

Haiti • Earthquake Situation Report #1 January 22, 2010



ELCA Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

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I. Highlights

- 7.0 magnitude earthquake on January 12th
- 6.1 magnitude aftershock on January 20th
- Estimated 75,000 dead and 200,000 injured
- Possible 1 million internally displaced people
- ELCA mobilizes \$600,000 immediately for LWF, LWR and CWS
- Lutheran Services Florida Inc. receives \$25,000 for emergency hardship grants
- More than \$1.6 million confirmed giving received and processed
- Haiti Relief blog coming

II. International Situation

On January 12th, a powerful earthquake of 7.0 magnitude hit Haiti at 16:53 local time (GMT 21.53hrs). The earthquake's epicenter was located south-west of Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti. Aftershocks measured 5.9 and 5.5, respectively, in the first hours after the quake.

An aftershock of 6.1 magnitude hit Haiti at 06:03 local time on January 20th. The aftershock was centered in Gressier, a town west of the capital city. Search and rescue and assessment teams were dispatched to evaluate damage and to resurvey buildings for potential trapped survivors from the earthquake. No new deaths were reported but there were some new injuries.



The Government estimates that 75,000 people have been killed, 200,000 injured and 1 million have been displaced. Approximately half of all structures in Port-au-Prince are believed to have collapsed. The International Organization for Migration estimates that some 370,000 people are living in makeshift houses throughout the city with limited access to water and appropriate sanitation.

People have begun to migrate from Port-au-Prince toward unaffected areas in the south and south-west of the country. The Government has made available free transport service for people wanting to leave Port-au-Prince. While the evacuation will expedite the clearing of harmful waste, both unsanitary and structural, the migration sends an urgent call to humanitarian organizations for housing relief in the areas outlining the capital city. The provision of shelter supplies and more organized, structured transit centers are now a priority. The Prime Minister of Haiti confirmed the Government's intention to build temporary settlements in order to provide shelter to all who are displaced before the upcoming rainy season which begins in April.

Logistically, Port-au-Prince has been difficult to access due to depleting fuel resources and strained transportation systems. The Port-au-Prince airport was bottlenecked earlier this week when aid planes were stranded without adequate fuel resources to depart. The airport continues to report heavy congestion with as many as 150 planes landing daily to this small facility. Haitian sea ports are operating more readily to allow material aid to be received by water; however, most human resources from humanitarian organizations are arriving by land in transit through the Dominican Republic.

On January 20th, Global Mission formally committed to engage the Lutheran Church in Haiti in an official relationship with the ELCA. The Lutheran Church in Haiti is an emerging church that has been accompanied by the Florida-Bahamas Synod. The denomination has eight congregations led by President Lauvanus Joseph Livenson. President Livenson was in Florida at the time of the earthquake. Global Mission is facilitating the logistics of his return to Haiti as soon as feasible. Very little additional information has been received from Haiti regarding the safety of pastors and parishioners. Regular communication is difficult as many do not have ready access to telecommunications. One of our churches is in the heart of the earthquake's epicenter and confirmation has not been received on the location of its pastor and parishioners.

At least three organized groups of ELCA-related organizations or Synods were in Haiti at the time of the quake. One person, Benjamin Judd Larson, a student at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, has died. Memorial services are being held today in Iowa.

III. Domestic Situation

The Haiti earthquake has affected the United States in many ways. About 45,000 persons who were in Haiti at the time of the quake hold dual US/Haitian citizenship. Approximately 10,000 other US citizens were in Haiti at the time of the quake, many involved as staff and volunteers with development and non-profit organizations. The United States Department of State is coordinating repatriation of US citizens wishing to return to the United States. Additionally, many Haitian Americans living in the United States struggle to gain news and information about loved ones in Haiti.

IV. Coordinated Response

The ELCA has supported a multi-national, multi-lateral response to the earthquake that includes the coordination of relief and development agencies through Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance, to which the ELCA has been a member since 1995. Specifically, the ELCA has supported the base of operations in Port-au-Prince for this work in partnership with The Lutheran World Federation, who has been a presence in Haiti for over two decades. Initial support in the amount of \$300,000 to the LWF is allowing immediate response in the areas of water and sanitation, tents, blankets and hygiene kits. In response to the migration of people from Port-au-Prince, the LWF is establishing a camp for internally displaced people that will provide safety, security and needed shelter to an initial 10,000 individuals. Emergency response experts have been deployed from Geneva and have arrived in Port-au-Prince today. A planned response for on-going rehabilitation activities is forthcoming.

Support has also been committed to the coordination base of operations in the Dominican Republic through Church World Service in the amount of \$150,000. With ELCA support, relief supplies of health kits and blankets, that had been pre-positioned for disasters in a Santo Domingo warehouse by a local partner, arrived in Port-au-Prince from Santo Domingo last week.

along with water and sanitation equipment that been shipped. CWS had a scheduled air shipment into Port-au-Prince, Thursday, January 21, containing medicine boxes with enough essential medicines and medical supplies to treat the routine ailments for about 1,000 adults and children. With ocean shipping schedules backed up, CWS has diverted part of a 40-foot container shipment of emergency kits to go by air, with the remainder to be expedited by fastest means available.

