

# ***CHINA: EARTHQUAKE***

*26 November 1998*

## ***Information Bulletin N° 2***

### ***The Disaster***

At 19.31 and 19.38 on Thursday 19 November 1998, two earthquakes measuring 5.6 and 6.2 in magnitude respectively hit a rural area on the borders of Yunnan and Sichuan Province in south west China. Following the main earthquakes, 200 aftershocks reportedly hit the region, causing additional damage to already weakened structures.

Latest reports from the area indicate that the worst affected area is around Lanniqi township, about 30 km east of Ninglang. A total of 16 townships in five Yunnan counties around Ninglang Li Autonomous County (including Lijiang) and nearby Yanyuan in neighbouring Sichuan were affected by the quake. Some of the villages have been visited by the Secretary General of the Yunnan Red Cross who led an assessment and rescue team to the area on 21 November, two days after the quake. According to the Red Cross, the number of injuries resulting from the earthquake has now risen to 4,167, with three fatalities. The most seriously injured are being treated in the local county hospital. Less seriously injured are being treated at home by Red Cross and Public Health Bureau mobile medical teams.

A total of 312,000 are officially reported to have been affected by the disaster. The Red Cross assessment mission reports that 22,000 homes have been affected and estimates the number of homeless is 23,651. Most of these are living in the open in makeshift shelters. Temperatures in this mountainous area are still hovering below 0 degrees Celsius, and snowfalls have been reported, further exacerbating the plight of the homeless. In addition, the quakes damaged 257 schools, causing cracks in some 4,335 classrooms. The local earthquake monitoring station fears further tremors might hit this earthquake prone area in the near future.

Official reports say the earthquakes seriously damaged about 900 kilometres of roadways and 46 kilometres of telephone lines, as well as bridges, reservoirs, and power plants. The total monetary loss given by the local government is around 578 million yuan (US\$ 2.4 million). This high mountain area is one of the poorest in China.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

The Red Cross Secretary General of Yunnan Province who is now back in the provincial capital of Kunming after the assessment mission, is intensifying Red Cross efforts, begun prior to her departure, to mobilise funds and in kind donations to assist the most vulnerable in the disaster area. The assessment team took with them 200 quilts, 144 boxes of medicines and 10 tons of rice to help meet some of the immediate needs.

The mission's initial findings were sent to the RCSC HQ in Beijing on 23 November. It reports that access to the region has been complicated by the fact that many of the roads have been destroyed, and emergency teams have had to resort to travelling on foot. The team's return journey from the area took sixteen hours.

The main priority needs are for quilts and warm clothing to combat the freezing temperatures. Additional needs are for tents and medicines. While some stocks remain in the Red Cross Disaster Centre in Kuming, these were seriously depleted during the recent floods operation.

So far the local authorities have released 1,000 blankets, 1,200 quilts, 460 woollen mats and 1,000 tents to help with temporary shelter. Food and medical supplies have been sent to the area by the Ninglang Civil Affairs Bureau. In addition, the provincial government has earmarked 20 million yuan (US\$ 2.4 million) for emergency aid and relief works and another 10 million yuan (US\$ 1.21 million) has been allocated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. To further augment these government pledges, the provincial government has issued an urgent national and international appeal for donations of clothes, food and medicines. Other Chinese NGOs and charitable organisations are also involved in raising funds for this emergency.

## Needs

As a result of the needs assessment, the Yunnan Branch has requested assistance from the RCSC HQ to purchase 5,000 quilts, 5,000 heavy winter jackets and 500 tents.

Relief Item	Unit Price (CHF)	Quantity	Total Cost (CHF)
Quilts	13	5,000	65,000
Heavy Winter Jackets	12	5,000	60,000
Tents	320	500	160,000
Operational costs			55,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>340,000</b>

While the RCSC has agreed to release 200,000 yuan (CHF 32,000) immediately to the region, it has requested some additional assistance from the Federation to supplement these funds. Taking into account the Society's allocation of funds, the Federation will immediately release CHF 50,000 from its Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) to start the procurement of the relief items listed above. On behalf of the RCSC, the Federation urgently seeks contributions to cover the CHF 340,000 needed for this part of the emergency operation.

## Conclusion

The Federation delegation in Beijing will support the National Society in the implementation of this first phase of the operation. The Federation and the Red Cross Society of China will continue to monitor the situation closely and keep the international community regularly informed of developments and required assistance.

Peter Rees-Gildea  
 Director  
 Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Hiroshi Higashiura  
 Director  
 Asia & Pacific Department