

RAPID EMERGENCY ASSESSMENT AND COORDINATION TEAM (REACT)

Murghob, Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan: 7.2 Magnitude Earthquake

Situation Update No. 5 (as of 15 December 2015)



This report is produced by REACT in collaboration with Government and humanitarian partners. It covers the period of 12 -15 December 2015. The next report will be issued on or around 18 December 2015.

Highlights

- The actual number of damaged and destroyed houses appears to be lower than initially estimated and currently stands at 799.
- The Agency on State Material Reserves has been appointed by the Government to receive and distribute international assistance.
- Many UN and non-UN agencies have pre-positioned food and non-food items in GBAO for immediate release.
- World Food Programme, representing the UN in Gorno-Badakhshan, and FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance have conducted an initial rapid needs assessment in Rushon district.
- A one-day donor mission is planned to Gorno-Badakhshan on 17 December using Aga Khan Development Network's helicopter.



A woman in her destroyed house. Ghurdara Village, Bartang Valley. 14 December 2015. Source: WFP Sub Office in Khorugh



124,500

Population living in the five affected districts



2

People died



10

People injured



4,794

People displaced

Situation Overview

The Committee of Emergency Situations (CoES) briefed partners at a REACT coordination meeting on 14 December that the members of the Governmental damage and needs assessment team have been able to reach some of the isolated communities for the first time after the onset of the 7.2M earthquake on 7 December. According to the latest information from CoES, the number of destroyed and damaged houses is significantly lower than initially estimated, and stands as of 15 December at 799 houses. CoES explained that the initial figures that were provided on the damaged and destroyed houses and infrastructure were estimated based on phone communication with heads of many isolated jamoats due to lack of access to the areas by air or land. Now CoES can access many of the jamoats, they have been able to more accurately assess the number of damaged and destroyed houses. Hence, the number of people displaced is now estimated to be 4,794 – using an average of 6 people living in a household.

The weather has cleared up the last few days, which made it possible to reach many isolated communities in Bartang Valley. As of 15 December, at least 508 people (253 children (age to be identified) and 255 adults) have been evacuated to Rushon district center. The evacuated people are staying in school and pre-school facilities.

The UN Resident Coordinator met with the Tajik Foreign Minister on 14 December to discuss how to improve response coordination. On behalf of the wider humanitarian and donor community, the UN Resident Coordinator assured the Government of Tajikistan of its commitment to support the Government and address the critical life-saving needs of the most vulnerable affected families. The Tajik Foreign Minister informed that the Agency on State

Material Reserves has been made responsible by the Government to receive and distribute international assistance. The next day, Senior Management of the UN and the Agency on State Material Reserves discussed clear protocols and SOPs on cooperation and reached an agreement that international organizations will be part of the humanitarian assistance distribution process.

A Development Coordination Council (DCC) meeting was organized on 14 December for the key in-country donor community, in which the UN Resident Coordinator gave an overview of the situation and the humanitarian needs, and reiterated support for a joint response to relief and longer-term recovery needs.

Government agencies and representatives of FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance conducted an aerial observation of Sarez lake. According to initial information received from CoES, the Usoi dam is stable, although the level of water in the lake remains higher than average.

UNOSAT activated the International Space Charter, and from satellite imagery obtained could confirm that Usoi dam and other visible dams seemed to be intact. No landslides were visible along the Bartang valley. Because of the shadow of the mountains and snow coverage, a detailed damage assessment analysis was not possible from the satellite imagery. However, some parts the image over the valley could be analyzed. In the table below the main findings from UNOSAT's analysis of nine villages in Rushon district are summarized.

