

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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: GANSU EARTHQUAKE

Information Bulletin N° 02/2003

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 100,000

This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below. A DREF allocation of CHF 100,000 has been released, and the Federation does not anticipate further requests for this operation. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update.



The Situation

On 25 October between the hours of 20:40 and 21:20, two earthquakes measuring 6.1 and 5.8 on the Richter Scale hit Zhangye Prefecture in China's Gansu Province. The earthquakes were followed by 400 aftershocks. Over 137,000 people in 175 villages were affected by the quakes, which left ten people dead. The initial damage indicates that nearly 14,000 houses were either damaged or destroyed and 3,000 head of livestock were killed or hurt. Heavy damage was also reported to local infrastructure such as bridges, roads, communications systems, and water and power supplies.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Within 24 hours of the earthquake the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) released urgently needed relief items: 50 winter tents; 1,607 quilts, and 61.73 MT of wheat flour worth RMB 300,000 from the Society's Disaster Preparedness (DP) Centre in Xi'an. The insulated winter tents and quilts arrived at the affected area the evening of 29 October. Of note is the fact that the Shaanxi Provincial branch that houses the DP Centre is currently in the midst of conducting extensive flood relief activities, in addition to responding to the earthquake. The Gansu Provincial branch gathered quilts and clothing worth RMB 30,000, which was ready for distribution on 29 October

On 29 October an assessment of the situation was conducted by the RCSC's Secretary General, the Director of External Relations, and representatives of the society's relief and external relations divisions. The team was accompanied by the Federation's regional disaster management delegate. The team visited Longshan Village and Yaozhai Village (the



quake's epicenter) in Minle County, and Liuzhuang Village and Xipo Village in Shandan County. With the onset of winter, night time temperatures in the area drop below freezing and many people are still living in makeshift shelters and tents as aftershocks continue to affect the area making it dangerous for them to return to their homes. A large number of the houses which remain standing sustained structural damage making them unsafe to live in.

After discussions with the local authorities it was agreed that the RCSC would focus on providing quilts while the authorities are addressing the needs for temporary shelter. The International Federation, in support of the RCSC operation, released CHF 100,000 from its DREF on 30 October for the purchase of 11,000 quilts.

The ability to use DREF, for immediate response to disasters where the Federation is not in a position to launch international appeals, is essential. This year China has suffered from extensive flooding for which an appeal was launched (Appeal no. 18/2003) and four larger earthquakes. To ensure continued quick and efficient responses to these operations the Federation and the RCSC are seeking CHF 100,000 to repay funding provided by DREF.



For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.