

Japan: Earthquake and Tsunami

Operations Update n° 1
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Period covered by this Operations Update: 29 March – 12 April 2011

* This is the first Operations Update Report issued by JRCS; IFRC has previously issued 5 Information Bulletins covering the period from 11 to 28 March 2011 and are available on the IFRC Website.



JRC nurse gives care to Ms. Tsuyako ITO (84) in an evacuation center in Kamaishi, Iwate. JRCS has a field clinic in this premise. 29 March © Olav Saltbones, Norwegian Red Cross/ Japanese Red Cross

Summary:

- Although the focus during the first month has been on emergency healthcare and emergency relief distributions, in the coming weeks, the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) will continue to place greater emphasis on early recovery and restoration of social welfare services
- A committee established to distribute the donations--comprising a number of major fundraising organizations, including the JRCS and prefecture governments of 15 disaster-affected prefectures--announced April 8, 2011 how the first 50 billion Yen (US\$ 600 million) in Japanese donations would be used.

Context and Background

On 11 March 2011 at 05:46 (UTC) Japan was struck by an earthquake of a magnitude 9.0, depth 24km, with the epicenter off its north-east coast. The earthquake generated a devastating tsunami (up to 38m waves) on the Pacific coast, whose consequences in terms of death toll, injuries, economic damage and environmental damage are still being calculated. Lack of fuel and adverse weather conditions hampered initial relief efforts. As a result of the main quake and of the ensuing tsunami, Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant was damaged with consequent radiation leaks; as a result the Government of Japan has created a 20 kilometer radius exclusion zone around that plant, and expended the evacuation to areas in Fukushima with high levels of accumulated radiation beyond the 20km radius.



A tsunami hit town in Rikuzentakata, Iwate © Olav Saltbones, Norwegian Red Cross/ Japanese Red Cross

The Current situation

At the one month mark i.e. April 11, the number of confirmed dead was 13,127 and missing/unaccounted for totaled 14,348, with 4,793 people being treated for injuries. Within the three worst affected prefectures (i.e. Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima), 127, 817 persons remained in evacuation centers, still displaced by the disaster. Most of them are staying in school compounds, which start a new school year next week, in over 1,000 centers. Aside from having to return to school with evacuees sharing their facilities, school opening will be disrupted for many school children, as over 7,000 schools were destroyed or significantly damaged. Many more displaced persons, whose homes were destroyed, have found a place to stay, with friends and their extended families. Significant aftershocks continue to rock the affected area, and felt in Tokyo including a 7.1 on April 7 and 6.2 on April 11; these tremors have resulted in electrical outages affecting millions, disruption of transport and caused additional deaths and injuries. In an informal survey, which tried to gauge the psychological impact of what victims felt were their three greatest concerns, in Miyagi Prefecture, 53% cited money (for living expenses), 50% cited work and housing was cited by 40%. A significant 55% said they continue to feel traumatized from the experience.

Coordination and Partnerships

The JRCS's relief and early recovery program activities continue to direct program resources and humanitarian support via two coordinated channels: The first coordinated approach is that funding received from other sister national Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies are being used to fund a variety of immediate relief and early recovery needs. The second major coordinated approach is that all other funds received from national or international donors (i.e. public, corporate, private, institutional etc) by the JRCS will be programmed into the cash grants program. The cash grants program is managed by the "Grant Disbursement Committee" appointed by the national government. Proceeds from national fundraising campaigns in Japan have traditionally been channeled to a single fund, with the allocations to affected prefectures being made by the committee. The JRCS, the Central Community Chest of Japan and Japan national broadcaster, NHK are the main fundraisers. This distribution committee is joined by three academics as well as local government representatives from the 15 affected prefectures. Once the distribution to prefectures is made to prefectures and municipalities, local government level committees, whom the JRCS is also a member at the chapter level will identify beneficiaries and distribute the money as agreed. The aforementioned meeting, held on Friday 8 April, called by the Ministry of Social Welfare, was the first round of distribution.

Japanese Red Cross Society Action Progress towards outcomes

The tables below summarize action taken to date by sector.

