



**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 #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2004

March 1, 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, such as Ait Kamara, Tamassint, and Imzouren, where people live in mud brick buildings unable to withstand a major temblor. The Government of Morocco (GOM) reports that the earthquake killed at least 572 people and injured 427 others.

CURRENT SITUATION

- On March 1, Under-Secretary Marc Grossman, Ambassador Thomas T. Riley, and Deputy Chief of Mission Wayne J. Bush arrived in Al Hoceima to assess the U.S. Government (USG) humanitarian response to the earthquake. USAID/Mission Director James Bednar and the USAID/ Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) joined the delegation in Al Hoceima.
- King Mohammed VI arrived in Al Hoceima on February 27 for a four-day visit to oversee relief efforts and provide support to the affected residents. The USG delegation, including Under-Secretary Marc Grossman, met with King Mohammed VI during their visit.
- The USAID/DART reports that shelter remains the highest priority for assistance to the earthquake-affected population in the Al Hoceima area. Public water distribution systems, local health care facilities, and food markets are functioning and there are no significant health, water, sanitation, or food concerns at this time.
- While visiting the Ait Kamara Commune on February 26, the USAID/DART observed open food markets stocked with fruit and vegetables and noted that there was no inflation of food prices. Furthermore, no food needs were reported during the USAID/DART site visits to tent camps on February 28.
- According to the USAID/DART and international media reports, commodity distributions are more effectively targeting vulnerable residents. On February 27, the GOM began delivering commodities to remote areas by helicopter.
- Local media report that 13,000 people are homeless. In addition, according to the USAID/ DART, many other residents are sleeping outside due to continuing aftershocks.
- On March 1, the IFRC reported that schools are still closed.
- The GOM will announce a reconstruction plan for the region next week.
- International press reports state that more than 200 aftershocks have hit the region since the February 24 earthquake.

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 Moroccan Red Crescent for emergency relief supplies.
- On February 25, USAID activated a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) composed of five members. The members include a Team Leader, Water and Sanitation Advisor, Information Officer, Logistics and Communications Officer, and Program Officer. The USAID/DART Team Leader arrived on February 25 and the rest of the USAID/DART arrived in Morocco on February 27. Since their arrival, the USAID/DART has met with the GOM, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and U.N. agencies to coordinate activities, in addition to traveling to the villages near Al Hoceima to assess the need for humanitarian assistance.
- On February 25, USAID/OFDA airlifted 10,000 blankets into Al Hoceima. On February 26, USAID/OFDA airlifted three emergency health kits. Each health kit serves a population of 10,000 for three months. On February 27, three flights with 712 tents, 50 generators, and 260 rolls of plastic sheeting arrived in Morocco. An additional 288 tents arrived on February 29. Two additional flights with 972 tents total left for Morocco on March 1. To date, the total value of USAID/OFDA commodity shipments, including transport, is \$1,221,026.
- On February 28, a five-person U.S. European Command (EUCOM) Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) arrived in Al Hoceima to gather information and make recommendations on how EUCOM can best

support relief efforts. The HAST donated humanitarian commodities valued at approximately \$160,000 to the GOM.

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 March 1, the IFRC announced that the appeal had been fully funded.
- The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) dispatched a U.N. Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to the affected area to assist in the coordination of relief efforts from February 25 - 28. The U.N. Country Team, composed of the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), and World Health Organization (WHO) will take over coordination responsibilities.
- Algeria, Austria, France, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey dispatched Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams to the affected region.
- UNICEF dispatched a team on February 27 to assess medium-term needs. UNICEF has allocated \$70,000 for tents, emergency, and rehabilitation needs.
- The European Union has dispatched a civil protection team to assist with coordination in Al Hoceima.

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. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their earthquake response efforts in Morocco can be found in the “How Can I Help” section of www.usaid.gov – keyword “Morocco,” or by calling the Center for International Disaster Information (CIDI) at 703-276-1914.
- 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 services can be found at:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov → “Our Work” → “Humanitarian Assistance” → “Disaster Assistance” → “How Can I Help”
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or (703) 276-1914
 - InterAction: www.interaction.org → “Guide to Appropriate Giving”
- 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/.