

## Iran – Bam earthquake of December 2003

On December 26, 2003, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.3 on the Richter scale completely razed the Iranian city of Bam.

The final numbers were disturbing: of more than 240,000 inhabitants, 120,000 were displaced, 40,000 killed and 80% of the buildings were destroyed.

The earthquake having occurred in the middle of the night, most of the population was caught off guard and asleep. First thing in the morning on December 26, Emergency Architects decided to answer Iran's call for international assistance by organising a mission to assess the situation and plan for the possibility of further operations to help secure the displaced Iranians.

An international team of three architects (French, Afghan and Romanian) was assembled and flown to Iran. Unfortunately, the reports were alarming; no further operations were possible, the city having been partially obliterated by the tremors.

Nevertheless, an appeal to the French Ministry of Culture resulted in approval of one proposal to help shelter the displaced and another to focus specifically on the historic Bam Citadel, once the largest adobe structure in the world...