

# Operations update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## China: Sichuan Earthquake

Emergency appeal n° MDRCN003  
GLIDE n° [EQ-2008-000062-CHN](#)  
Operations update n° 1  
16 May 2008

**Period covered by this Update:** 24 hours after the launch of the appeal;

**Appeal target (current):** CHF 20,076,412 (USD 19,304,242 and EUR 12,431,215);  
[<click here to view the attached Emergency Appeal Budget>](#)

**Appeal coverage:** 7%;  
[<click here to go directly to the updated donor response report, or here to link to contact details >](#)

### Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was launched on 15 May 2008 for CHF 20,076,412 (USD 19,304,242 and EUR 12,431,215) for 12 months to assist 100,000 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF): CHF 250,000 was allocated from the International Federation's DREF.



Red Cross staff and volunteers saving lives in Beichuan County (Red Cross Society of China).

**Summary:** The 7.8-magnitude earthquake which rocked the south-western province of Sichuan on 12 May, the worst to hit China in 30 years, has so far as of 16 May left 19,912 confirmed deaths according to the ministry of civil affairs. Rescuers have pulled out 13,465 people alive but it is estimated 12,323 are still buried in the rubble. As of today (16 May), more than 50,000 people are feared dead across eight affected provinces and

municipalities including the majority being in Sichuan as well as others in Gansu, Shaanxi, Chongqing, Yunnan, Shanxi, Guizhou and Hubei Provinces with some 102,103 people injured. The China Earthquake Networks Center had measured 122 aftershocks measuring 4 and above on the Richter scale in Wenchuan County as of midnight Thursday, 15 May 2008.

The local branches of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) immediately dispatched teams and relief items to the affected areas. The national society's staff and volunteers have been providing non-stop assistance to those injured and in need of assistance. Tents, quilts, food, water and water purification tablets have been distributed where they are most needed. Medical aid is a priority at this stage. A joint emergency assessment team made up of four people from the RCSC headquarters, the International Federation's regional office and the Hong Kong Red Cross branch is currently in Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province, to support the relief work.

On 15 May, the regional disaster management delegate of the International Federation returned from the first assessment in Beichuan county, which is located near Wenchuan county, the epicenter of the earthquake. After discussions with the Red Cross Society of China, the International Federation's East Asia regional office has sent a four-person team to Chengdu (16 May) today which consists of the regional disaster management delegate, disaster management officer, health delegate and media officer. The team will set up an emergency office to support Sichuan Red Cross branch's emergency relief and to coordinate international relief.

Relief items such as tents, winter clothes, water purification tablets (covered by DREF funding), have been delivered to the earthquake affected areas such as Dujiangyan, Beichuan and Mianzhu counties by the Red Cross in Sichuan on 16 May. So far, six professional medical teams have been dispatched by RCSC headquarters. These teams include doctors, nurses and up to 200 personnel, and along with equipment and medicines have arrived in the most affected counties. Sichuan Red Cross branch has dispatched 21 first aid teams totalling nearly 700 personnel to the epicentre and the most affected counties of Beichuan, Dujiangyan, Qingzhou, Pengzhou, Mianzhu.

By 15 May, RCSC has received more than USD 60 million donations in cash and in-kind to support in the earthquake relief operations, through its national fundraising appeal. The Taiwan Red Cross organization has sent relief assistance to Sichuan through the RCSC.

## The situation

On 12 May at 14.28 Beijing time (06.28 GMT) in the southwest province of Sichuan, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake rattled China, with tremors felt in nearly every province of the country and as far away as Bangkok and Hanoi. In the first hours that followed the quake, little was known about the utter devastation it caused due to disrupted communication lines, obstructed roads and transportation routes. The epicentre, Wenchuan County, is located more than 100 km away from Sichuan's capital in a remote mountainous area populated mostly by Tibetan and Qiang minority people. With more than 70 percent of the roads destroyed and blocked, the county was completely cut off from the outside world for more than a day, with relief workers having to travel many kilometres on foot. Chinese President Hu Jintao said rescue efforts following this week's powerful earthquake entered their "most crucial" phase on Friday, as the country braced for a death toll expected to rise above 50,000.



A collapsed school building in Beichuan county (International Federation).

