200 Fearing for their lives as Quake Rips Colombia

From Times Wire Services

POLAYAN, Colombia — A major earthquake struck Colombia on Thursday, devastating this mountain city where hundreds of tourists had gathered for Holy Week. Estimates of the casualties ranged up to 200 dead and 500 injured.

A witness said that the shaking felt "like an earthquake," as "the whole area was collapsing." The noise was deafening. From the air, Popayan looked as if it had been bombed. Dust rose 1,000 feet over the city.

The quake, measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale, according to the U.S. Geological Survey, struck at 8:15 a.m. near the epicenter of 225,000, but during Holy Week it grows to twice that number. Tours from Colombia and other nations flock to the city, which has world-famous processions and religious ceremonies. Some are televised nationwide.

San Jose Hospital reported that 500 injured people were admitted. Doctors said there were supplies of plasma, medicine and even surgical thread were exhausted by mid-morning.

Police said 35 bodies were recovered from homes and churches. Officials reported fires raging in some parts of the city.

In residential areas many people, daized by the shock, wandered through the ruins. Others took charge of crying children who had lost their parents.

Mayor Luis Guillermo Salazar said the city was "half-destroyed" and that at least 500 houses were in ruins.

President Belisario Betancur, who flew to Popayan shortly after the quake, said Popayan was put under military control and that 110 tons of food and blankets were sent planes with food and medicine to the population. The Andean Geophysics Institute said the quake lasted 18 seconds and was followed by two other, minor earthquakes in the next two hours.

The institute said the earthquake's epicenter was 60 miles west of Popayan. The damage is expected to be severe.

Recurse workers complained about delays in distribution of relief supplies and said the army had held up delivery of tents and medicines due to reports of looting.

Many people in this city of 200,000 slept on sidewalks and in parks without blankets or other protective clothing. Temperatures fell as low as 46 degrees Fahrenheit on Thursday.

Relief Aid Being Sold In Columbia

POLAYAN, Colombia (AP) — Some tents for the homeless were selling for $50 each, supposedly because the food was costing up to $22 a pound, and people were begging for medical attention in the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated this Andean city.

The quake struck this city of 200,000 people early Thursday, destroying homes and a crowded cathedral, killing at least 20 people and injuring hundreds more and leaving thousands of the population homeless.

The government relief office said 5,000 buildings had been destroyed. Red Cross relief aid that began arriving Friday from Canada, the United States, France and other countries was still piling up Sunday in warehouses under control of military authorities.

The Colombian network, notarized the relief effort as chaotic. One group was seen pouring down the doors of a police station demanding food.

Red Cross officials said there were supplies of food and water and the Colombian Red Cross said cases of dysentery were reported.

At least 12 people fainting after the afternoon sun and were treated by Red Cross volunteers.

Popayan is famous for its Holy Week festivities that attract 70,000 people to the city every year.

The Red Cross officials also said that tents were still being sold to the homeless for $50 each.

People said water supplies had been contaminated by broken sewers and the Colombian Red Cross said cases of dysentery were reported.

In the province of Cesar, west of Popayan, the government's Market and Agriculture Agency said 30,000 people were camping out in the capital, that it was giving away 50 tons of rice and 5,000 pounds of flour each day.

But in Popayan, the agency was selling the food in the center of town, far from the poor sections.
Red Cross to Run Colombia Quake Relief

**Part I / Wednesday, April 6, 1983**

**Red Cross to Run Colombia Quake Relief**

**POPAYAN, Colombia (AP) -** The state governor's committee administering relief to survivors of the Popayan earthquake bowed Tuesday under charges of inefficiency, profiteering and misuse of relief supplies and announced that it will let the Red Cross take over relief operations.

Committee member Ignacio Mosquera said after a meeting of the 12-member group that effective immediately, the Red Cross alone will be responsible for distribution of all food, medicine, tents and clothing.

"A lot of mistakes have been made," Mosquera said. "All of the responsibility for what has happened falls on our shoulders."

A variety of sources in Popayan confirmed an Associated Press report Sunday, denied by officials in Bogota, that relief tents and supplies were sold instead of distributed free. The sources had more reports of misuse of the supplies, particularly by the Colombian army.

By midday, officials of the Colombian Red Cross, said Tuesday that after last week's quake, which killed at least 250 people and left 180,000 homeless, the Red Cross tried to move in quickly and start a relief program. She said Gov. Amalia Salazar's emergency committee blocked the agency's efforts.

Tents, generators, medical supplies and clothing began pouring in from Colombian cities and abroad Friday, but the governor's committee and the army, working together, repeatedly confiscated the relief aid destined for the Red Cross, she said.

"On Saturday, the army confiscated 400 tents donated by the United States, and on Sunday it said it had only 206 and would not give them up, Iglesias said.

"Reporters were not allowed into the army's temporary base near the airport, but an AP reporter flying over the area and the adjoining police barracks saw 30 of the blue-and-white U.S. tents set up there."

**Relief Aid Diverted**

Iglesias said the army on Monday seized two trucks arriving in Popayan with relief aid from the Red Cross at Barranquilla, and the Red Cross has not seen the material yet.

Red Cross relief coordinator Fernando Gómez said 14 portable generators were flown Sunday from the Spanish Red Cross, but the governing committee confiscated six of them and turned them over to the army.

Gov. Salazar told the Associated Press that her committee ordered all relief aid stuck under its control because it believed it could distribute it best. But Mosquera said that because the quake struck at the beginning of the Easter holiday, many committee members were away, and it took several days to get the group organized.

