



On December 29, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck central Croatia, about 30 miles southeast of the capital, Zagreb. (Photo Credit: BBC)

Just after noon local time on Tuesday, December 29, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck central Croatia about 30 miles southeast of the capital, Zagreb, near the towns of Petrinja and Sisak. The quake—the second to hit the area in two days and the strongest recorded in 140 years—killed at least seven people and left dozens more injured. Initial reports indicate that tens of thousands have been displaced; however, these numbers are expected to increase as search-and-rescue efforts continue. There has been widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure, including the region's largest hospital and a variety of other healthcare-related facilities. Hundreds of thousands of people are without power, and travel and has been widely disrupted as officials assess damage to roads, bridges and local airports. Strong aftershocks have continued throughout the following days.

International Medical Corps Response

Within hours of the earthquake, International Medical Corps released from prepositioned stock in our global hub in Dubai \$50,000 worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) to support Croatian health authorities with immediate relief efforts. We also deployed an Emergency Response Team from our Croatia office to conduct an assessment of the damage and critical needs in Patrinja, Sisak, Glina and the surrounding villages. Given the vast structural damage and the increased risk for COVID-19 transmission among those displaced, our response team includes technical experts in procurement, logistics and health.

The epicenter of the quake was near the towns of Petrinja and Sisak. The town of Petrinja—home to approximately 25,000 residents—was hardest-hit. This same area had been affected by a magnitude 5.2 quake that struck the area the day before the stronger December 29 quake. The entire town center has been heavily damaged, with the city's mayor reporting that half of the town has been destroyed. Our team arrived in Petrinja on December 30 and met with administrators and clinicians at Dom Zdravlja—the central primary healthcare center—and the local hospital, both of which had suffered severe damage from the quake, with the hospital evacuated. Palliative care and COVID-19 patients were relocated to hospitals in Zagreb and Karlovac. Long-term care residents at the facility were evacuated to the military barracks on the outskirts of the city.

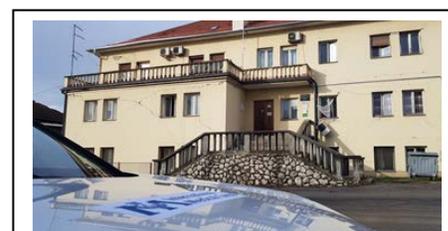
FAST FACTS

Our Footprint

- International Medical Corps has a global support office and logistics hub in Split, Croatia. Our team includes more than 100 staff members.

Our Response

- In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, International Medical Corps deployed personal protective equipment (PPE) and an Emergency Response Team to assess the damage in Petrinja, Sisak, Glina and the surrounding villages.
- Healthcare facilities throughout the affected region have been damaged by the earthquake. Critical needs in health sector include PPE, medical equipment and supplies, and temporary structures to facilitate continued delivery of healthcare services.



Damage to the Dom Zdravlja primary healthcare center in Petrinja and its extension in Glina town, following the earthquake on December 29.



A home near Petrinja that was severely damaged by the earthquake.

The Dom Zdravlja building is now structurally unsound, forcing healthcare staff to leave critical medical equipment and supplies inside. Residents in Petrinja are without electricity or running water, leaving officials scrambling to establish temporary shelters for the displaced.

In the city of Sisak, located roughly 12 miles northeast of the epicenter, the damage is also significant. The region's largest hospital has been rendered largely unusable. Although people injured in the quake are still being taken to the facility to be triaged, the government has stated that they need to evacuate all patients there, including 40 COVID-19 patients. In Sisak and the surrounding areas, it is estimated that between 700 and 1,000 houses have been damaged.

In Glina, residents are without power and assessing structural damage. Our team met with administrators and clinicians at the newly renovated health center. Though the building remains intact, the inner partition walls, ceiling and plumbing all require repairs. On the first floor of the facility, a burst pipe caused flooding the dental clinic, which led to a loss of some medical equipment and supplies.

Our team has so far visited health facilities in the Petrinja, Glina, and Sisak areas. Most of the health facilities in these areas have lost diagnostic equipment as a result of the earthquake and require additional support to resume services. In addition, the disaster further exacerbates concerns around COVID-19. Given the significant damage to infrastructure and the number of those displaced, there is an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission due to possible crowding in homes and shelters, thus requiring additional PPE dispatch to healthcare facilities and to the affected population.

To respond to these urgent needs, International Medical Corps has deployed PPE from our local warehouse to support the Ministry of Health (MoH). In coordination with the MoH, the PPE will be delivered to healthcare facilities to safeguard healthcare workers as they continue to respond to COVID-19, while addressing the urgent needs of those injured in the earthquake. International Medical Corps' team is also meeting with the MoH's Crisis Management Center staff to explore additional avenues to support the emergency response.

In addition to providing PPE, International Medical Corps' team is completing a rapid assessment that will include a review of possible interventions that will strengthen efforts to restore local healthcare capacity.

Interventions may include replacing damaged equipment and supplies for primary healthcare centers and clinics; providing support with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and providing temporary structures—primarily in Petrinja—to ensure continuity of care while rebuilding efforts are underway. As the situation evolves, International Medical Corps is working closely with our partners and health authorities in the Republic of Croatia to provide immediate relief to those affected by the earthquake.



International Medical Corps' team visited Strasnik, where they joined President Zoran Milanović's delegation as they assessed the damage and met with residents.