

# Information bulletin



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## PAKISTAN: Baluchistan Earthquake

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Several aftershocks have been felt in Baluchistan since the two earthquakes that jolted several districts of Baluchistan on 29 October 2008. Official figures from the government and initial assessments indicate that more than 160 people have lost their lives, while 500 have been injured. The government, United Nations agencies and various non-governmental organizations are carrying out assessments and relief works in the affected areas. The weather in the Province drops below zero degree centigrade and there is an immediate need to provide temporary shelter.

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has distributed relief stocks for 300 families in Ziarat on 30 October, and non-food items for 700 families are planned to be distributed on 1 November. PRCS health teams are treating the affected people in Ziarat. The joint International Federation /PRCS team reached Ziarat on 30 October and is assessing relief and health needs. All Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners present in the country are working in close coordination and the PRCS national disaster response team has been placed on high alert. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has launched a preliminary emergency appeal for CHF 9 million on 30 October to enhance the emergency response operation of the PRCS.



PRCS personnel carrying out assessments in Ziarat. Photo: Mubashir Fida/ International Federation

### The Situation

Two powerful earthquakes of magnitudes 5.2 and 6.4 on the Richter scale struck the south-western province of Baluchistan in the early hours of 29 October 2008. According to current government figures and preliminary assessments from the field, more than 160 people have lost their lives and the death toll is expected to rise. The epicentre of the earthquake was 70 kilometres north-east of the provincial capital Quetta and 25 kilometres east of Ziarat; it was a "shallow earthquake" as the depth was only 10 kilometres below the earth level. According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), the worst affected districts are Ziarat and Pashin. More than 40 aftershocks of magnitudes between 3 and 4 have occurred since. The strongest tremor measuring 6.4 on the Richter scale occurred at 5:30 pm (Pakistan standard time) in Baluchistan on 29 October. Hundreds of houses have collapsed. However, electricity and telecommunication networks have been restored in Ziarat since the night of 30 October.

A total of 154 deaths have been recorded in Ziarat with approximately 500 injured. In Pashin, four deaths have been confirmed while 20 have been injured. Three deaths have been reported in Chaman. Preliminary assessments indicate that approximately 17,500 families have been displaced in Ziarat and Pashin.

The local government, along with the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), the military and PRCS, started relief and assessment works within hours of the earthquakes, followed by additional staff from the International Federation on 30 October. PDMA, along with the Army, has developed a relief base in Ziarat. The government is deploying a field hospital in Ziarat. World Health Organization (WHO) has sent an Emergency Health Kit (sufficient for 100,000 people for three months) to Quetta. Oxfam, Save the Children and MSF-Holland have sent their assessment teams to the affected areas. The immediate needs identified by the government authorities are shelter, food, blankets and emergency health. The government is not requesting for any international aid at the moment. Coordination meetings are being organized in both Quetta and Islamabad to avoid duplication of efforts among the government, UN agencies and other non-governmental organizations working in the earthquake-affected areas. The PDMA plans to form a steering committee, and the International Federation/PRCS will co-chair the shelter cluster. List of sectoral leads. is as follows:

<b>Sectoral clusters</b>	<b>Government lead</b>	<b>Co-chairs (international communities)</b>
Food and agriculture (Relief)	Secretary Food	WFP and FAO
Food and agriculture (Rehabilitation)	Secretary Agriculture	WFP and FAO
Health and Nutrition	Secretary Health	WHO and UNICEF
Shelter	DG PDMA	IFRC and PRCS
Education	Secretary Education	UNICEF
Water and Sanitation and Hygiene	Secretary Public Health and Engineering	UNICEF

The province of Baluchistan has a history of earthquakes. In 1935, an earthquake of 7.6 magnitude on the Richter scale struck Quetta, killing approximately 30,000 people and destroying most of the city. According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department, the temperatures in Ziarat and Pashin drop to between -1 and -4 degrees centigrade in the night at this time of the year. Though the skies will remain cloudy for the next 48 hours, no rains are predicted in the province for the next seven days.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in the country is coordinating their response in Baluchistan. A Movement coordination meeting was organized in Islamabad on 30 October; it was attended by the PRCS, International Federation, ICRC and partner national societies in country, including the American, German and Turkish Red Cross Red Crescent Societies.

The PRCS teams in Ziarat district are continuing assessments in the field. Distributions have already been carried out in the following villages in Ziarat: Ahmedun, Kawas, Kili Gogi, Lavi Kach and Kuz Kach. The PRCS team dispatched to Pashin has returned to Quetta and is working on their response plan. The team in Pashin carried assessments in four union councils of Khanozai tehsil (district Pashin). PRCS plans to provide shelter, food and non-food items to 4,000 families. Relief stocks for 300 families have been distributed in Ziarat (village Kili Wam) on 30 October. Stocks for 700 families (tents, tarpaulins, quilts, blankets, stoves and jerry cans) were sent to Ziarat on 31 October; these stocks are planned to be distributed in Warchun on 1 November. A total of 30 volunteers are present in Ziarat area and helping in carrying out PRCS activities.

There are currently two PRCS health teams operating in Ziarat. To date, the teams have treated a total of 265 patients (since 29 October). Respiratory tract infection is the most common disease among the patients. Each team has two doctors, a dispenser, motivator, lady health visitors and three volunteers. The PRCS has put two more health teams on stand-by in Quetta. The health teams in Ziarat are coordinating with the local government and other agencies working in the area on regular basis.

Since the earthquake on 29 October, ICRC has also been coordinating with the PRCS provincial branch on regular basis. The ICRC, which has a sub-office in Quetta, sent an assessment team to Ziarat on 29 October. An ICRC surgical team has been flown from Peshawar to Quetta, and shelter/food kits for 700 families are being flown in to Quetta by ICRC from Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The partner national societies working in Pakistan have extended their support to PRCS. Turkish Red Crescent and Danish Red Cross representatives based in the country have also travelled to Baluchistan. Turkish Red Crescent is providing food and hygiene kits to PRCS for 1,000 families.

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

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.

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