

TURKEY: ADANA EARTHQUAKE

28 June 1998

The Disaster

At 16.56 local time yesterday (Saturday 27 June) an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale struck Adana Province in Southern Anatolia. Reports to date show 110 people dead (39 in Adana, 30 in Ceyhan county, one in Hatay and 40 in surrounding areas.) Some 1,000 people have been injured, 300 seriously. The most common injuries being reported are broken limbs, sustained as people jumped from windows.

The Prime Minister's office immediately set up a Crisis Administration Centre which is co-ordinating with crisis desks at the Governor's office in Adana, Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and the Ministries of Public Works, Health, and Communications. A 25-strong civil defence team has arrived in Adana, along with several government Ministers and the President of TRC. The country's President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister are expected to be in Adana today (Sunday).

Local authorities used heavy machinery to clear debris and allow the civil defence, local people and Red Crescent volunteers rescue victims, remove corpses and bring the injured to hospitals as aftershocks rocked the area. Blood donations have been requested and the Ministry of Health has asked staff on vacation to return to work. Health teams and ambulances from surrounding towns have been mobilised and private hospitals are ready to treat victims of the disaster.

The quake was felt as far away as Syria and Cyprus. Although the region lies on an active fault line, the last major earthquake was in 1945, when 13 people died.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

TRC set up a crisis desk on Saturday evening, and the Society's President, Dr Kemal Demir, is in the disaster area. Red Crescent relief teams (40 members) arrived in the area overnight and immediately set up mobile kitchens to distribute hot meals in two locations.

The following relief supplies have been sent to the disaster zone:

Five mobile kitchens, 820 tents and 2,900 blankets from the Adana warehouse, 400 tents and 3,300 blankets from the Ankara warehouse. In addition, seven trucks full of relief materials including 1,200 tents and 6,000 blankets are ready for delivery from Ankara. Another truck of relief materials including 150 tents and 750 blankets is ready in Elazig Warehouse. TRC sent 135 units of blood (various types) and 50 units of dry plasma to the disaster area.

Needs

Due to the damage to infrastructure, general confusion and the scale of the disaster, exact needs are as yet unknown. TRC's stocks were recently depleted by its response to floods on the Black Sea coast, so cash for local purchase of blankets, tents, medical equipment, generators, temporary water supply and other relief items may be needed. The sheer size of the country, coupled with inaccessibility and frequency of disasters, both large and small, necessitate the continuous upgrade of TRC's telecommunications systems. By Monday afternoon the decision on whether or not a full appeal will be launched will be communicated. In the meantime, more information can be had from Leopoldo Principe, desk officer, on ++4122 7304319, email: principe@ifrc.org

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Renny Nancholas
Director
Europe Department