China has mobilized more than 130,000 army and paramilitary troops to the disaster area, but the quake buckled roads and triggered mountain landslides, meaning that relief supplies and rescuers have struggled to reach the worst-hit areas. Neighbouring areas have also been badly affected, with more than 50,000 made homeless in one county of Gansu province to the north. Some expressed frustration at the resources still being devoted to finding survivors among the some 25,000 who remain buried.



Red Cross medical volunteers providing medical service to injured people in Beichuan County (International Federation).

Hundreds of damaged dams have also raised fears of collapse or flooding that could inundate towns and cities that are already struggling to recover from the quake. China has asked the United States for satellite images to help locate victims and identify damaged infrastructure. In Sichuan and neighbouring Chongqing, reservoirs have been damaged, some dams have cracked or are leaking water, and officials have warned the full extent of the hazard was as yet unclear.

It was reported on 16 May that, more than 20,000 stranded survivors were rescued in quake-hit Sichuan Province in southwest China by armed forces by Thursday alone. Meanwhile, the roads to the epicentre Wenchuan County and worst-hit Beichuan County have been cleared. As of 10:00 on Thursday (15 May), 64,040 people had been hospitalized in Sichuan. Among them, 12,587 patients were severely injured. As of 21:00, roads from Lixian to Wenchuan were cleared. Three hours earlier, roads from Mianzhu to Beichuan, the other worst-hit region, were cleared.

The regional disaster management delegate, a member of the joint RCSC/International Federation assessment team in Sichuan, speaking from the county town in Beichuan County, Sichuan, close to Wenchuan County gave a preliminary situation report.

'There are many wounded people in mobile clinics set up by the Red Cross and government, staffed with many medical personnel. Injuries range from minor to severe, with many broken limbs'.

'Rescue teams – mainly from the military – are continuing to look for survivors. They are very well organized and coordinated. The collapsed buildings – apartments, offices, schools, government agencies – are mainly made of concrete. Only a few buildings are still standing, with more than 80 per cent destroyed'.

'There are lots of dead bodies, with family members trying to identify loved ones. I can see at least fifty bodies, covered by plastic sheets. People are stressed and many are crying'.

'A Chinese Red Cross medical team was the first medical team to enter Beichuan County'.

'In Beichuan county (adjacent to the epicentre county), there is a high school consisting of several blocks, with 1,700 students and teachers. The building collapsed in the afternoon burying all the students while they were in

their classrooms. So far, rescuers have only been able to release 20 or 30 survivors. The others are most likely dead. This is where I saw the fifty dead bodies (mentioned earlier) – including children, adults and teachers’.

‘They’ve already removed the bodies now. There are people crying all around, still thinking there is a chance that their children are still alive. Rescue teams are still working on finding survivors but it is less likely that they will find any. People are getting very stressed as they look for their family members and wait for answers’.

‘I can say the government is well organized and there are lots of teams working 24 hours a day to find the survivors. Also, medical teams are doing their best to provide care for the injured. The doctors here are very experienced – many are surgeons. There are doctors from all over China. I feel that we basically have the personnel and capacity but need more resources and materials’.



Red Cross medical volunteers serving at Beichuan County (Red Cross Society of China).

‘We are trying to organize medical teams, which are badly needed. Five teams will be supported by the International Federation’s appeal (of which two have arrived in the province and three will arrive shortly). In addition, the Sichuan Red Cross branch has already organized at least ten medical teams’.

‘Clean water and food is also a priority for the thousands of people evacuated and without homes’.

‘I’m now in An County, which is next to the county of Beichuan. Here the Red Cross has already set up hundreds of tents, along with mobile clinics, with many ambulances bringing people from the affected area. People from the countryside have walked for two days to get here. The Red Cross has ten of these sites. Many people have been evacuated from Beichuan County to here, even though this county was also badly affected. I talked to one villager who said he walked for forty hours to get here. From the village where he lives, with a population of 350 people only 20 survived; the others are either dead or there is no information on them at all. The village is still inaccessible, so no one knows the situation. Lots of villages, maybe hundreds, are still cut off with little or no information coming from them. Landslides have completely buried everything’.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Overview

The RCSC Sichuan branch dispatched two emergency relief teams to two of the most heavily damaged counties of Dujiangyan and Beichuan. A team arrived in Dujiangyan and started emergency relief distribution, including the set up of tents. The other team reached Beichuan and reported severe damage in the county.