Emergency Health Activities	
Outcome: The immediate health needs are met and health risks posed by the emergency are reduced of the affected population through the provision of first aid, psychosocial and emergency medical services	
Outputs	Activities planned
Target population is provided with medical care services related to injuries and diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilization of JRCS medical teams and establishment of field clinics and dERU operational stations • Provision of health care by mobile medical teams • Provision of first aid and referral services
Target population and National Society staff and volunteers are provided with psychosocial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision and scale-up of psychosocial support (PSP) to victims affected by the emergency • Provision of PSP to staff and volunteers of national societies and municipal office engaged in emergency response.
Strengthen preventive measures of infectious diseases within evacuation centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake rapid assessments, as required, to identify gaps in environmental health (e.g. water supply) at evacuation centers • Installation of hand washing facility in evacuation centers
<p>Progress to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 452 medical teams have been deployed from the JRCS nationwide network of 92 hospitals. 26 teams are currently operating in the three worst affected prefectures of Miyagi, Fukushima and Iwate providing mobile clinic services to the evacuation centers and a further 151 teams are being prepared for further deployment - in total 4,000 staff will be involved. • As of April 12, 34,430 patients have been treated by JRCS. • Radiation medical specialists from Hiroshima & Nagasaki Red Cross Hospitals have been sent to and stationed in Fukushima. • In Ishinomaki area, Miyagi prefecture, the JRCS established a psychological support centre at the Red Cross hospital five days after the disaster to aid grieving families. To date 16 PSP trained medical team members and 8 specialized psychosocial (PSP) teams have provided PSP support to 919 persons who have suffered loss of family member and trauma from multiple disasters and support to medical care providers and municipal staff have also been provided with PSP support. • In the Yamada, Kamaishi and Rikuzentakata areas of Iwate prefecture, a PSP outreach services have been provided to traumatized disaster victims at the evacuation centers; a total of 513 people have been provided support by 34 PSP trained medical team members. Further 176 people have been provided support in Aizu-Wakamatsu in Fukushima prefecture. • 12 water bladders and tap stands are sourced and being set up in evacuation centers, while 500 Air Purifiers procured and distributed to the evacuation centers for infection control purpose. • JRCS dERU and DMAT teams have augmented the capacity of Ishinomaki Red Cross Hospital, which provides tertiary medical care to 300,000 people in surrounding areas. <p>Operational gaps, challenges or constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The psychological toll on those who survived the disaster is presenting major challenge and the JRCS continues to strengthen its efforts to provide psychosocial support. • The threat of a worsening radiation situation in the Fukushima Prefecture remains a worrisome risk to Red Cross staff and care providers. The JRCS has provided dosimeters, protective gear, and masks for the medical relief team working there and a Geiger counter to Fukushima Chapter and 1,000 iodine tablets ready for medical and relief staff if required. 	

Relief Distribution

Outcome: Provision of relief materials to the affected population in evacuation centers and equipment to care givers to reduce suffering to those who have lost their homes and livelihoods

Output

Target population is provided with basic necessities

Activities planned

- Provision of food and non-food items

Progress to date:

- Emergency materials, equipment and food items distributed to evacuees to date include:
 - ✓ 131,510 blankets
 - ✓ 183,000 pieces of clothing
 - ✓ 28,362 Emergency Relief kits
 - ✓ 12,500 sleeping kits
 - ✓ 5,000 brooms
 - ✓ 2,000 shovels
 - ✓ 4,980 dustpans
 - ✓ 3,500 scrub brush
 - ✓ 4,900 buckets
 - ✓ 15,000 towels
 - ✓ 5,040 brushes
 - ✓ bin liner 20,000 pcs
 - ✓ 10,000 hand sanitizer
 - ✓ 10,000 masks
 - ✓ Rice: 11.2 mt
 - ✓ Instant Meals: 4,000 meals
 - ✓ Instant Noodles: 57,000

Operational gaps, challenges or constraints:

- The JRCS relief plan that included the sourcing and procurement of a variety of food and non-food items was not implemented as initially planned, as the local governments have received significant donations from the private sector, NGOs and public to meet most food and nonfood needs.

Early Recovery Activities

Outcome: Basic asset replacement and transitional shelter needs of target population are met

Output

Assist victims from evacuation centers into transitional shelters

Assist disaster victims with cash grants assistance to meet their immediate needs

Activities planned

- Provision of basic household items
- The first 50 billion yen (US\$600 million) cash distribution being planned from donations

Progress to date:

- A decision has been made by the Grant Disbursement Committee to make the following cash grant distributions: 1) Victims who have lost immediate family members will receive 350,000 Yen (US\$4200) per a dead or missing member; 2) Households whose residences were destroyed by the earthquake, tsunami or resulting fires--about 46,000 -will receive 350,000 yen (US\$ 4200) each; 3) Households whose homes were severely damaged--about 10,000--will get 180,000 yen (US\$2160) each. About 65,000 households located within 30 kilometres of the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant that have been told to evacuate will receive 350,000 yen each. The committee is treating these people as if their homes were destroyed, regardless of any damage actually sustained.
- JRCS will equip up to 70,000 transitional shelters with a package of six essential home appliances, comprised a refrigerator, washing machine, rice cooker, microwave, hot water dispenser and television.