The ELCA's principle partner for collection of material aid is Lutheran World Relief. An initial contribution of \$150,000 was sent to LWR to help with the costly, but necessary, transportation of lifesaving material resources to Haiti from US warehouses. Initial material items include health kits, nursing kits and blankets. Future material aid will include school kits for children.

The Director for International Development and Disaster Response, Louis Dorvilier, arrived today in Port-au-Prince. As a Haitian national and former staff member of the LWF-Haiti program, his expertise has been seconded to LWF in Haiti for assessment and creating a response strategy. A videographer is scheduled for deployment to provide resources to the ACT Alliance on behalf of the ELCA.

International staff have been in regular consultation with historic companions of the ELCA, namely CWS, LWF and LWR. Participation in a coordinated effort by the ACT Alliance has been strong as this body represents a global alliance of churches and church-based organizations participating in disaster response and development. Particular to the Haiti earthquake, other companions such as the United Methodist Committee on Relief, Church of Sweden, DanChurch Aid, Christian Aid, Hungarian Interchurch Aid, and the Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation are participating in this coordinated response.

Domestically, through local affiliate agencies, the ELCA is monitoring the national impact of the earthquake, particularly in Haitian-American communities. Lutheran Services Florida is taking a lead role in assisting the State of Florida's Department of Children and Families with the repatriation of Haitian-Americans who were in Haiti at the time of the earthquake. LSF is overseeing the management of a reception center at Sanford Airport, near Orlando, providing interpretation services and emotional support as well as connecting clients with available services. As of yesterday, 43 repatriation flights had been processed at Sanford and 4,200 earthquake survivors had arrived. An initial \$25,000 has been granted to the agency for distribution of emergency hardship assistance to these clients.

Domestic staff have been regularly consulting with staff of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service on issues of repatriation. Staff have also performed an asset mapping of all disaster affiliates to assess the capacity of staff who are of Haitian descent, those with French-Creole language skills, and those with experience in refugee resettlement. Many of these agencies are standing by to serve, if needed. Lutheran Services in America will convene a conference call next week to further connect LSA member organizations in service with issues related to the Haiti earthquake relief.

Additionally, LSA member organization Lutheran Medical Center, located in Brooklyn, New York, is actively serving the Haitian-American community in the New York City area through their Caribbean Lutheran Family Health Center. This community has also begun to receive Haitian-Americans seeking repatriation. Lutheran Medical Center will continue to serve the health needs of Haitian-Americans in their community.

Finally, we have learned that Chaplain David Oravec, who is serving aboard the US Navy hospital ship, the USNS Comfort, deployed to Haiti, is an ELCA pastor, rostered in the Delaware-Maryland Synod.

VI. Fundraising

As of January 22nd, approximately 11,000 direct gifts have been processed totaling \$1.4 million with many more gifts still being counted. Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has informed us that they are transferring an initial \$165,000 given by Thrivent members for ELCA Disaster Response. This does not include the amount that Thrivent has committed to match on a one-to-two basis. (The match is a collective \$1 million for ELCA, LWR, LCMS and WELS.) Including these gifts given through Thrivent for the ELCA, our total received and processed to date is \$1.6 million.

Contributions can be made to ELCA Haiti Relief by:

- Check or money orders sent to:
ELCA Disaster Response
39330 Treasury Center
Chicago, IL 60694-9300
write "Haiti Earthquake Relief"
on your check's memo line.
- Credit card by phone to: 800-638-3522
- or online at www.elca.org/haitiearthquake

V. Communication

To date, ELCA communications related to the Haiti earthquake include:

- ELCA Disaster Response e-Alert to congregations, leaders, and donors (Jan 13)
- E-mail message from Bishop Hanson to rostered leaders (Jan 14)
- E-mail message from Bishop Hanson to congregational leaders (Jan 15)
- Regular ongoing communication through elca.org and [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/elca) including the sharing of worship resources and bulletin insert.

Future communications:

- Update from Bishop Hanson to rostered leaders (Jan 22)
- Postcard update to all congregations (mails Jan 25)
- E-mail message to registered volunteers (Jan 29)
- Regular ongoing communication through elca.org and [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/elca) including the sharing of worship resources and updated bulletin inserts.

In addition, a blog about how the ELCA and our companions are responding to the Haiti 2010 Earthquake is forthcoming. The blog, hosted on elca.org, will feature contributions from a wide range of contributors bringing light to the situation in Haiti, stateside and here at the ELCA. A notice will be sent out once this resource is active.

Recognizing many close connections between ELCA congregations and individuals with Haiti, ELCA Global Mission has been in contact with a number of these contributors to provide and receive emerging news from and to Haiti. Other congregations and individuals with connections in Haiti are encouraged to email Mary Campbell in Global Mission with news they are receiving from their companions.

Websites:

- For more information on ELCA Disaster Response: www.elca.org/disaster
- For more information on ACT Alliance: www.act-intl.org
- For more information on international aid: www.reliefweb.int

VII. Contact

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