

# Haiti – Earthquake

AUGUST 19, 2021

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- The August 14 earthquake results in at least 2,189 deaths, injures at least 12,260 people, and damages or destroys an estimated 130,000 houses as of August 18, according to the GoH.
- Heavy rains and flooding caused by Tropical Storm Grace exacerbate shelter and WASH needs among earthquake-affected households.
- USAID/BHA partners IOM and WFP dispatch additional emergency relief commodities from Port-au-Prince to communities in southwestern Haiti on August 18.
- USAID/BHA releases an additional 100 MT of contingency food commodities to WFP to scale up emergency food assistance operations in southwestern Haiti.



## TIMELINE

### August 14, 2021

At 8:29 a.m. local time, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake strikes southwestern Haiti at a depth of 6.2 miles

### August 14, 2021

U.S. Ambassador Michele J. Sison declares a disaster; USAID/BHA activates a DART and Response Management Team

### August 15, 2021

USCG deploys 2 helicopters to assist with medical evacuations and transport DART staff

### August 15, 2021

USAID/BHA deploys additional DART staff to Haiti, including 65 USAR personnel

### August 15, 2021

DoD deploys 8 helicopters to support USAID/BHA response efforts

### August 16, 2021

DART USAR experts conduct assessment and response activities in Sud

### August 16, 2021

Tropical Storm Grace makes landfall over southwestern Haiti as a tropical depression, generating heavy rains and strong winds

### August 17, 2021

DART USAR experts conduct assessments in Grand'Anse and Sud

### August 18, 2021

USAID/BHA releases an additional 100 MT of contingency food commodities to WFP

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Identified Humanitarian Needs Rise as Assessment and Response Activities Continue

Relief actors continue to identify humanitarian needs resulting from the August 14 earthquake, as assessment and response efforts reach additional communities in southwestern Haiti. As of August 18, the earthquake had resulted in at least 2,189 deaths and injured more than 12,260 people in the country, while hundreds of individuals remained missing, according to the Government of Haiti (GoH). The majority of confirmed earthquake-related casualties occurred in Sud Department, where authorities have reported 1,832 deaths and nearly 9,160 additional people injured. The GoH further reports that the earthquake resulted in 218 and 137 deaths in Grand'Anse and Nippes departments, respectively, and 2 deaths in Nord-Ouest Department.

More than 136,800 households had reportedly registered for GoH assistance in Haiti's southwestern peninsula—comprising Grand'Anse, Nippes, and Sud—as of August 18, according to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). Furthermore, the UN estimates that at least 1,470 people requiring assistance are individuals with disabilities, underscoring the need for specialized protection services and other humanitarian support inclusive of those with acute vulnerabilities.

Meanwhile, the earthquake destroyed approximately 53,000 houses and damaged an additional 77,000 houses in southwestern Haiti as of August 18, the GoH reports. Assessments in Sud's Les Cayes commune on August 18 indicated that an estimated 25 percent of buildings in Les Cayes town center had sustained earthquake-related damage, representing a similar outcome to the assessment conducted by USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) urban search-and-rescue (USAR) staff in the town on August 17. However, relief actors report that only limited information is available regarding humanitarian needs in other areas of southwestern Haiti that likely sustained damage, including Grand'Anse's Pestel commune and Grande Cayemite Island, Nippes' Baraderes commune, and Sud's Camp-Perrin commune. DART members—including USAR experts—continue to conduct assessment and response activities in affected areas to determine needs and provide urgent assistance.