The assistance – worth an estimated US\$160 million and benefiting approximately 280,000 people – is part of JRCS efforts to replace assets lost or destroyed by the March 11 disaster. The first 36 government-built transitional shelters have been turned over to tsunami victims in Rikuzentakata, Iwate prefecture on April 8, along with the appliance sets to each prefabricated house.

Operational gaps, challenges or constraints:

- After the March 11 earthquake, many people evacuated to other prefectures, and several municipal administrations in affected areas lost tracking whereabouts of evacuees. This could make it difficult to deliver the support to disaster victims.
- Two potential constraints to meet ambitious construction schedules (i.e. complete approximately 60,000 temporary shelters within five months) remains the lack of adequate building materials and the need to identify available land on which to build the transitional shelters.

Support and Strengthen Social Welfare Services

Outcome: Essential social welfare services to the most vulnerable groups including children, the elderly and the disabled, are normalized

Output	Activities planned
Strengthen community and social welfare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of manpower to meet increased needs in service provision. • Provision of medical beds for elderly/disabled people in Geriatric Health Service Centres and Special Elderly Nursing home • 500 Vehicles for social welfare facilities and community services being considered
Improve municipal transport capacity to assist most vulnerable groups	

Progress to date:

- Medical beds for elderly/disabled people in Geriatric Health Service Centres and Special Elderly Nursing home are being sourced
- Rapid assessment is being conducted and caregivers are being sourced.
- Volunteer Action - A total of 13,952 JRCS volunteers, comprising 529 local RC Teams have participated in a variety of activities from March 11 to April 10. In the absence of public services these volunteers were involved in the following social and emergency service activities:
 - Mobile kitchen (hot meal/soup distribution)
 - Distribution of an food and non-food items
 - Fundraising related activities to assist earthquake and tsunami victims
 - Directing affected persons to the evacuation centers
 - Management and support to volunteer centers
 - Assisting home owners and communities clean mud away from their property
 - Assisting affected JRCS chapters
- Four volunteer centers have been setup (Tokyo HQ, Miyagi Chapter, Iwate Chapter and Fukushima Chapter) to coordinate the trained volunteer work/activities. Volunteers continue to assist in a variety of ways, including cleaning houses and supporting distribution and non technical support to medical services teams.

Restoring Family Links (RFL)

Outcome: Assist people seeking to restore contact with family members affected by the earthquake tsunami and/or nuclear power plant disasters

Output	Activities planned
Strengthen JRCS RFL technical capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out assessments as required • Increase database of missing persons • Carry out training of JRCS staff and volunteers in RFL
Improved database for missing will be in place	

Progress to date:

- Restoring Family Links (RFL) database has 5,786 entries of missing persons – including 1,738 Japanese and 4,048 foreigners.
- On April 4th, the JRCS sent the field team to the affected area in Miyagi Prefecture to initiate a pilot project. The team plans to provide internet services and helps register in the RFL website-register the name and coordinates of the missing person and their condition in those evacuation centers.
- A half-day RFL seminar for trainers of volunteers was organized on March 27th with support of the ICRC. Three JRCS staff and six volunteers took part in this seminar.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Two communications delegates seconded by the International Federation have focused on getting visibility for the efforts of the Japanese Red Cross Society, including human interest stories, photographic and video content to document the activities and response stories of JRCS staff, volunteers and camp residents. Dozens of interviews have taken place with English, German, Swedish, French and language networks, including BBC, CNN, and Al Jazeera.

How we work

All Japanese Red Cross Society and IFRC 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 the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The Japanese Red Cross Society, as a member of the IFRC, vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The Japanese Red Cross Society and IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

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PHOTOS



JRCS nurse gives care to Ms. Tsuyako ITO (84) in an evacuation center in Kamaishi, Iwate. JRCS has a field clinic in this premise. 29 March © Olav Saltbones, Norwegian Red Cross/ Japanese Red Cross



Home visit by JRCS medical teams in Rikuzentakata, Iwate © Olav Saltbones, Norwegian Red Cross/ Japanese Red Cross



JRCS Volunteers helping to clear the mud in a local shop in Iwanuma, Miyagi. 30 March © Olav Saltbones, Norwegian Red Cross/ Japanese Red Cross



Ms. Yamada and her two daughters were one of the first 36 families to move into prefab transitional shelters © Kathy Mueller IFRC/Japanese Red Cross



Home appliances provided by the JRCS to the first 36 prefab shelters completed in Rikuzentakata, Iwate © Japanese Red Cross

Donations

Donations received from individuals/corporate inside and outside Japan = USD1.4 billion

While no international appeal has been launched, the Japanese Red Cross Society is receiving cash contributions from other National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the spirit of solidarity. As of 12 April, this amounted to 10 billion yen (approx. equivalent US\$118 million).