



International Offers of Assistance 2003

Mexico Offer of Assistance January 2003

21 Jan 2003: Almost exactly 2 years after the earthquake in El Salvador which caused extensive damage, an earthquake of the same magnitude (7.6) struck Central America. The epicenter was located approx. 600km west of Mexico City affecting Colima and Gua de la Clara most severely.

Several conversations with the Mexican Embassy in Vienna were conducted the following day following the Offer of Assistance. The most important question for the Embassy concerned the costs of the mission – which was free of charge, of course. In the course of the day it became apparent that the damage was not as severe as originally thought and that no assistance from Europe was necessary. An official letter of gratitude from the Embassy was received on 29 January for the Offer of Assistance.

IRO affiliated NRO's were consequently ordered to stand down.o

China Offer of Assistance February 2003

Just one month later, on 24 Feb 2003, western China was struck by an earthquake. The epicenter of the quake was located in the Bachu district and measured 6.8 on the Richter scale. As the reports of the dead and injured rose somewhat from hour to hour, and based on previous experience, an Offer of Assistance was made. Following discussions with Chinese Authorities in Vienna, the Offer of Assistance was declined in a very friendly letter from the Chinese Embassy in Vienna.

Turkey Offer of Assistance May 2003

On 1 May 2003, an earthquake struck the Bingol province of Turkey with a magnitude of 6.4 on the Richter scale. The city of Bingol is located approx. 700 km east of Ankara at an elevation of 1,125 meters. Initial reports cited more than 150 deaths and far more than 300 injured with several areas being completely wiped out. An obligatory Offer of Assistance was made very quickly and IRO affiliated NRO's were placed on mission alert. On 2 May, Turkish authorities informed us that the mountain rescues would be handled by Turkish teams only and that no foreign assistance was necessary at all.