

## News Bulletin

16 December 2009 - 13 January 2010

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- Earthquake leaves 980 homeless in Vanj
- Children in tent schools since 3 years in Qumsangir
- Stability enhancement for 50 communities
- Winter clothes for disaster victims
- IFRC appeal extended until March 2010

## Current issues

### Earthquake leaves 980 homeless in Vanj

On 2 January 2010, a 5.3 magnitude earthquake hit 20 villages in Vanj district, 500 km to the east of Dushanbe in the *Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast* (GBAO). There were no casualties.

Some 140 houses were left uninhabitable, rendering 980 people homeless, and close to 1,000 houses were seriously damaged. Public infrastructure such as health centers, schools and administrative buildings were also affected.

Frequent aftershocks are instilling fear of more damage to come among the population of Vanj. The disaster victims therefore require psychological and social support.



Destroyed house in Vanj | Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan

The *Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense* (CoES), together with REACT partners, provided food, tents, stoves, blankets and other essential items for survival in winter. The

Government has requested further assistance in terms of food, medicines, heaters and fuel. There is also urgent need for construction materials and assistance for the reconstruction of earthquake-resistant homes and public buildings.

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### Children in tent schools since 3 years

The Kurgan-Tube REACT group reports that children in Ozodi-2 village in Qumsangir, a district in the extreme south of the country, have been attending school in tents for the past three years. The village school was severely damaged and rendered unsafe by an earthquake in 2006.

The four tents were originally intended to serve as temporary classes during summer only, but, for lack of alternatives, they are also used during the cold winter months. Children and teachers are complaining of health problems due to exposure to extreme temperatures.

The rehabilitation of the school, along with the reconstruction of nine other schools across the country damaged or destroyed by the 2009 spring floods and mudflows, is part of the education sector plan of the REACT Early Recovery Appeal. However, of the \$2.6 million required to do this, only a fraction was received, enough to provide a safe school for 100 children in Kuhistoni Mastchoh district. Over 3,000 children in Qumsangir and other disaster-struck areas in the south are left to attend classes in inadequate, unhealthy or unsafe conditions.



School girls in a tent class in Qumsangir | Save the children

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## Response activities

### Stability enhancement for 50 communities

In December 2009, MercyCorps embarked on a 3-year project to address the root causes of potential instability in three regions of Tajikistan: South-west Khatlon - bordering Afghanistan, the Tajik part of the Fergana Valley and the Rasht Valley, both to the north of Dushanbe.

The \$7 million undertaking will create economic opportunities for youth, strengthen governance at the local level and support local projects in 50 communities in the three regions. The project's disaster preparedness component will focus on community emergency planning, training, and household budgeting to increase the coping capacity of families.

In preparation for the first phase of implementation, MercyCorps and its local partners conducted assessments to select the target communities and determine the detailed project activities. The Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Project is supported by the *United States Agency for International Development* (USAID).

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### Winter clothes for disaster victims

At the end of December, Counterpart International donated winter clothes to the people affected by the 2009 spring disasters in the southern districts of Tajikistan. Over 3,000 sets of warm underwear and socks for adults were distributed to beneficiaries in Khuroson, Pyandj and Qumsangir districts.

The donation is part of Counterpart's Community and Humanitarian Assistance Programme, funded by the United States Department of State. The distribution was managed jointly by CoES, Save the Children and the *Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development* (ACTED).

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2009 to support the victims of the spring disasters. The appeal projects, implemented by the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, provide help to 4,320 beneficiaries with basic survival items and hygiene promotion. Emergency stocks are also being replenished.

Only 63% of the required funding has been received so far, all of it provided by IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund. Due to the late receipt of funding and the low appeal coverage, significant needs remain unmet. The operation will now be completed on 22 March 2010.

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## Coordination

### IFRC appeal extended until March 2010

The *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* (IFRC) announced a four-month extension of its \$800,000 appeal launched in May