Village	Distance from epicentre	MMI estimate of earthquake intensity	UNOSAT analysis findings
Roshorv	39 km	Very strong	Not possible to analyse - Post image covered by snow
Yapshorv	37 km	Very strong	Seems quite intact
Nisur	32 km	Very strong	Seems quite intact
Saynob	32 km	Very strong	Seems quite intact
Barchadiv	25 km	Very strong	Village obscured by shadows on imagery
Rukhch	26 km	Very strong	Village obscured by shadows on imagery
Pasor	22 km	Very strong	Seems quite intact
Bospasor	20 km	Very strong	Not possible to analyse - Post image covered by snow
Kudara	18 km	Very strong	Some buildings seem possibly affected

A Shelter Sector coordination meeting was conducted on 15 December to discuss issues around improving the temporary shelter for the displaced population. Partners argued that a clear shelter strategy is lacking on the Government's side. Such strategy would enable the international community to take further actions in supporting the winterization of temporary shelter facilities. Taking into account the expected lengthy winter and harsh weather conditions in Gorno-Badakhshan, which usually last up to late April, urgent solutions need to be identified to improve shelter conditions for the displaced population. IOM is planning to deploy shelter experts to Gorno-Badakhshan to conduct a shelter assessment.

Many UN and non-UN agencies have pre-positioned food and non-food items in Gorno-Badakhshan for immediate distribution, jointly with the Agency for State Material Reserve, to the affected population. On 14 December, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued an overview of required relief and recovery assistance, which is based on an assessment by the State Commission. At the same time, it is anticipated that some of the life-saving assistance has already reached the affected communities through national, local and international actors. In the next few days, OCHA will compile an overview of the response to-date which will help to identify gaps and avoid duplications in the sectors of concern.

OCHA has deployed an emergency response expert and UNDP has deployed a damage assessment and early recovery expert to support response to the earthquake and improve coordination. Both experts are expected to arrive on 16 December.

In addition to houses, also critical infrastructure - including roads, medical points and hydro-power station and schools - have been damaged. CoES has made available the below information on these damages at district level. It includes information on livestock that has been killed.

District	Houses		Schools		Medical points		Hydro-power station		Livestock
	Destroyed	Damaged	Destroyed	Damaged	Destroyed	Damaged	Destroyed	Damaged	killed
Rushon	130	390	1	4	1	2		1	212
Shugnon	24	211	2	13		3			
Darvoz		3							
Vanj	2	28							
Khorug town		11		3					
Total	156	643	3	20	1	5		1	212

Humanitarian Response

Sector-specific information on needs, damages, gaps and constraints will be updated in due time as more information is available. The REACT Secretariat is in close contact with the Government to obtain this information. As of 15 December, below information on needs has been made available by the Government of Tajikistan, and REACT Secretariat has made an additional analysis of potential needs, gaps and constraints. On 14 December, UN World Food Programme (WFP), representing the UN in Gorno-Badakhshan, and FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance have conducted an initial rapid needs assessment in Rushon district. The results of the assessment are expected to be made available soon. A rapid response team members of REACT will be deployed on 17 December to support the ongoing inter-agency needs assessment process.

Overall, there is lack of information on the exact location of blocked junctures of roads and which villages remain isolated because of these access constraints.



Early Recovery and Livelihoods

Needs:

- Construction materials to restore infrastructure, including roads, schools and other critical facilities.
- Fuel for heavy machinery to support the ongoing debris removal process.
- Potential interventions to restore livelihoods of affected communities, including restoration of agriculture farm buildings.

Response:

- The Government is undertaking debris removal of the main roads blocked by rock-fall.
- The Government has deployed five helicopters to support response and recovery operations.



Education

Needs:

- School space and education kits are expected to be a need.

Response:

- UNICEF has propositioned items in FOCUS warehouse in Khorugh (classroom tents, school in the box, recreational kits, Communication for Development materials etc.) for distribution, depending on the need.



Food Security

Needs:

- Food support to affected families, including hot meals, has been listed as the priority need by the Government.
- As per initial analysis conducted by WFP, 5,000 people are in need of food assistance.