The RCSC is assisting survivors with shelters (International Federation).

So far, the RCSC has allocated relief items such as tents, quilts, and food items in total of CNY 4.3 million (CHF 650,000) to affected areas. Relief items through donations and from the RCSC regional disaster preparedness centres were sent to the disaster areas. Relief stocks in Chengdu have already been depleted, thus supplies such as tents and clothing have been sent from the other regional disaster preparedness centres in China.

Five RCSC emergency medical teams were dispatched on 14 May. Each team comprised of 10 - 20 staff including doctors, nurses, ambulances and cooking facilities. These five teams are from the General Hospital of the Armed Forces, the Beijing Red Cross emergency service centre, the Anhui Red Cross branch, the Hebei Red Cross branch, and Huashan Hospital.

A joint assessment team composed of staff from the RCSC headquarters, the International Federation's regional office in Beijing, and the Hong Kong and Macao branches of the RCSC travelled to Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan. The team was briefed by the Sichuan Red Cross branch before heading to the epicentre. Detailed information from the team is expected after their return, as communications to and from the severely affected areas is still disrupted.

In view of the huge disaster family tracing service activities may be considered soon.

Hundreds of volunteers have been mobilized by the Red Cross to Chengdu, the provincial capital, to help with rescue and first aid. Red Cross distributions are ongoing with more relief supplies coming in from other provinces. The Red Cross is helping both with shelter and moving people to safer places.

### Coordination and partnerships

Coordination is a high priority to ensure the most effective use of available resources towards the needs of vulnerable people. Besides the central and local government authorities, RCSC is the only other organization currently engaged in disaster response activities on a nationwide scale in China. The RCSC works to ensure a close coordination of its activities with the ministry of civil affairs and the ministry of health, particularly at local operational levels. The government authorities assume the major responsibility for both emergency disaster

response and follow-up rehabilitation activities such as the restoration of damaged infrastructure, and rebuilding of roads and bridges. RCSC focuses on providing supplementary disaster response in the immediate aftermath of disasters and, as far as resources permit, on the continuing humanitarian needs. Coordination meetings will be held regularly between the RCSC and the International Federation, including operations planning in all sectors.

The International Federation's East Asia regional office in Beijing is supporting the RCSC in the earthquake relief operations, and there is very close coordination with RCSC's relief department. The East Asia regional disaster management team of the International Federation is currently composed of the regional disaster management delegate, the relief coordinator seconded by the Japanese Red Cross, and a disaster management officer. Additional support is provided by the International Federation's Asia Pacific zone office and by the secretariat in Geneva.

### Capacity of Red Cross Society of China

The Red Cross Society of China was founded in 1904, becoming one of the first members of the International Federation in 1919. The mission of the RCSC is reflected in its law, acknowledged by the central and provincial governments, and is reflective of the good working relationship with the government, particularly in the fields of relief and health activities. Today with over 21 million members, a headquarters in Beijing (217 staff) and established regional branches (5,959 staff) corresponding to state administrative units, the RCSC is well placed to act as a valuable auxiliary partner to the government in times of disaster.

In recent years, China has experienced many earthquakes, during which RCSC has conducted key relief activities. In addition, the RCSC has responded to massive disasters caused by typhoons, torrential rains and snow in the past few years. Through these experiences, the RCSC has developed well established response mechanisms to ensure delivery of assistance to affected individuals. When disaster strikes, RCSC branches at the provincial and local levels immediately launch local appeals for funding and gather items such as warm clothing to assist victims. Branches in the affected areas have already distributed tents, water purification tablets, and quilts.

The RCSC maintains a nationwide network of six regional disaster preparedness centres. These are essentially warehouses with stocks of relief supplies, but they also serve as focal points for training staff in disaster management, including logistics, report writing skills and first aid tailored to different kinds of disasters.

### Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The Federation's regional office in East Asia is working in partnership with the RCSC's media department to raise media attention and public awareness about the RCSC's response to the earthquake. Currently, a media specialist has joined the regional office to provide timely and accurate information to the public and the media. A camera crew has been hired to assist the media specialist in documenting relief activities to support fundraising and public awareness campaigns. The reporting delegate will further support these efforts through timely reporting and communications with donors and partners. Opportunities for advocacy for more solid structures in the reconstruction and support to the most vulnerable communities will also be pursued. Support is also provided by the media service at the International Federation's secretariat in Geneva and Asia Pacific zone office in Kuala Lumpur.

