



American Red Cross

Red Cross of Central South Carolina
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Situation Bulletin Haiti: Earthquake January 14, 2010 2:00 p.m. EST

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FOR MEDIA ONLY

INCIDENT BACKGROUND :

On January 12, at 5:22pm local time, a series of earthquakes ranging from magnitude 6.5 to 7.3 struck Haiti near the highly populated area of Port-au-Prince. Aftershocks continued to occur over the next 24 hours.

CURRENT SITUATION:

- ✓ Damage - The capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, has been severely affected including critical city infrastructure such as electricity, water and phone services. Initial reports indicate a large number of casualties and widespread damage. According to preliminary reports, many Red Cross, UN and government buildings have collapsed or have been damaged or destroyed. Populations may also be affected in Carrefour and Jacmel.
- ✓ Access - The Port-au-Prince International Airport is closed to commercial traffic, but remains open for official use. Thousands of earthquake survivors are clogging roadways, hindering the ability of rescue workers to reach those trapped beneath rubble.
- ✓ Transportation disruptions are expected to deteriorate.
- ✓ Power - There is a near-total blackout in Port-au-Prince; the power grid has been
- ✓ significantly damaged, and sporadic blackouts have begun to spread across the island. Those with generators could run out of fuel before nightfall, further limiting electricity availability.
- ✓ Communications – Due to limited electricity, communications are difficult with phone lines and cellular infrastructure down.
- ✓ Shelter-People are sleeping in the streets out of fear of being crushed inside their already crumbling homes; our workers in Haiti tell us that Red Cross presence has been very reassuring.
- ✓ Security-Police, fire response and medical teams are overwhelmed and the overall security situation tense.
- ✓ Life-saving operations, such as search and rescue and first aid, continued throughout the night; thousands remain trapped and the death toll is rising.
- ✓ Priority needs now are food, water, temporary shelter, medical services and emotional support.



THE AMERICAN RED CROSS RESPONSE:

A Relief Emergency Response Unit (ERU) made up of five American Red Cross volunteers has been deployed to manage the distribution of relief items to earthquake survivors. Additional disaster specialists are en route to Haiti to support disaster assessments as part of a FACT team from the International Federation. The American Red Cross has made available all relief supplies stored at its warehouse in Panama. These include blankets, kitchen sets, and water containers to meet the immediate needs of up to 5,000 families. The American Red Cross has allocated funds from the International Response Fund to meet emergency needs generated by the earthquakes. Assessments are ongoing, and the American Red Cross is mobilizing additional support, including relief supplies, trained personnel, repatriation support as needed.

Additionally:

- ✓ Eleven ICRC staff members are expected to arrive in Port-au-Prince this morning. Those on board include engineers, a surgeon and family linking specialists.

- ✓ A second ICRC plane carrying 40 tons of supplies – mainly medical items – is expected to leave Geneva today. Included are specialized kits to help treat the wounded, basic medicines and chlorine for water treatment.
- ✓ Other Red Cross partners have deployed a mobile hospital as well as medical teams to support it as well as more than 40 others who can coordinate the relief activities, including sheltering, water, sanitation and telecommunications.
- ✓ The American Red Cross of Central South Carolina is taking calls from media on this situation and providing timely information as it is verified and released through our national offices in Washington, DC.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is coordinating family tracing activities and will be focusing on helping people affected by the disaster in Haiti communicate with family members. To locate family members in Haiti please see the information posted at www.icrc.org/familylinks

THE SUPPORT OF DONORS IN CENTRAL SOUTH CAROLINA

You can help the victims of countless crises, like the recent earthquake in Haiti, around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the American Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster, please do so at the time of your donation by:

- ✓ Mailing your donation to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 91, Columbia, SC 29202;
- ✓ Calling 803-744-6551, 803-744-6552, or 803-744-6554 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. through January 22, 2010. Afterwards at the links posted on our website at www.centalscredcross.org
- ✓ Online at www.centalscredcross.org
- ✓ Text "HAITI" to 90999. Donors will be prompted to confirm the text and a \$10 will appear on their monthly phone bill
- ✓ To receive information on Volunteer training, please call 803-744-6551, 803-744-6552, or 803-744-6554.

Currently, the American Red Cross is not accepting In-Kind donations of food and supplies due to the logistics of delivering those items to Haiti. Please see the attached "In-Kind Donations" information bulletin for a full explanation of this policy.

