

China launches emergency response to Xinjiang quake



Rescuers work at Kuzigun Village in Taxkorgan County, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, May 11, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

China has activated emergency response procedures following a 5.5-magnitude earthquake in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region early Thursday morning.

The China Earthquake Administration activated level-III emergency response procedures earlier Thursday.

All departments concerned are on high alert, and will continue to monitor for aftershocks and evaluate damage.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and the China National Commission for Disaster Reduction have also initiated grade-IV emergency response measures and sent teams to assist relief work.

A grade-IV response, the lowest in China's emergency response system, means a 24-hour alert, daily damage reports, and the allocation of money and relief materials within 48 hours.

Also on Thursday, China's Red Cross Society activated level-III emergency response to the earthquake. Apart from sending a work team to assist relief, it has allocated emergency funds of 100,000 yuan (US\$15,000) and sent supplies from its local branch to the affected region.

Eight fatalities have been confirmed and 23 people have been injured in the

quake that jolted Taxkorgan County, Xinjiang, at 5:58 a.m. Thursday. Over 1,500 houses collapsed or were badly damaged.

Taxkorgan, some 1,250 kilometers from Urumqi, capital of the region, borders Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.