

CROATIA: EARTHQUAKE IN DUBROVNIK REGION

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The Disaster

An earthquake measuring six points on the Richter scale struck the southern Croatian Adriatic coast at 22:45 hours on Thursday night (5 September). The earthquake's epicentre was in the Ston and Slano area, 20 kilometres north-west of Dubrovnik. Thankfully, there were no fatalities and only one person was injured.

However, in Ston the town hall and the rectory were badly damaged and all residential buildings are no longer safe for living. In addition, the residents of Slano and other earthquake-affected villages were evacuated to temporary shelters. Altogether, some 3,500 people are estimated to be without accommodation.

A section of the Adriatic road in the Dubrovnik area was also closed for traffic.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

On Friday 6 September, the Croatian Red Cross sent two trucks with food and hygienic provisions from Split and one truck with humanitarian help from Knin to the residents of Ston. The 7.3 mt delivery from Knin consisted of family packets with food, fresh water containers, plastic foils, candles and transistor radios. It arrived in Ston on Friday evening.

The International Federation has supported the Croatian Red Cross in delivering this humanitarian assistance. In addition, the Federation sent one construction expert from its delegation office in Split to assess the situation.

The Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees (ODPR) was to send, during the weekend of 7-8 September, 50 caravans from the evacuated Stobrec collective centre to the area as temporary accommodation. The Federation's Stobrec maintenance team is assisting this effort by ensuring that the caravans could be made mobile.

Future Red Cross Action •

Accommodation, water and food are the most critical problems at the moment in the earthquake-affected area, and detailed multi-agency needs assessments continue to be made. However, future Red Cross action is likely to take the following forms:

- Two to three Rubb Halls and tents will be donated and set up by the CRC/Federation for the villages that have been struck by the earthquake (taken from existing stocks in Croatian Red Cross warehouses). The Rubb Halls may then function as 'local centres for humanitarian support' where distributions of food, water, blankets and other assistance can be made.

- Depending upon the results of the needs assessments currently being completed, up to ten water tanks of between 2,000 - 5,000 litre capacity may be provided by the CRC/Federation to villages in the Slano area. Smaller water canisters for families to transport and use water may also be given.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The swift and effective response by the Croatian Red Cross and the International Federation has already attracted considerable local interest and praise. The Red Cross response featured prominently in the local media, and the British Embassy in Zagreb has been extremely supportive, offering to meet some of the costs of the operation. Additional support may also be required, however, and interested donors are invited to contact Mark Wilson, the Federation's Desk Officer in Geneva, for further details.

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