If you or your organization would like to support the American Red Cross we can provide you with guidance on our Third Party Fundraising Agreement and Policies. Please contact us at 803-744-6554 for more information on workplace giving. If you or your organization would like more information on Volunteer Training, please call 803-744-6551, 803-744-6552, or 803-744-6554.

ATTN: Possible Fraud Alert. The FBI has issued a Citizen Alert today. There have been reports of telemarketing calls and/or emails to internet users who receive appeals to donate money in the aftermath of Tuesday's earthquake in Haiti urging people to apply a critical eye and do their due diligence before responding to those requests. Past tragedies and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions purportedly for a charitable organization and/or a good cause. Please be advised that the American Red Cross does not participate in telemarketing fundraising, does not share any email list or other personal contact information with outside source. If you have concerns about this, please contact the American Red Cross at 1-800-REDCROSS or www.redcross.org

Click the Holiday Mail Fact Sheet link above for details. The American Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The American Red Cross of Central South Carolina responds to approximately one disaster every 17 hours. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work. For more information please contact Susan Benesh at beneshs@usa.redcross.org

Haiti Earthquake Response: In-Kind Donations

In response to international disasters, the American Red Cross often experiences an outpouring of generosity from the American people. As long as disasters continue to happen, we know that people will want to find ways to help. In addition to tremendous financial support, we typically receive myriad offers of product from individuals and community groups.

If you are an individual or community group who would like to make a product donation (such as clothing, hygiene products, medicine or food), please understand, though your generosity is sincerely appreciated, the American Red Cross cannot accept this type of donation.

Though unsolicited offers of goods and services from individuals and community groups are well intentioned, they have hidden costs and pose a number of complications for relief efforts.

For these reasons, the American Red Cross is unable to accept any large collections of items, such as clothing, hygiene items, furniture, toys, blankets, canned goods, or medicine. We are also unable to accept small individual donations of these items.

Why does the Red Cross discourage donations of collected goods and individual items for disaster relief?

- ✓ The cost of processing and transporting these types of donations often outweighs the cost of the donated items themselves. Donations of collected goods require time, money and personnel to accept, clean, sort and distribute them.
- ✓ The influx of unsolicited donations distracts relief workers on site from critical emergency response activities – feeding and sheltering the affected population.
- ✓ In addition, because we cannot anticipate what these spontaneous donations of collected items will include, we cannot ensure that the donated products will be appropriate for the relief effort or that there will be enough of a particular item to distribute them equitably.
- ✓ Shipping donated goods is costly and particularly difficult in the aftermath of a disaster. Routes into disaster sites are often damaged or impassable and can be clogged easily with shipments of non-priority items.
- ✓ The Red Cross makes every attempt to procure items locally, which minimizes transportation and storage expenses. By procuring goods locally, the American Red Cross can also ensure the items distributed to disaster victims are appropriate for the culture and diet.

Haiti Earthquake Response: In-Kind Donations

Where can donations of collected goods and individual items be most effective?

Individual donations of goods and collections of items are put to the best use possible and have the greatest impact economically, when they are donated to charitable organizations in your local community. Donating these items locally eliminates transportation costs and ensures disaster workers are not overwhelmed with sorting unsolicited donations, allowing them to focus on the critical response activities.

Local charitable organizations are not operating in the crisis environment that characterizes disaster relief, so they will have the time and resources to sort, clean and repair goods and identify how and where they can be most beneficial.

Does the American Red Cross ever accept in-kind donations for international disaster response?

If you represent a corporation that would like to offer a bulk donation of items for a Red Cross international response that you sell or manufacture, you may contact your local Red Cross chapter, which will direct your call appropriately. Please keep in mind that due to the time sensitivity, transportation costs, and complex nature of our product needs, we have greatest success procuring product as close to the disaster site as possible, which avoids delays in getting basic necessities to disaster victims.

What is the best way I can support the relief efforts?

We are especially appreciative of the financial contributions made by individuals, corporations, and foundations. Financial contributions allow us to support the greatest needs in the most efficient manner. Financial contributions can be used to purchase items locally, eliminating the added costs involved in transporting goods. Cash contributions also allow our relief workers to purchase culturally appropriate items in the country and stimulate the devastated economy.

How can I make a financial donation?

You can help the victims of countless crises around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need. The American Red Cross honors donor intent.

Donations can be sent to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 91, Columbia, SC, 29202, or made by phone at 1-803-744-6551, 1-803-744-6552, or 1-803-744-6554; or online at www.centalscredcross.org.