### How we work

*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 \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

The International Federation's activities 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.

## Contact information

### For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- Red Cross Society of China: Mr. Wang Xiaohua, director of external relations department; email: [rcsc@chineseredcross.org](mailto:rcsc@chineseredcross.org); phone: +86.10.6404.8366, fax +86.10.6402.9928.
- East Asia regional office in China: Mr. Carl Naucler, (head of regional office), email; [carl.naucler@ifrc.org](mailto:carl.naucler@ifrc.org); and Mr. Qinghui Gu (regional disaster management coordinator), email; [qinghui.gu@ifrc.org](mailto:qinghui.gu@ifrc.org); phone +86 1391 0959 834, fax+86-10-6532-7166.
- Federation zone office in Kuala Lumpur:
  - Alistair Henley, head of zone office, phone: +6012 203 8254, email: [alistair.henley@ifrc.org](mailto:alistair.henley@ifrc.org),
  - Amy Gaver, acting head of disaster management unit, phone: + 60 3 2161 0892, fax: +60 3 2161 1210, mobile +60 12 220 1174, email: [amy.gaver@ifrc.org](mailto:amy.gaver@ifrc.org)
  - For pledges of funding: Penny Elghady, resource mobilization and PMER coordinator, phone: +603 9207 5775, email: [penny.elghady@ifrc.org](mailto:penny.elghady@ifrc.org)
  - Jeremy Francis, regional logistics coordinator, phone: +60 12 298 9752, fax: +60 3 2168 8573, email: [jeremy.francis@ifrc.org](mailto:jeremy.francis@ifrc.org)
- Federation secretariat in Geneva: Christine South, operations coordinator Asia Pacific, phone: +41 22 730 4529; mobile: +41 79 308 9824; email: [christine.south@ifrc.org](mailto:christine.south@ifrc.org)

[<Updated donor response report attached below; click here to return to the title page>](#)

