

ATHENS: EARTHQUAKE

10 September 1999

appeal no. 22/99

situation report no. 1

period covered: 8-9 September

In line with the Greek Government's declaration of a state of emergency in the disaster zone and the need for international assistance, the Hellenic Red Cross has requested the International Federation to assist in the earthquake assistance effort by appealing for contributions in support of the Society's emergency relief operations. Since the Preliminary Appeal issued on Wednesday, 8 September, relief needs continue to increase (see Outstanding Needs below). The full appeal to be issued early next week will indicate a more detailed statement of need.

The disaster

A strong earthquake struck the Greek capital Athens at 14.56 hours local time on Tuesday, 7 September, measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale, lasting ten seconds and bringing death, injury and destruction in its wake. The tremor was felt as far away as Corinth, 100 km south of the city. More than 72 hours after the disaster, people are still trapped in collapsed buildings and rescue efforts are continuing, despite over 750 aftershocks since the main quake.

The municipalities reported to have suffered the most extensive damage are: Menidi, Liosia, Zefiri, Thracomacedones, Philadelphia, K.Kifissia, Metamorphosi, Petroupoli, N.Ionia, N.Erithrea, Peristeri, Ag Anargiri, Haidari and Galatsi. According to the latest figures, 83 people are dead, another 600 injured (with 120 in hospital) and more than 33 remain missing. Thousands of homes are reportedly destroyed. However, with recovery and relief efforts continuing, these figures as well as the estimates of those made homeless are tentative while further assessments continue.

The telecommunications and electricity systems remain either overloaded or damaged, and the government has urged the population to limit the use of these utilities.

Latest events

The Greek Government is co-ordinating all the activities through the Prefecture of Attica and the municipalities. The operational activities undertaken include:

- ♦ organising and managing search and rescue teams; many people have been rescued, but reports indicate some 33 people are still trapped at this stage;
- ♦ distribution of relief material to those people made homeless or to those whose houses have suffered severe damage. Items distributed include: tents, bottled water, blankets, bed-sheets and food;
- ♦ official inspection and damage assessments by civil engineers. The inspection started immediately. The Ministry of Environment and Public Works informed the public not to enter damaged houses and two telephone lines were made available and publicised on TV for people to ask for inspection of their damaged houses. **Damaged houses are being marked green for those which are habitable, yellow for those which need to be repaired and red for those which will be demolished.**

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

With the recovery phase of the operation winding down, the Hellenic Red Cross (HRC) are focusing efforts on providing effective immediate and longer-term relief assistance. In addition to the 450 tents immediately distributed by the HRC, three meals per day are being served to some 6,000 people, and the government has requested the HRC to increase this assistance to cover a population of 40,000. This activity will be carried out through the 5 existing HRC distribution centres and 6 more centres that will be established by today (10 September). Medical and psychological support is also underway through these centres. HRC volunteers from all sectors of the community are once more proving dedicated and well trained by providing essential support to the entire recovery and relief operation. The Federation has provided one Liaison Officer to assist the HRC, and also a telecommunications officer to install a satellite telephone at the HRC headquarters.

Relief Assistance •

- ♦ The Turkish Red Crescent Society has sent two C-130 aeroplanes (on 8 September), delivering 44 tons of relief material;
- ♦ 700 tents provided by the German Red Cross arrived by air at midnight on 9 September;
- ♦ Two trucks with 3,000 mattresses arrived from Skopje early this morning, and a further 7,000 mattresses and 10,000 blankets have also now been mobilised from regional emergency stocks in Skopje;
- ♦ 3,000 tents and 30 rolls of plastic sheeting will arrive by air today and in the coming 2 days from the Iranian Red Crescent.

Outstanding needs

Relief items urgently needed are: 10,000 bedlinen sets, 10,000 folding beds and 10,000 pillows. Funds are also needed for the purchase of food locally. The HRC has requested the Federation to assist in coordinating all donations of international assistance offered from the donor community and/or national societies.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The HRC and the Federation are effectively participating in the Government-coordinated efforts. Regular media contacts are being made and maintained.

Contributions

Valuations of emergency relief contributions are underway, and will be provided in subsequent reports.

For further information please contact the following at the International Federation, Geneva: Penny Elghady; tel +41 22 730 4319; mobile +41 79 205 1959; email: elghady@ifrc.org

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Renny Nancholas
Director
Europe Department