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Information bulletin

Japan: Kumamoto earthquakes

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Date of issue: 16 April 2016

GLIDE n° [EQ-2016-000033-JPN](#)

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation. The Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) has mobilized its staff and resources nation-wide to assist affected communities. International assistance is not being sought.

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The situation

Two major earthquakes that have struck the Kyushu island of Japan – within a span of two days – have left at least 32 people dead, more than 2,000 injured and dozens missing. The first earthquake, of magnitude 6.5, struck on Thursday, 14 April 21:26 local time, resulting in at least nine people dead and 800 injured. According to the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), the epicentre of the quake was in the Kumamoto Prefecture with a depth of 11 kilometres.

Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) immediately activated its emergency response in support of the authorities. Two days into the rescue and emergency relief efforts, a 7.3 magnitude earthquake with a depth of 10 kilometres struck in the same area early Saturday, 16 April 01:25 local time. As of 16 April 17:00 local time, Early assessment reported 32 people dead and hundreds injured as a result of the second quake, with dozens trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings.



Nearly 100,000 people are staying in evacuation centres after their homes were damaged or due to the fear of continuing aftershocks. Japanese Red Cross Society is distributing essential relief supplies to the affected families.

Photo Credit: Japanese Red Cross Society.

Initial updates from the authorities show that the earthquakes have damaged roads, caused landslides and disrupted power supply, leaving more than 100,000 households without gas or electricity. More than 69,000 people have been safely evacuated from their homes after a dam was damaged as a result of the quake. Thousands more have chosen to stay out in open spaces for fear of aftershocks, while some seeking shelter in evacuation centres. The forecast rain in the coming days could further affect people who are staying out in the open as well as set off mudslides.

Action by the authorities

Rescue workers, including police and firefighters, are undertaking emergency operations, with some having been active since the first earthquake. The Japan's Self-Defence Forces also deployed its resources to the most affected areas to bolster the response.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In response to the two earthquakes, JRCS is undertaking an emergency operation in accordance with its mandated role as auxiliary to the public authorities during disasters. The National Society's contingency plan has been activated. Twelve emergency medical teams¹, and staff of JRCS chapters and hospitals across the country have been deployed and are focusing on the provision of emergency medical assistance, management of injuries and distribution of relief items.

In addition to the deployment of emergency medical teams, JRCS's Kumamoto Red Cross Hospital has received more than 807 injured patients, of which 33 were seriously injured. JRCS has 92 hospitals nationwide, which play an important role in disaster response.



The Kumamoto Red Cross Hospital has received more than 800 patients after the Thursday 14 April earthquake.
Photo Credit: Japanese Red Cross Society.

Meantime, local chapters of JRCS have distributed 5,000 blankets to people who were evacuated and are staying in evacuation centres. Red Cross teams have also distributed 500 family emergency kits, containing basic personal hygiene items, 200 sleeping mats (with pillows) and 1,000 tarpaulins to people in evacuation centres. Relief distributions are expected to continue.

The IFRC Asia Pacific regional office in Kuala Lumpur is in regular contact with JRCS and providing the relevant coordination to support the National Society's response. The communications delegate of the IFRC country cluster support team (CCST) in Beijing has supported JRCS in producing a [web story](#) and other form of external communications. The situation is deemed to be within the capacity of the authorities and local organizations to respond; international support is not envisioned for the time being.

¹ JRCS has 500 emergency medical teams on roster at its branches nationwide, comprise of a total of 7,000 medical and support personnel who are trained in disaster response.

Contact information

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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 Humanitarian 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.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives.
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.