



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

Morocco – Earthquake

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

February 25, 2004

BACKGROUND

- On February 24, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.4 struck Al Hoceima Province in northern Morocco at 2:28 A.M. local time and aftershocks continue. The epicenter was in the Strait of Gibraltar, 185 miles east-northeast of the capital of Rabat. The closest city was Al Hoceima, a coastal city with a population of 100,000. According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the most affected areas are rural villages near Al Hoceima where an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people live in mud brick buildings unable to withstand a major temblor.

CURRENT SITUATION

- International media reports estimate that the earthquake has resulted in the deaths of approximately 564 people and this number is expected to rise. In addition, at least 300 people were injured.
- According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), preliminary reports indicate that six remote villages in the Rif Mountains near Al Hoceima are severely affected. Local officials are particularly concerned about the villages of Ait Kamara, Tamassint, and Imzouren where approximately 30,000 people reside.
- Local media reports state that many residents are camping outside for fear of aftershocks.
- UN OCHA reports that the greatest needs are shelter and improved medical assistance.
- International media reports state that residents in the affected area protested on February 25, demonstrating for increased humanitarian assistance.
- According to the IFRC, the Moroccan Red Crescent (MRC) has established a relief assistance and assessment operation and deployed more than 200 staff and volunteers, including medical professionals, to the affected area to deliver relief items, such as blankets and tents.
- The Mohammed V Foundation is coordinating relief efforts in the affected area.

U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

- On February 24, U.S. Ambassador Thomas T. Riley declared a disaster due to the damage caused by the earthquake. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 through USAID/Morocco to the MRC for emergency relief supplies.
- On February 25, USAID activated a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) composed of six members. The members include a Team Leader, Water and Sanitation Advisor, Program Officer, Information Officer, Logistics and Communications Officer, and a Field Officer. The DART Team Leader arrived in Casablanca on February 25 and the other members of the DART are scheduled to depart Washington, D.C. for Morocco on February 26.
- On February 25, USAID/OFDA airlifted 10,000 blankets into Al Hoceima. USAID/OFDA is currently preparing additional emergency commodities for delivery to the affected area.

OTHER DONOR AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION ASSISTANCE

- On February 24, the IFRC launched an appeal for \$2.3 million to assist 30,000 beneficiaries for six months.
- On February 25, UN OCHA dispatched a U.N. Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to the affected area to assist in the coordination of relief efforts.
- According to UN OCHA, UNDAC reports that Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams from Algeria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Spain are in Morocco.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. Information on organizations responding to the humanitarian situation in Morocco may be available at www.reliefweb.int.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time,

warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.

- More information on making donations and volunteering can be found at:
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org
 - InterAction: www.interaction.org -> “How You Can Help”
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/.