

DREF Bulletin 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

EL SALVADOR: SEISMIC SWARM

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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 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this update: 30 December 2006 to 4 February 2007.

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- On 27 December 2006 CHF 60,000 (USD 49,710 or EUR 37,712) was allocated from the Federation's DREF to respond to the needs of this operation.
- This operation is expected to be implemented for 2 months, and will be completed by 27 February 2007;
- A DREF Bulletin Final Report (narrative and financial) will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 27 May 2007).

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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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 \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and current situation

A seismic swarm became active on Sunday, 17 December 2006 at approximately 9:58 in the morning in the northern Department of Ahuachapán. The magnitude of the first tremor was of 3.3 on the Richter Scale with a depth of 5.4 km (Intensity level III)¹. Between 17 December 2006 and 15 January 2007, a total of 1,039 quakes have been registered in the department of Ahuachapán, of which approximately 157 were felt in the regions of Atiquizaya, Turín, San Lorenzo, Apaneca, Juayúa, among others. The strongest quake felt during this time period was registered on 20 December at 11:06 am in Atiquizaya and Turín at a magnitude of 4.6 on the Richter Scale with an intensity level between VI – VII ².

The quakes felt on 20 and 21 December have done the worst damage in terms of infrastructure; the numbers presented by the Ministry of Housing showed that in the five affected Municipalities 1,637 homes were damaged, of which 875 were severely damaged (uninhabitable), 512 were moderately damaged and 250 suffered minor damage. 80 percent of the damaged homes are in the rural zones and 20 percent in urban areas. The estimated affected population by the swarm stands at around 9,000 people.

The origin of this seismic cluster is attributed to the activation of local fault and is therefore not related to the recent activity of the Ilamatepec volcano or with the recent thermal activity in Ahuachapán.

Seismic swarms have been reported previously in this area, the most recent being in Turin and Atiquizaya on 7 - 13 of April 2005, registering 183 earthquakes of which 24 were felt by the population.

A state of emergency was declared by the president of El Salvador for five municipalities: Atiquizaya, Turin, San Lorenzo, Refugio and Ahuachapán; seeking to ensure emergency measures to improve the situation of thousands of victims in this zone. Following the reactivation of the swarm, Civil Protection declared a yellow alert in the five affected municipalities, which activated all national emergency response entities under the Civil Protection System.

Red Cross action

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRCS) immediately mobilized National Intervention Team (NIT) members and volunteers from the local branches in Atiquizaya and Santa Ana, with an aim to provide initial response to the emergency situation by supporting activities such as needs assessments, the provision of immediate relief items and by monitoring the situation.



¹Intensity level III- The tremor is noticed by some people inside buildings and only in some circumstances outside them, the vibration felt is similar to that caused when a light lorry passes. Very observant people may notice objects swing slightly.

² Intensity level VII- difficulty maintaining standing position, is felt by drivers of moving vehicles, furniture breaks, visible and serious damage to building structures, waves in standing water.

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In preparation for the distributions, a training workshop about adequate humanitarian aid was carried out for 30 Red Cross volunteers, addressing the following topics: Fundamental Principles, Code of Conduct and SPHERE standards, as well as pre-distribution formats and the basic standards for distribution of humanitarian aid.

According to the need assessment 500 families were targeted as the most affected by the seismic swarm in the municipalities of San Lorenzo, Atiquizaya and Ahuachapán. The criteria for the selection of beneficiaries focused on losses which families have incurred, and/or the degree of difficulty for them to cope and recover from the situation. Pre-distribution visits were conducted by the Salvadorean Red Cross Society to ensure accountability and transparency of distributions.

Objective 1: 500 families (2,500 beneficiaries) affected by the seismic swarm in the area of Ahuachapán benefit from the distribution of humanitarian aid, psychosocial support and disaster preparedness activities.



Needs assessment carried out by member of SRCS

All International Federation procurement procedures were followed in the dispatching of materials. Hygiene kits, tarpaulins and blankets were immediately procured from the SRCS pre-stocked supply, while the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has sent items to replenish these stocks.

