B.12 Italy - 2009 - Earthquake

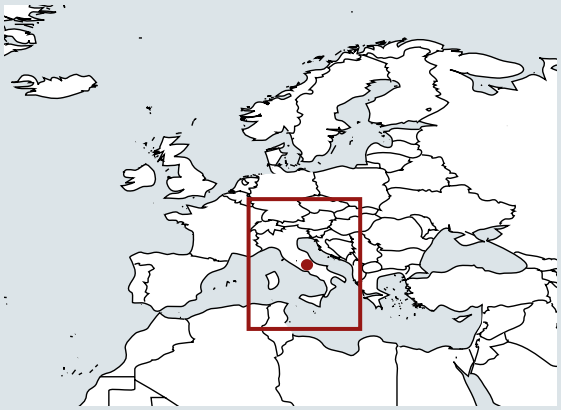
Overview

Summary

The earthquake of April 6th 2009 was the deadliest to hit Italy since 1980, and the first major earthquake in 300 years to hit the Abruzzo region. The town of L'Aquila was severely affected and is a historic town known for its university and the arts.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, people moved into tents, hotels, or slept in holiday homes, with families or in their cars.

The government established a very prescriptive processes for sheltering affected families. Within one year, new apartment blocks and modular housing units were built to house families for 3 years. Cash grants were also provided for minor repairs.



Disaster overview

First assessments were that 55% of the buildings in L'Aquila were usable, 15% were usable with simple repairs, 20% were not usable, and the rest required further study. 50,000 buildings, including public buildings, offices and factories, were affected.

For search and rescue and subsequent operations, the civil protection were able to mobilise 12,000 volunteers after the earthquake. In addition, 2,300 firemen were mobilised.

A building damage assessment was conducted by 500-600 experts in teams of 2-3 people. Each team assessed 4-10 buildings per day, a total of 1000-1500 buildings every day. 50,000 buildings were assessed within two months.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the whole centre of L'Aquila was evacuated.

Sheltering policy

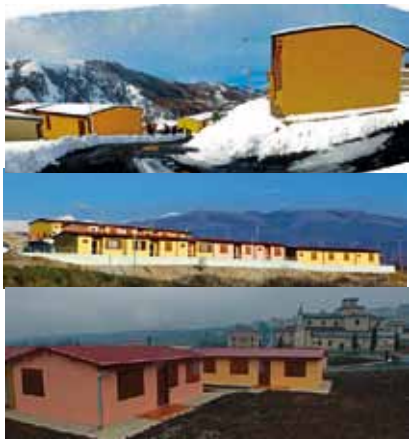
About 35,000 people moved into tents, 30,000 people moved into hotels made available on the coast, others moved into second homes or slept in their cars. It was estimated that up to 100,000 people were sleeping outside of their homes.

The aim of subsequent responses was to return as many people as possible back to their own homes as soon as possible.

To shelter families for the first three years, two types of building were developed:

- appartment blocks (185 buildings containing 4500 flats were built in the first year, housing 15,000 people)
- modular housing units (3475 were built in the first year housing 8500 people)
- cash grants for minor repairs and rental for families with agreed levels of building damage.

Buildings and housing schemes were designed to reduce seismic risks. They also included schemes to reduce energy consumption. Many included solar and photovoltaic panels, rainwater harvesting, and thermal and sound insulation



Left: tent camps,
Centre: modular housiung units
Right: apartment blocks
Photos: Dipartimento Protezione Civile
Croce Rossa Italiana