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## Information Bulletin No. 3 Ecuador: Earthquake

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. A Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) for 407,778 Swiss francs (CHF) was issued on 18 April 2016, and an emergency appeal is will be issued shortly

### The situation

A 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck northern Ecuador at 6:58 pm local time on 16 April 2016. According to the latest report from Ecuador's National Secretariat for Risk Management (SNDGR), there have been 480 deaths, 4,605 injures, 20,503 people have sought shelter in emergency collective centres, 805 buildings have been destroyed and 608 others have been affected, and 146 schools have been affected; no official information has been provided on the number of affected people. Ecuadorian Red Cross estimates that the numbers of



Ecuadorian Red Cross volunteers assist with the recovery process. Source: ERC

affected people could reach up to 70,000 and 100,000 and with 3,000 to 5,000 needing emergency shelter. Some cities lost their electricity, but it is in the process of being restored.

### Action by the authorities

The Ecuadorian government declared a state of emergency with a red alert in six provinces on 16 April 2016: Manabí, Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo, Los Ríos, Santa Elena and Guayas. The Ecuadorian Vice-president stated that the 20 most affected cantons are located on the coast and in the mountain region with 17 roads affected at the national level. The area of Pedernales (Manabí province) has been declared a disaster zone. Search and rescue efforts started immediately.

The Ecuadorian government solicited support from the United Nations to complement its response efforts. An UNDAC team of 12 people arrived in Ecuador on 17 April. The UNOSAT satellite service is activated. The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) has deployed a health in emergencies specialist to Ecuador to coordinate the arrival and organization of medical equipment and professional teams.

The countries of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Spain and Chile have deployed approximately 370 technical teams in support of the Ecuadorian government response effort. A platform of the

Humanitarian Network has been established to register the entry and departure of humanitarian actors in the field.

In Ecuador, risk management activities are coordinated from the National Decentralized System, involving all public and private institutions as advising entities, which in turn are part of eight technical task forces (in normal situations) and of the Emergency Operations Committees (in emergency and disaster situations), which are led by the relevant state ministries. The Ecuadorian Red Cross (ERC) actively participates in 5 of the 8 technical task forces at the canton, provincial and national level. Additionally, the ERC is an active member of the Humanitarian Country Team, which holds weekly meetings for information sharing and coordination among non-government organizations (NGOs) and international institutions.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

An emergency operations center for this operation was opened in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)'s Americas Regional Office (ARO) on the morning of 17 April 2016. On this same day, ARO leadership and staff along with the American Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross Society and Norwegian Red Cross, present in Panama, started regular teleconferences with the National Society president, sister National Societies offering support and IFRC delegates and staff in the region. These conferences have continued several times daily until the emergency response has been fully organized and implemented

The IFRC has deployed several regional staff members to assist the National Society during this emergency. The disaster management coordinator for South America arrived in Ecuador less than 18 hours after the earthquake to assist in coordination for humanitarian relief and initial damage and needs assessments. From the Americas Regional Office, the shelter delegate and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) delegate were deployed to assist in shelter needs and damage and needs assessments with regards to WASH. The coordinator of the country cluster for the Andean countries is now in Quito to second the National Society in its political coordination with Ecuadorian government authorities and institutions. A logistics official and the communications coordinator from the ARO are scheduled to arrive in Ecuador on a charter flight with relief supplies on 19 April.

Additionally, the IFRC country cluster office for the Andean countries in Lima, Peru, particularly through the IFRC's Pan-American Disaster Unit (PADRU), has provided technical support in administration and finance and logistics, which has entailed coordination with other National Societies in the Andean sub-region.

Furthermore, the IFRC issued a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) alert, and the Americas Regional Office is coordinating with Geneva regarding this emergency, which also has personnel on standby.

Lastly, the IFRC activated an existing agreement with Airbus for the provision of helicopters to conduct damage assessments in communities that cannot be accessed by land or for transportation of response equipment

As the operation evolves, the Ecuadorian Red Cross, with IFRC support, will establish regular meetings in order to continue Movement coordination in the field and ensure a timely and organized humanitarian response.

The National Society has divided its teams into three geographic areas for the current damage and needs assessments: Manta, Pedernales and Esmeraldas. Parts of rural Esmeraldas and areas outside of Pedernales still have not been reached with humanitarian aid, much less assessed for damages and needs.

Based on guidance from the national headquarters, the volunteers from ERC provincial boards and local branches in the area of heaviest impact were the first responders. The National Society, in

fulfilment of its humanitarian mandate, has activated a general alert for all its components to respond to the aftermath of the earthquake. To date, it has engaged its volunteer human resources and staff to implement the following actions in the field.

The Spanish Red Cross (SRC) is the only participating National Society that has a permanent office in Ecuador. The SRC is located in ERC national headquarters. From the first moment, the SRC began work with the ERC in the emergency operations center and in the field to support the damage and needs assessments. The SRC has offered additional aid to respond to the evolving needs.

The Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) has deployed a 31-person search and rescue team, 3 for water and sanitation (WATSAN), 7 for shelter, 1 for information technology (IT) and 21 logistics personnel, with the possibility of sending the canine unit in the future if required. The CRCS is also sending a medical team of 14 health personnel and two water purification plants from the CRCS branch in Pasto, which is located close to the border with Ecuador.

The Mexican Red Cross has deployed a 20-person search and rescue team that will work in Puerto Viejo; the team arrived in Manta on 18 April.

Three volunteers from the Salvadorean Red Cross Society have been deployed as part of a multi-institutional Salvadoran government- led search and rescue team. This team will work in Esmeraldas province and Pedernales.

From the American Red Cross (ARC), there has been a deployment of an assessment team, the ERC has requested telecommunications equipment and human resources support from the American Red Cross and the IFRC, and further personnel ready to be deployed as needed; in addition, ARC staff has been supporting with the information management for the emergency operations centre (EOC). Lastly, the stock in the warehouse in Panama is to be shipped immediately to support 1,000 families as needed or requested by the National Society through the IFRC logistics system

The Canadian Red Cross Society has deployed two delegates to support the IFRC and National Society team on their assessments.

The Norwegian Red Cross WASH delegate, who is acting as the IFRC focal point for WASH, will be deployed for water and sanitation assessments. Water needs are extreme, and it is foreseen that sanitation will be a problem in the near future.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has permanent representation in Ecuador. As part of this operation, the ICRC is assisting with Restoring Family Links (RFL) in areas where people have lost contact with their loved ones.

Moreover, the ICRC is providing logistical support with four vehicles and field officials to facilitate the transport of the CRCS team located in the Colombian city of Pasto to Pedernales in Ecuador. Three of the vehicles and the teams are scheduled provide support for 10 days. Furthermore, the ICRC will provide support with the restoring family links, the management of cadavers in an emergency situation and emergency assistance, as needed.

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How we work

All 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 IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, 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.

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The 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.