The following relief items were distributed to the affected communities according to their specific needs:

DISTRIBUTION TABLE

Municipality	Canton	Villages	People	Families	Hygiene kits	Blankets	Tarpaulins
Atiquizaya	Urban zone	various	88	21	21	0	21
	Lomas de Alarcón	Kilo 5	135	26	26	76	26
		Los Nayolas	31	8	8	20	8
		El Estero	79	15	15	45	15
		Joya de Venado	159	25	25	73	25
		Las Bromas	226	42	45	119	45
		El Copinol	46	13	13	41	13
		La Escuela	140	25	25	70	25
		Los Rivas	75	15	15	44	15
		El Salitre	317	73	73	209	73
	Zunca	Los Lemus II	55	11	11	35	11
		Jicaro Grande	93	17	17	78	17
					1		
	Sub total		1,444	291	295	810	294
San Lorenzo	Urban zone	Albergue CE A. Cárcamo	216	45	45	0	0
	El Portillo	El Portillo	172	30	30	93	30
	Las Posas	Los Pénate 2	79	19	19	75	19
		La Capilla	84	21	21	79	21
		San Felipe	51	9	9	38	9
		San José	51	12	12	44	12
	Jicaral	Los Chinchillas	62	15	15	54	15

	Guascota	Los Peñate	148	28	28	80	28
	Sub total		863	179	179	463	134
Ahuachapán	Rio Frio	San Roque Obrajuelo	529	103	103	437	103
		Las Pampas	259	48	46	140	46
	Sub total		788	151	149	577	149
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION			3,095	621	623	1,850	577

With the use of the pre-stocked supply, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society was able to assist an additional 121 families. In total 621 families (3,095 beneficiaries) received hygiene kits, blankets and tarpaulins, making the total items distributed 621 family hygiene kits, 1,850 blankets and 577 tarpaulins.



Relief items distributed to the affected population

According to the National Society's Plan of Action, the distribution process was accompanied by educational activities and psychosocial support. These activities were developed and carried out under the supervision of the Community Health Department of the SRCS and with support of the volunteers specialized in risk reduction. Educational material about risk reduction was disseminated within the communities and schools in order to provide the affected communities with knowledge of the appropriate steps during the three phases of an earthquake: before, during and after. These materials were also distributed to staff of local branches and to volunteers who assisted in the

assessments and distributions, who, in their turn distributed this knowledge and material within their communities.

Earthquake preparedness poster developed by SRCS. With information about the appropriate steps during the three phases of an earthquake: before, during and after



Coordination

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society is part of the National Commission for Civil Protection, Prevention and Disaster Mitigation (Comisión Nacional de Protección Civil y Mitigación de Desastres) ³ which, amongst other things, coordinates all disaster response activities on behalf of the Salvadorean government in order to save lives

³ Previously it was called the National Emergency System (Sistema Nacional de Emergencias- SISNAE) but the name was recently changed to National Commission of Civil Protection, Prevention and Disaster Mitigation (Comisión Nacional de Protección Civil y Mitigación de Desastres).

and improves the wellbeing of those directly affected by disasters. Coordination took place at national, departmental, municipal and community levels with Commissions of Civil Defence, community leaders, and other present organizations.

From the onset of the disaster, the SRCS has liaised with PADRU, which has supported the National Society with the request of the DREF allocation and with technical and logistics resources. Deployment of a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member to support the SRCS was planned initially. However, this action proved not necessary as the National Society was able to successfully coordinate and implement the Plan of Action.

Coordination meetings took place with the departmental branch of Ahuachapán and with the local government from Atiquizaya. At the same time, coordination meetings were held with the local Commission of Civil Protection of Atiquizaya, San Lorenzo and Turín. These commissions assisted the SRCS with the selection of suitable distribution points for the relief items. A coordination official was assigned to oversee all activities related to the emergency to ensure appropriate and effective distribution to those affected.

Communications – Advocacy and Public information

Through continued public and media relations it is hoped that the public will develop a better understanding of the mission of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and the activities the organization undertakes in serving affected communities. For this purpose two press releases were issued and distributed to national and local media. As a member of the International Federation, the SRC seeks to promote the Fundamental principles in all activities. In order to increase visibility, official Red Cross t-shirts, caps, and vests with the Red Cross logo and appropriate boots and jeans have been disseminated amongst the 42 Red Cross volunteers who supported the distribution of humanitarian assistance.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – Principles and Values

The Federation is working with the Salvadorean Red Cross Society to assist the most vulnerable. In the planned operation, the activities to be carried out in First Aid, psychosocial support, emergency response and disaster preparedness are based upon the principle of humanity. Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the level of vulnerability of those affected, respect of the culture and ensuring gender sensitivity.

Activities planned for this operation are based on the SPHERE project humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response. The operation will ensure transparency through the drawing up and dissemination of narrative and financial reports. All objectives put forward in this DREF bulletin are in line with Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement.

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