### Relief Actors, Including USAID/BHA Partners, Deliver Life-Saving Assistance Despite Continued Insecurity

Although insecurity and earthquake-related damage continue to adversely affect relief operations, humanitarian organizations—including USAID Bureau for Humanitarian assistance (USAID/BHA) partners—continue to find ways to deliver life-saving assistance to communities in need. Following recent efforts led by USAID/BHA partner the UN World Food Program (WFP) to secure passage to southwestern Haiti via road, the UN agency dispatched a convoy—including three USAID/BHA-funded trucks

transporting blankets, food kits, hygiene items, and safe drinking water—from Haiti’s capital city of Port-au-Prince to Les Cayes on behalf of the GoH Civil Protection General Directorate (DGPC) on August 18. The convoy also included USAID/BHA-supported WFP food assistance for hospital patients in affected areas. In addition, USAID/BHA partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM) dispatched four trucks from Port-au-Prince to Les Cayes carrying USAID/BHA-funded relief items—including 3,000 hygiene kits, 2,500 blankets, 500 plastic sheets, and 400 shelter repair kits—for onward distribution to affected households on August 18. USAID/BHA continues to coordinate with IOM, WFP, and other relief actors to support the transport of critical emergency relief supplies to areas in need.

### **Tropical Storm Grace Exacerbates Shelter, WASH Needs, Particularly Among Displaced Households**

The damage or destruction of an estimated 130,000 houses in Haiti’s southwestern peninsula and the effects of Tropical Storm Grace—which made landfall over Haiti as a tropical depression on August 16—have generated significant displacement and humanitarian needs, according to the UN. As many official displacement shelters experienced earthquake-related damage, some internally displaced persons (IDPs) resorted to constructing makeshift shelters and taking refuge in assembly points such as public squares, rendering them acutely vulnerable to severe weather events. Subsequently, Tropical Storm Grace resulted in heavy rains, strong winds, and flooding as it made landfall as a tropical depression, destroying some makeshift shelters and generating additional risk of collapse for damaged structures, the UN reports. The rain and resultant flooding also exacerbated the transmission risk of infectious diseases, particularly for IDPs, underscoring the need for urgent water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support. In response, USAID/BHA partner IOM continues to provide shelter and WASH assistance—including through the provision of hygiene kits and shelter items, such as blankets, plastic sheeting, and shelter repair kits—to affected households.

### **USAID/BHA Releases an Additional 100 MT of Contingency Food to Support Expanded WFP Emergency Food Assistance Operations**

Prior to August 14, an estimated 578,000 people in areas affected by the earthquake were likely experiencing Crisis—IPC 3—or worse levels of acute food insecurity, according to WFP.<sup>1</sup> Among this group, WFP had been targeting 138,000 people for emergency food assistance, bolstering food security conditions for households facing Haiti’s concurrent coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, its second-order economic effects, and poor security conditions.

To respond to continued food needs following the earthquake, USAID/BHA released an additional 100 metric tons (MT) of food commodities to WFP from the USAID/BHA-funded contingency stock in Haiti on August 18; these commodities are in addition to the 10 MT of contingency food supplies USAID/BHA released to WFP on August 15. WFP is using the additional food to provide emergency assistance to individuals receiving treatment at hospitals and other earthquake-affected households in Grand’Anse, Nippes, and Sud. Meanwhile, WFP plans to further scale up food assistance operations to reach an additional 62,000 people in affected areas in the coming months, bringing the UN agency’s target caseload in southwestern Haiti to approximately 200,000 people. Together, WFP and its partners are targeting 100 percent of people experiencing Emergency—IPC 4—levels of acute food insecurity and 15 percent of people experiencing Crisis levels of food insecurity. Moreover, WFP is supporting the GoH to conduct an emergency food security assessment in Haiti’s southwestern peninsula, as well as Sud-Est Department, which was affected by Tropical Storm Grace.

<sup>1</sup> The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity.

# NATIONAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

## KEY FIGURES



**65**

USAR personnel deployed to Haiti with the DART



**4**

USAR canines deployed to Haiti alongside DART USAR personnel



**52,000**

Pounds of gear DART USAR personnel brought to Haiti

## URBAN SEARCH-AND-RESCUE

Following the earthquake, the GoH requested international assistance for USAR support. A USAR team from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, including 65 search-and-rescue personnel and four canines, subsequently deployed alongside DART members, arriving in Haiti on August 15. The USAR team traveled with 52,000 pounds of specialized tools and equipment, such as hydraulic concrete breaking equipment, saws, torches, and drills, along with advanced medical equipment for search-and-rescue operations. Additional USAR supplies arrived in Haiti on August 17.

