

SITUATION UPDATE



An AMSED MMU serves people in the Taroudant province of Morocco.

On September 8, a catastrophic magnitude 6.8 earthquake hit central Morocco, with its epicenter about 45 miles (72 kilometers) southwest of Marrakech near the town of Adassil, in the High Atlas Mountains, Al Haouz province. The earthquake was the strongest Morocco has seen in more than 120 years, with hundreds of aftershocks recorded following the quake.

More than 500,000 people have been displaced, while approximately 380,000 people were severely impacted due to their proximity to the epicenter. Nearly 60,000 homes were damaged, and 19,000 homes have been destroyed.¹ Nearly 3,000 people were killed and more than 5,500 people were injured by the quake.²

Instead of gathering in displacement centers, families have been staying in government-provided tents near their damaged homes, making it more complicated to provide aid to remote communities. Given the limited access to medical care, those with chronic illnesses have faced challenges seeking and receiving medical attention. Reported needs have included safe drinking water, solar lights, blankets, food, medical supplies, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies.³ International and local organizations are continuing to provide emergency food assistance, health services, shelter, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to affected communities.⁴

FAST FACTS

- On September 8, a 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck central Morocco, about 45 miles southwest of Marrakech
- Nearly 3,000 people are confirmed dead, with injuries numbering more than 5,500
- The disaster was Morocco's most powerful earthquake in more than a century and its deadliest since 1960
- More than 500,000 people have been internally displaced

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps has partnered with local organizations in Morocco to provide critically needed services through the deployment of mobile medical units (MMUs) and the procurement and distribution of supplies
- The MMUs began operations in mid-October, and have so far reached hundreds of people with primary care consultations, supplies, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and awareness-raising sessions on general health and hygiene topics
- Ongoing critical needs include shelter, food, non-food items, health, MHPSS services, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

¹ <https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disasters/2023-morocco-earthquake/#:~:text=Data%20Friendly%20Space%20reports%20that,Dr%C3%A2%2DTafilalet%20and%20SoussMassa%20provinces.>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/morocco-earthquake-death-toll-passes-2800-survivors-camp-outdoors-2023-09-11/>

³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/morocco/morocco-earthquake-humanitarian-assistance-peace-winds-response-morocco-earthquake>

⁴ <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/sep-13-2023-united-states-expresses-support-earthquake-affected-communities-morocco>

International Medical Corps Response

International Medical Corps is coordinating with the Moroccan Association of Solidarity and Development (AMSED), the Moroccan Ministry of Health, Maroc Solidarité Médico-Sociale (MS2), the European Committee for Education and Agriculture (CEFA), Action for Humanity (AFH) and Cooperazione e Sviluppo (CESVI) to provide healthcare services to communities affected by the earthquake.

Our teams are working with AMSED and MS2 to support mobile medical units (MMUs) in Al-Houz and Taroudant provinces, where over the past two weeks we have procured and delivered drugs, consumables and medical equipment for two MMUs. We also held an induction workshop in Marrakech for the 17 MMU team members from AMSED and MS2, addressing topics such as safeguarding, pharmacy stock management, medical data collection and reporting, MMU layout and patient flow, medical prescription with best practices, hygiene and health promotion strategy, referral strategy and partnerships with local authorities.

The MS2 MMU began operations on October 16 in Al Haouz province, and the AMSED MMU also began operations in Taroudant province. The MMUs are providing integrated health services, including health and mental health consultations, and distributing hygiene kits, tents and solar electric kits to ensure that remote communities have access to critically needed services and supplies.

The MS2 and AMSED MMUs each consist of one or two doctors, one psychologist, one or two nurses and one midwife. As of November 2, the two MMUs have provided 2,413 primary health consultations, 1,138 health promotion sessions and 366 mental health consultations. Clinicians have frequently diagnosed non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and pulmonary infections, and have diagnosed psychological disorders that were exacerbated by the trauma of the earthquake. Community members most severely impacted by the earthquake include children, women, pregnant women and people with disabilities. Staff also provided health and hygiene promotion sessions to patients, helping to disseminate prevention behaviors and attitudes within the community. Patients requiring additional care were referred to Taroudant Health Center.

The team conducted individual and group psychosocial activities, including group discussions based on the identification of psychological vulnerabilities. Furthermore, AMSED and MS2 conducted awareness-raising sessions around health and hygiene, covering such topics as environmental, personal, intimate and menstrual hygiene; pregnancy, breastfeeding and caring for newborns; and sexually transmitted infections. Staff focused additional awareness-raising sessions on waste management and environmental protection, highlighting the added difficulties the community is facing and alerting them to risks of disease exposure.

Concurrently, workers at building sites have benefitted from the MMUs' issuance of masks to protect against dust and potentially toxic materials contained in the rubble, which can cause respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis. For the children of the targeted Douars, the AMSED team also visited two primary schools to provide creative workshops with the goal of bringing hope and encouragement to the children affected by the earthquake.

International Medical Corps has partnered with AFH to provide hot meals and emergency supplies, so far providing 300 hot meals, 450 mattresses, 700 blankets, 500 hygiene kits and 200 food parcels to the Amizmiz area, the mountains of Azgour and Tizi Imilil, the Amizmiz mountains and Taroudant sidi Abdulla O saeed.

In collaboration with CEFA and CESVI, we are continuing to provide critical non-food items to affected communities, and improving access to MHPSS and safeguarding services. As of October 31, CEFA had distributed 100 family hygiene kits, 50 winterized tents, 100 mattresses, 100 blankets and seven community kitchen kits in Taroudant province.