

Cologne, 11th October 2005

Relief Activity Report No. 1

Earthquake South Asia

Plus: Information on Hurricane Stan in Central America



Source: Central Intelligence Agency (<http://www.reliefweb.int>)

Overall Situation

On the 8th of October an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale has affected large areas in northern Pakistan and two districts in India. The number of affected persons by the earthquake is estimated to be over 4 million of which 1 million was affected seriously and about 50,000 are confirmed to be injured. The number of casualties caused by the earthquake reached about 23,000 in Pakistan and about 880 in India. The government of India has not requested international assistance.

The number of casualties is still rising since rescue teams haven't yet reached all of the remote areas. Until now 140 aftershocks were recorded, a number of them were over 5.0 on the Richter scale.

The worst affected areas in Pakistan are six northern districts of North Western Frontier Province and five districts of Azad of Jammu and Kashmir, including the city of Muzaffarabad, which is estimated to be destroyed to 60%.

The urgent basic needs of the surviving population are enormous, although all national resources have been mobilised and the people of Pakistan contribute to the rescue and relief measures at all levels. The national and international relief efforts are coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Interior Affairs. The cold nights and rainy

weather requires priority to winter-proof temporary shelter, stoves and blankets. Other urgent needs are field hospitals, enforcement of health care structures, water purification equipment and food as well as transportation means to reach remote areas.

The region in general faces major logistical difficulties due to the fact that the infrastructure has been severely damaged and the most affected regions are mountainous. Access to the affected areas is still the main problem.

Malteser International Activity

The international response to the disaster is ongoing, but remained chaotic. Pledges of aid for the victims of Saturday's earthquake came in from around the world but little assistance has yet reached people living in remote areas due to blocked roads and a shortage of aircraft, particularly helicopters. All NGOs and UN agencies face the problem of accessibility.

As a first action, Malteser International has taken the following steps:

- Malteser International has pledged 100,000 Euro. The greatest proportion of these funds will be used in projects which are yet not defined.
- A smaller proportion will be used to contribute to a relief flight organised by the “*Aktion Deutschland Hilft*”, the Alliance Germany Helps which is a donation platform of 10 German NGOs, amongst them is Malteser Germany. The flight is expected to start on Wednesday, 12 October from the airport Frankfurt Hahn (which is a former military airport some 100 kms to the city of Frankfurt) to Pakistan. And will contain relief goods such as blankets, tents, covers, household kits and medicines.
- Malteser International will send a small assessment team on Thursday to contact national and international organisations and evaluate possibilities for further activities in the region. The team consists of Marie-Theres Benner (German) and Jon Freeman (British). In respect of the extent of the damage caused by the disaster it becomes clear that the rehabilitation phase will require high funding and international assistance which should be canalized through local organizations. The strategy of Malteser International aims at the reinforcement of local capacities instead of establishing an own operational system.
- Sending a large number of aid workers which seems to be counterproductive at the momentary stage. If not liaised with a local structure which we have not available yet, they would be only of little help and would be rather a burden for scarce local resources.

Further information will be disseminated as soon as possible.

Information on Hurricane Stan in Central America

In the period from 4 to 9 October 2005 Hurricane Stan has caused casualties and high damages across Central America and Mexico. Affected countries have been Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. El Salvador has already suffered with the first eruption in a century of it Llamatepec volcano on Saturday, which killed two people and caused thousands to evacuate their homes.

As a result of the hurricane especially Guatemala was affected by heavy rains at the Southern Coast and western highlands. Flooding and over 900 landslides have caused loss of life, injury and displaced persons as well as damage to housing and infrastructure. Poor and isolated communities have been severely affected, people lost their livelihood and women and children are prone to suffer first from a lack of rescue resources.

Secretary General Ingo Radtke is in close contact with the Order's Associations in Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador. Malteser International will make available 50,000 Euro as a first pledge. Concrete activities will be soon defined by the Associations of the Order.

Malteser International would be glad if you support these activities by cash donations and encourages you to collect money. In order to avoid "fundraising confusion" and high bank fees, all Associations and Priorities should first use their internal system for collecting donations and then coordinate further proceeding with the Headquarters in Cologne.

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