**APPEAL BUDGET SUMMARY**

CHINA: SICHUAN EARTHQUAKE

Annex 1

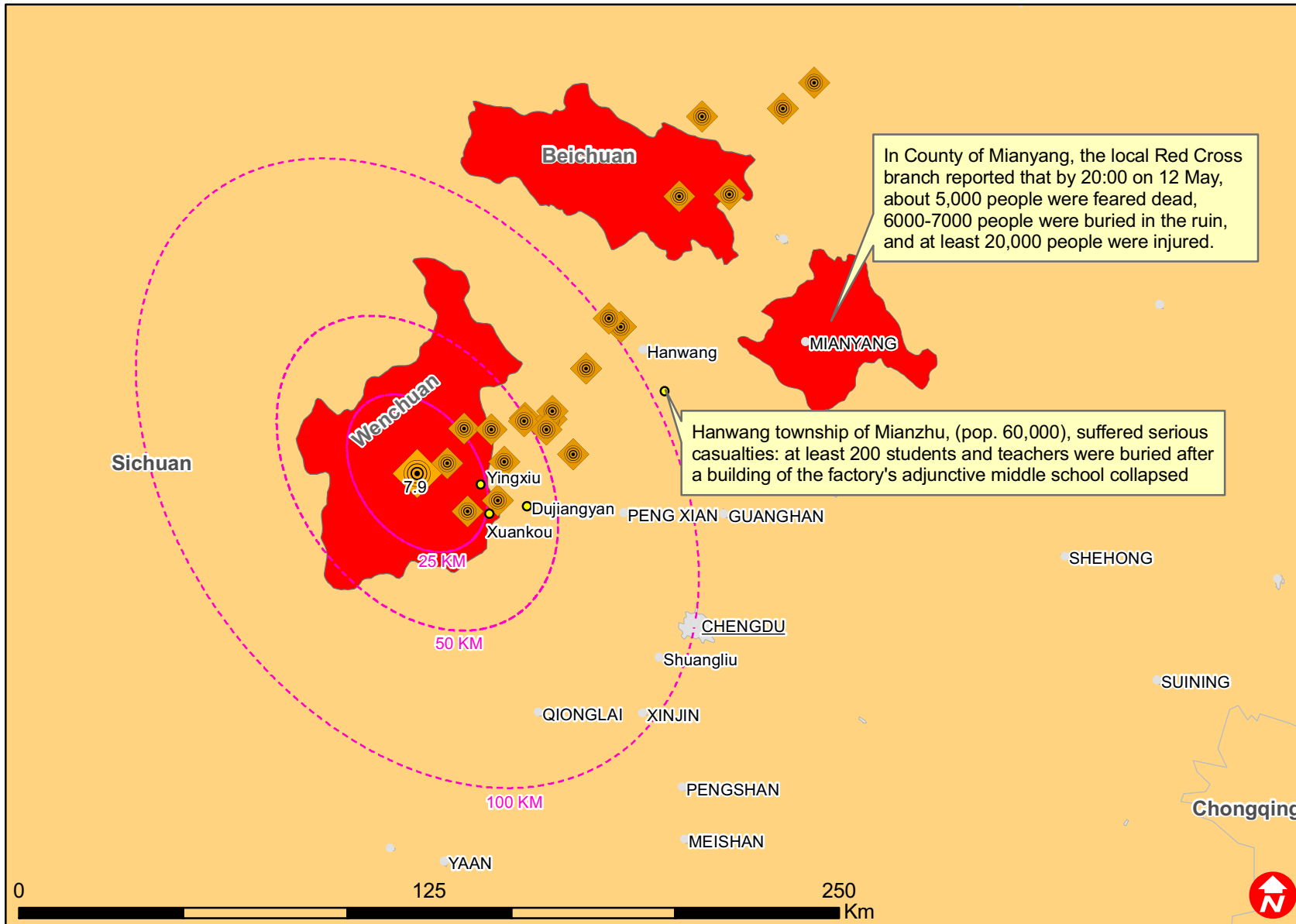
MDRCN003

	<b>ORIGINAL</b>
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>	
Shelter	630,000
Construction Materials	5,000,000
Clothing & Textiles	4,000,000
Food	5,000,000
Water & Sanitation	285,000
Medical & First Aid	740,000
Utensils & Tools	825,000
Other Supplies & Services	-
<b>Total Relief Needs</b>	<b>16,480,000</b>
<b>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</b>	
Land & Buildings	-
Vehicles Purchase	90,000
Computers & Telecom Equipment	30,000
Office/Household Furniture & Equip.	-
Medical Equipment	-
Other Machinery & Equipment	-
<b>TRANSPORT, STORAGE &amp; VEHICLES</b>	
Storage - Warehouse	-
Distribution & Monitoring	200,000
Transport & Vehicles Costs	100,000
<b>PERSONNEL</b>	
International Staff	316,800
Regionally Deployed Staff	-
National Staff	72,000
National Society Staff	48,000
Consultants/ information	108,000
<b>WORKSHOPS &amp; TRAINING</b>	
Workshops & Training	50,000
<b>GENERAL EXPENSES</b>	
Travel	180,000
Information & Public Relations	36,000
Office running costs	85,200
Communication Costs	78,600
Professional Fees	847,400
Financial Charges	3,000
Other General Expenses	46,445
<b>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</b>	
Programme Support - PSR	1,304,967
<b>Total Operational Needs</b>	<b>3,596,412</b>
<b>Total Appeal Budget (Cash &amp; Kind)</b>	<b>20,076,412</b>
<b>Available Ressources</b>	
<b>Net Request</b>	<b>20,076,412</b>



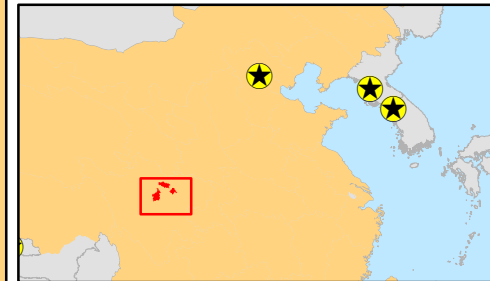


# China: Earthquake



In County of Mianyang, the local Red Cross branch reported that by 20:00 on 12 May, about 5,000 people were feared dead, 6000-7000 people were buried in the ruin, and at least 20,000 people were injured.

Hanwang township of Mianzhu, (pop. 60,000), suffered serious casualties: at least 200 students and teachers were buried after a building of the factory's adjunctive middle school collapsed



- Main earthquake
- Aftershocks
- Most affected counties