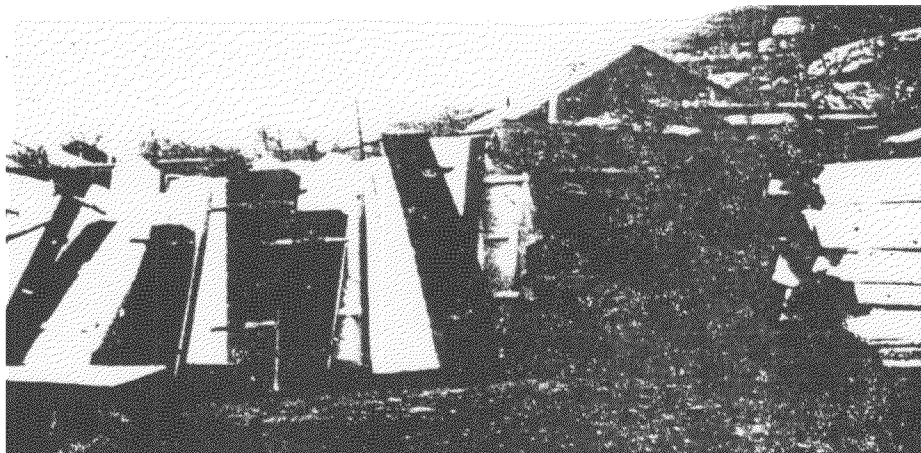


# International Solidarity for Armenian Quake Victims

by N. Solomatine  
UNDRO Co-ordination Officer

The catastrophic earthquake of 7 December 1988 in north-western Armenia virtually wiped out an entire town and caused extensive destruction to two other towns and 48 villages over a 70-kilometer-wide area.

The population in this already quite densely-inhabited region had recently increased to 700,000 by an estimated 90,000 people (15,000 in Spitak alone), who had sought resettlement following the ethnic dispute in neighbouring Azerbaijan. But although 25,000 people died in the earthquake and several thousand are still listed as missing, the number of those rescued alive (15,000 including 12,000 injured) is impressive.



UNDRO/S. Kilde

*Piles of empty coffins at the stadium in Spitak. The white ones were for the women and children.*

From the first moment the Government of the USSR took steps to meet the emergency needs of the population Mr. N. Ryzhkov, the Prime Minister of the USSR

headed a special commission created to help ease the human suffering and to lead the reconstruction effort in the Republic. He chaired daily review sessions on the course of the emergency operations in which practically all the USSR ministers took part, while the Prime Minister of the Armenian Republic co-ordinated emergency relief at the local level.



UNDRO/N. Solomatine

*USSR Prime Minister N. Ryzhkov (third from left) chaired daily meetings at Erevan discussing emergency operations.*

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## Activities of the UNDRO Mission

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As a result of the extent of the disaster, the UNDRO proposed