Ayatollah Khamenei's meeting with officials to address the problems of quake-hit areas - 20 /Nov/ 2017

Having visited the earthquake-hit regions, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei had a meeting with provincial and local officials and a group of military and police commanders to address the woes of the quake survivors where he described as very heavy the responsibility of officials vis-à-vis those affected by the quake in Kermanshah Province. Ayatollah Khamenei also stressed, “The top current priority is the issue of providing housing for the quake-stricken and reconstruction of damaged and destroyed areas that must be carried out with the support of various military and civilian apparatuses and with centralized management at the required pace.”

He stressed that progress must be tangible to the devastated people, saying, “The expanse of devastated areas is great in this earthquake and although Sarpol-e-Zahab and a few other cities have suffered heavy damage, some villages have totally been destroyed, which is an important incident.”

Pointing to the suffering, woes and hardships of the quake-stricken people, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution added, “Since we ourselves have not been afflicted by the disaster of earthquakes, we may not comprehend the suffering of those hit by the quake. People who, until days ago, were living in peace beside their family in a house have at once lost all their livelihoods and now all of their lives boil down to a tent.”

Stressing that “We must understand the importance of this disaster in order to get to know the significance of our responsibilities,” Ayatollah Khamenei reiterated, “In incidents like earthquakes, one of the necessary issues in those early hours is rescue [operations] and in this region, due to the timely presence of the Army, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps and the police forces, rescue [operations] were carried out in an acceptable manner.”

He reiterated, “Considering my visit to some of the quake-hit regions and given the broad expanse of devastated regions, if rescue [operations] had not taken place promptly in those early hours, the fatalities would be several times higher than the current level.”

Pointing to his numerous meetings with state officials at the time of the Bam earthquake, the Leader of the Islamic Revolution said, “Following those meetings, a crisis management committee was formed so that in the early moments of natural disasters this committee would take action.”

Ayatollah Khamenei described the issue of “relief operations” as one of the important issues in natural disasters and plights after the issue of “rescue operations,” adding, “Speed is also required in relief [operations]; however, relief [operations] are not urgent and ceasing, because they have their own particular applications at any point in time.”

He reiterated, “In disasters such as earthquakes, the initial stages of relief operations must focus on the provision of urgent needs such as food, water, livelihood facilities and clothing; however, after this stage is the stage of collecting the rubble in cities and villages and then the provision of housing, which is a major and difficult job and must take place.”

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution described as “crucial” speed in the construction of houses for the devastated people and also the provision of heating devices, reiterating, “To carry out this heavy responsibility, centralized management is required.”

Ayatollah Khamenei appreciated the efforts of officials, particularly the apparatuses and institutions that buckled

down and took serious action from the outset of the disaster, saying, “As well as the centralization of the management, Jihadi operations and continuously following up on the missions and speed must also be included on the agenda of officials.”