Response:

- Local authorities and neighboring communities are reportedly providing hot food to the displaced population.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society (IFRC) is applying to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the affected population with food assistance (complementary food parcels).
- WFP will provide lifesaving food assistance to the 5,000 people in need of food assistance. Beneficiaries will receive a standard emergency food basket for three months. Government helicopters will be used to reach communities in the isolated areas, however, trucks will be used to access population in Murgab and Shugnon districts.
- 36 MT of food commodities are prepositioned in GBAO for immediate distribution. 12 MT is already dispatched in the FOCUS warehouse in Rushon district and 24 MT of food is available in the WFP Khorugh warehouse and ready to be distributed.
- Food commodities for the immediate response will be taken from WFP's available stocks in-country and replenished through local, regional, and/or international procurement as soon as contributions are confirmed.

**Needs:**

- It is expected that psychosocial support is required as well as medical assistance to the injured persons.

Response:

- First aid has reportedly reached affected communities in several jamoats.
- UNICEF has released basic health kits (Health Emergency kit, Health kit) from Dushanbe for prepositioning in FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance's warehouse in Rushon district.
- UN Population Fund has some maternal delivery equipment and kits available in stocks in Dushanbe for release as required.

**Needs:**

- Urgent need to support the Government with provision of winterized tents and/or yurts in all affected districts.
- Heating, including coal, fuel, wood and stoves, blankets, mattresses and clothes and other basic household supplies are of a priority need.
- Winterization of temporary shelters due to extended length of severe weather conditions.
- Construction materials to restore partially damaged and destroyed houses.
- 500,000 MT of aviation fuel raised as an urgent need by Government to support helicopter operations throughout the response.

Response:

- Displaced families have been moved to their relatives and neighboring communities or have been relocated to school buildings. As of 15 December, some 508 children and elderly have been evacuated to schools and pre-school facilities in Rushon district.
- The Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan (SCO) released 50,000 Swiss Francs for winterization and provision of non-food items.
- The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) released more than 72,000 US Dollars to provide coal to the most vulnerable 1,500 people, which will help them to cope with severe weather conditions during the winter months. The coal will be delivered within seven to ten days.
- FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance distributed its existing limited stock of non-food items to cover basic needs.
- UNICEF has released non-food items for prepositioning in FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance's warehouse in Rushon district.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society (IFRC) is applying to Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the affected population with non-food items.
- WFP is planning to distribute NFI, including fuel-efficient stoves. A total of 150 fuel-efficient stoves are available in Khorugh.
- IOM is deploying two shelter experts to conduct an assessment of temporary shelters and to provide recommendations on winterization of temporary shelters.
- OXFAM is ready to release non-food items (blankets, mattresses, warm clothes) for immediate distribution.
- UN is ready to release some non-food items from UN Emergency Reserve stock (located in Dushanbe) managed by UNDP.
- USAID pledged to release resources to support provision of non-food items.
- Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan has transported some non-food items to GBAO for immediate distribution.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Limited information on warehouse capacity in GBAO for preposition of relief items from other regions.
- Lack of market capacity for yurts in the country create additional challenges to address urgent temporary shelter as international procurement may delay assistance.
- Lack of agreed temporary shelter winterization strategy by Government.

**Needs:**

- Water tanks and hygiene kits/facilities both at temporary shelters and the affected communities.

Response:

- UNICEF has released basic water and sanitation supplies (water tanks, containers, hygiene kits, water purification tablets and others) for prepositioning in FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance's warehouse in Rushon district.
- Red Crescent Society has transported some hygiene kits to GBAO for immediate distribution.

Profile of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)

Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast borders China in the East and Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in the North and West. The province is almost entirely mountainous and virtually has no arable land. The largest mountains in the Pamir and Tien Shan ranges are located in this region, up to 7,495m – Ismoil Somoni Peak (24,590ft). Although the province makes up 45% of the land area of Tajikistan, it represents only a bit more than 3% of the population (approximately 214,300). The largest city in GBAO is Khorugh, population of approximately 32,000 and the second largest is Murghab, with more than 4,000 residents.

For further information, please contact:

Valijon Ranoev, National Disaster Response Advisor/REACT Secretariat, ranoev@un.org, Cell +992 93 9999 163

Khursheda Aknazarova, Programme Assistant/REACT Secretariat, react.dushanbe@undp.org, Cell +992 93 9999 262

To be added or deleted from this mailing list, please e-mail: react.dushanbe@undp.org