to floods over the past two years and had her house destroyed in the earthquake. Unless she receives assistance, she is unsure how she will be able to rebuild her life.

Based on the findings of the field visit, the RCSC's relief division and the Federation are exploring options for the possible provision of 40 portable latrines to the affected area.

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