



**Canadian Red Cross  
Croix-Rouge canadienne**



**Red Cross...Anywhere. Anytime.**

## **Earthquake in Iran: helping survivors rebuild their lives**

December 31, 2003

---

### **The need**

A major earthquake registering 6.3 on the Richter scale hit Iran's south-eastern city of Bam at 5:30 am (local time) on December 26, 2003. The death-toll is currently at 28,000 and continues to climb. Over 30,000 people have been injured and more than 80,000 are homeless.

Sixty per cent of homes are either badly damaged or destroyed, and both of the city's hospitals were flattened in the quake. Cold weather is a threat to survivors who are sleeping outside—many without protection from the freezing nighttime temperatures.

The need for clean water, medical assistance and shelter is urgent.

---

### **How the Red Cross is helping**

The International Red Cross Red Crescent, whose mandate is to provide assistance to those affected by disaster, have been working to alleviate the suffering of earthquake survivors.

In the early hours and days following the quake, the local Red Crescent was part of search and rescue operations. Now, efforts are focused on helping survivors—many of whom are injured and without homes.

### **Essential goods**

Life's basics are most urgently needed right now. Tents and plastic sheeting for shelter, cooking utensils, food, clean water and kerosene are all being distributed as quickly as possible by local and international Red Cross and Red Crescent teams. Each day, planes carrying relief goods arrive in the local airport to provide as much comfort as possible to survivors. Concerns about disease are great, so clean water and sanitation systems are quickly being put into place.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society has 7,000 relief workers and medical staff and over 2,000 volunteers working in and around Bam. There are seven Red Crescent medical clinics in operation to serve the many injured, with several mobile medical units going where the need is greatest. A more permanent field hospital will be in place within the next day or two, to care for residents in and around Bam for at least four months, following the destruction of both area hospitals.

### **Restoring family links**

As one of its roles internationally, the Red Cross and Red Crescent strives to reunite loved ones separated by disaster or conflict. Red Cross and Red Crescent societies around the world are available to take requests from family members inquiring about the health and whereabouts of loved ones.

The Red Cross Red Crescent has a tracing team in Bam and several satellite phones, in order to help families contact concerned loved ones around the world. The use of satellite phones has proven very successful in other disaster and conflict zones and provides great reassurance to families who can be in touch, even if only briefly.

---

## **How Canadians are helping – and how you can help**

Canadians have donated over \$900,000 to the Red Cross relief effort since the earthquake hit Bam. The Canadian Red Cross immediately released \$100,000 from the International Disaster Relief Fund and sent two relief workers to help in the area.

Canadians are urged to donate generously to help survivors of this devastating disaster. Cash transfers to the affected region provide the optimum flexibility to our Red Cross colleagues so they can meet the most urgent needs.

In-kind donations of food, clothing and other items, while well-intentioned, are not the best way to help those in need. There are tremendous processing and transportation costs involved in shipping these items to beneficiaries. Local purchases of food and clothing are more culturally appropriate and effective. Red Cross supplies can be purchased in the immediate area, thereby reducing transportation costs.

**Please help those affected by the earthquake in Iran. To make your donation, you have several options:**

- Online at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca)
- Toll-free at 1-800-418-1111
- At any local Red Cross office
- Mail a cheque or money order (no cash in the mail, please) to Canadian Red Cross National Office, 170 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa Ontario, K2P 2P2