

# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

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Office for Peace and Justice



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## Memorandum

**To:** Pastors/Administrators  
**From:** Adrienne Curry, Program Director CRS  
**Date:** 10/26/2011  
**Re:** CRS Assists Earthquake Victims in Turkey

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Catholic Relief Services is supporting emergency rescue efforts underway in Turkey, where a devastating earthquake killed more than 200 people, injured hundreds more and led to the collapse of hundreds of buildings.

The 7.2 magnitude tremor struck Sunday afternoon in the eastern cities of Ercis and Van, located in the mountainous region near Turkey's border with Iran. The death toll is expected to rise in the surrounding villages, where almost all of the mud-brick homes have been destroyed.

Rescue teams are still digging through the remains of dozens of collapsed multi-story buildings. At least 80 buildings collapsed in Ercis and about 40 buildings there had people trapped beneath the rubble. In Van, one hotel, the university hospital and two dormitories are among the 30 multi-story buildings that have totally collapsed.

Many of the rescue efforts are being carried out with shovels, picks and bare hands in near-freezing temperatures. A Turkish news agency reported that 24 people were pulled alive from the rubble two hours after the quake struck.

An emergency response team from Caritas Turkey is on its way to the earthquake site to determine what the most pressing immediate and longer-term needs are. CRS is also supporting International Blue Crescent, which has launched an emergency response effort. An IBC representative in Van, a town of 70,000, reports a chaotic situation there, with residents in dire need of makeshift shelters, and roads that are heavily damaged- creating logistical problems for rescue efforts.

In the initial response phase, CRS will support efforts to provide 500 families with heaters and wooden ovens, blankets, plastic sheeting, hygiene packets, food packages and baby food.

Turkey is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes because it sits on major geological fault lines. The weekend's earthquake was the worst natural disaster since 1999, when two earthquakes with a magnitude of more than 7 hit northwest Turkey, killing 18,000.

**Donate to the Turkey Earthquake Fund.** Make and send your donation (**on the memo line- Turkey Earthquake**)

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