An AP reporter found the government's marketing and agriculture agency, IDEMA, selling food to refugees Saturday at its downtown warehouse, which survived the earthquake. President Belisario Betancur ordered the president's committee to sell the reported and said IDEMA also had been donating food to survivors.

However, the head of the government's Family Welfare Institute office in Popayan, Fernando Trujillo, said Tuesday that IDEMA was distributing food to the food and would not begin to give it away until today.

The selling of tents apparently occurred when the governor's committee handed a list of rich food instead of setting up their relief compounds as the Red Cross recommended.

Residents of one neighborhood said over a local radio station that representatives of the Alfonso Lopes suburb noticed a Red Cross selection committee tried to sell the tents that were delivered to them.

The governor's committee said it is investigating the accusation.

"We know there are incidents of politics in the communal areas, where people who really don't need aid are being favored," Mosquera said.

He said tents in the hands of people who don't need them will be confiscated and turned over to the Red Cross.

**Costa Rica hit by quake; no deaths reported**

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (AP) -** A strong earthquake shook this Central American capital Saturday evening, causing confusion, panic and minor damage in the capital, police said.

There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries.

The main window of one downtown church was knocked out by the shock and broken glass littered the streets in several areas.

Reports from other parts of the country were scarce and the extent of damage, if any, could not be determined.

There were no reports from Panama, Costa Rica's southern neighbor, where some reports here said the quake also could be felt.

The tremor struck at 8:53 p.m. local time (5:53 p.m. MST) and knocked out electric power here and in other parts of the country for about five minutes, officials said.

Red Cross officials said about 300 people in the capital were treated for shock but apart from that there was no need for medical assistance.

Police said property damage in San Jose and other areas of the country from which they had reports was minimal.

The National Earthquake Information Center in Golden said the quaked measured 7.1 on the Richter scale and the epicenter was about 225 miles west of Panama City, Panama, which would put it on the border area between Costa Rica and Panama.

Lindo Morales of the University of Costa Rica seismograph station said local geologists placed the epicenter about 25 miles south of San Jose and about 79 miles west of the Pacific Ocean. He said the temblor lasted 42 seconds.

**Quakes Hit Costa Rica**

**SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (UPI) -** Tremors rippled across Costa Rica on Sunday, one day after a major earthquake had killed one man and caused an estimated amount of damage, officials said.

At least three major shocks and a number of lesser tremors were reported by Costa Rica University seismologists on Sunday in the area where a number of the night-time Saturday that toppled houses, downed utility lines and cracked pavement and windows.

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**Colombians Not Getting U.S. Aid**

**Military Fears Rebels Will Seize Quake Relief**

**BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) -** The Colombian Red Cross has received none of the 25 tons of U.S. medical aid left with the army for distribution to quake victims, a spokesman for the relief agency said Monday.

Military authorities fear that the relief aid will fall into the hands of leftist guerrillas, said Lt. Carlos Lealmac of the Red Cross, who is helping with civil defense officials in the stricken city of Popayan, 238 miles southeast of Bogota.

U.S. Air Force planes delivered 6,000 tents and 25 tons of medicine and food to an airport in Colombia last Friday, 24 hours after an earthquake devastated the southern city of Popayan, killing at least 250 people, injuring hundreds and leaving three-quarters of the population homeless.

The Red Cross has seen none of the medical aid, and the army has said it plans to deliver it to the Red Cross, according to a spokesman for Carlos Martinez, the director of emergency relief for the government.

The army has delivered to the Red Cross only two dozen of the 5,000 tents, the executive of the relief agency, who asked not to be identified for fear of possible retribution by military authorities.

Col. Jose Garzon, director of public relations for the Defense Ministry, was in his office and did not return a reporter's telephone call.

A spokesman for the Red Cross, who refused to identify himself beyond saying he was a captain, said Monday that the government is withholding relief supplies are lies. He did not elaborate.

A spokesman for the Roman Catholic archbishop of Popayan, Silverto Beturgo, told reporters Sunday that tents meant for the poor were being sold for as much as $400. Dozens of refugees told a reporter earlier that individuals were competing for the tents for sale for up to $100.

Those tents are among several dozen that the army said it had given to the state government relief committee, the Red Cross source said.

Residents and reporters in Po- payan said Sunday that the government's Market and Agriculture Agency was selling food to quake survivors, despite newspaper reports in the capital that the agency was giving away 30 tons of food.

Officials in the center of Popayan were charging $10 for five pounds of food, including rice, coffee, sugar, noodles, dried soup and salt, witnesses said. Attempts to reach any- one in the agency's Bogota offices with knowledge of the situation were unsuccessful.

Reports from the devastated city said thousands of quake survivors spent their fourth night sleeping in the open in temperatures in the mid-40s with no running water, electricity or latrines.

Popayan's Mayor Guillermo Sala- zar imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew Monday as part of government attempts to prevent looting and robbing.

The Red Cross broadcast appeals for medicine to fight gastrointestinal typhus and dysentery, three disorders that particularly strike children among the homeless victims.

Here in the capital, President Belisario Betancur met with aides Sunday to discuss means to halt profiteering and began the orderly distribution of aid.

In addition to aid from the United States, tons of food, clothes, tents, medicine and portable generators have been airlifted to Colombia from countries such as Canada, West Germany, Spain, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama.