

Pakistan Earthquake Situation Report

November 5, 2008

Overview

A 6.5-magnitude earthquake struck southwest Pakistan on October 29, 2008 at 5:10 a.m. (23:10 GMT), northeast of the provincial capital Quetta, triggering landslides that instantly buried hundreds of homes. The initial earthquake has been followed by some 830 aftershocks—some as large as 6.2-magnitude tremors—causing even more damage. The after-jolts have forced the people to stay outdoors at altitudes of 2500 meters with temperatures plunging below freezing during the night in what is of one of the poorest regions of the country.

Damage and Response

The quake has killed at least 320 people and seriously injured over 600 others. Officials say they expect the death toll to rise to 500-600 persons, while aid agencies estimate that up to 108,000 people—half of them children—have been affected by the disaster. Officials in the hilly Ziarat district, 70 km (45 miles) northeast of Quetta, said many houses had collapsed and several villages were reduced to rubble, with many people believed to be trapped under the debris. Over 70,000 people have been left homeless and aid is slow coming given the mountainous region's rough terrain and difficult accessibility. The Deputy Director of the geological survey of Pakistan reported that more aftershocks are expected in these areas.

Immediate needs in the region include food, shelter, emergency medical assistance, and safe drinking water to survivors in rural areas. As the houses that collapsed were made of mud, they cannot be used or fixed quickly and the survivors need alternative shelter as soon as possible.

The region's worst earthquake—a 7.6-magnitude on the Richter scale—struck in October 2005, killing an estimated 75,000 people, most of them in mountainous northern Pakistan. Large parts of south Asia are seismically active because a plate known as the Indian plate is pushing north into the Eurasian plate.

JDC Response

JDC is collecting funds to directly assist victims of the earthquake. JDC is working with the International Blue Crescent—a partner in JDC's efforts following the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan—to deliver immediate relief supplies to those affected by the disaster.

JDC is providing emergency relief for at least 200 affected families in Ziarat District, one of the most difficult areas to reach that was also among the most severely devastated by the quake. JDC is distributing foodstuffs, blankets, bedding, hygiene kits, water purification tablets, and warm clothing to help victims combat the recent sub-zero temperatures.