Two U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) helicopters deployed to Haiti began transporting DART assessment teams—including USAR staff—to Les Cayes on August 16 to commence assessment and response activities. Sites reached or assessed by DART USAR experts included Les Cayes, Camp-Perrin, and Grand’Anse’s Jérémie and Pestel communes as of August 18. USAR activities in other affected areas remain ongoing.

USAID/BHA USAR teams consist of 19 functional positions, staffed by experienced emergency managers, construction riggers, hazardous materials technicians, licensed engineers and emergency medicine physicians, logisticians, paramedics, planners, search-and-rescue specialists, and search-and-rescue dogs with handlers. Structure collapse resulting from earthquake events often creates numerous void spaces in damaged or destroyed buildings where survivors may be trapped. Thus, USAR teams perform life-saving technical activities, including specialized search-and-rescue operations to recover trapped individuals.

On August 14, the GoH declared a one-month state of emergency in Haiti and activated DGPC personnel, mobilizing search-and-rescue brigades to earthquake-affected areas. The GoH has also activated an emergency operations center to coordinate assessment and response activities. As of August 16, the GoH had mobilized rapid response teams in Grand’Anse, Nippes, and Sud to carry out search-and-rescue operations, deliver food assistance and medical supplies, and clear roads and bridges damaged by the earthquake or blocked by resultant landslides.

Several governments across the Latin America and Caribbean region—including the governments of Colombia and Mexico—mobilized personnel and supplies to support USAR operations. In addition, on August 17, ISAR Germany and BRH Bundesverband Rettungshunde deployed a five-member team—including experts in disaster assistance, field medicine, and USAR—to Haiti to support and advise GoH authorities.



Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department staff deployed to assist UNDAC

## LOGISTICS AND HCIMA SUPPORT

USAID/BHA is providing logistics support in heavily-affected communities in Grand'Anse, Nippes, and Sud. In addition, five members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department have deployed as part of the Americas Support Team (AST) to provide technical support to UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) personnel, assisting with humanitarian coordination, information management, and assessment (HCIMA) efforts. The AST is a module supported through USAID/BHA to establish On-Site Operations Coordination Center facilities and assist with coordination efforts between the UN, local emergency management agencies, and other relief actors, including donor governments and non-governmental organizations. As of August 18, the AST is supporting a 10-member UNDAC team in facilitating coordination and information management in concert with the GoH DGPC and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The UNDAC team is deploying one staff member at the national level and three personnel each in Grand'Anse, Nippes, and Sud.



Helicopters deployed by USSOUTHCOM to support of relief operations

Meanwhile, USAID has requested the unique capabilities of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) to support USAID's response efforts with air transport of relief staff and USAR team members within Haiti, as well as assessment efforts in earthquake-affected areas. USSOUTHCOM is deploying eight helicopters, including three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, three CH-47 Chinook helicopters, and two HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters. Additionally, USSOUTHCOM is providing aerial images to support damage assessments.

USAID/BHA is also supporting a WFP barge service to facilitate additional humanitarian transport between Port-au-Prince and the northern coast of Haiti's southwestern peninsula. Separately, the UN Humanitarian Air Service has an aircraft available to assist with response efforts.

On August 14, in response to a GoH request for aerial assistance, the Government of the Dominican Republic (GoDR) provided a fixed-wing aircraft and two helicopters to provide logistical support for assessments, transport GoH officials to earthquake-affected areas, and transfer injured individuals in affected areas to Port-au-Prince for treatment. In addition, CDEMA activated its Regional Response Mechanism and is deploying a Caribbean Community Operational Support Team to provide coordination and operational support in coordination with the GoH.

## RELIEF COMMODITIES AND WASH

On August 17, USAID/BHA partner IOM distributed 2,000 hygiene kits, 2,000 jerry cans, and 600 shelter repair kits to affected populations in Les Cayes and across Nippes. USAID/BHA funds IOM to maintain pre-positioned emergency relief supplies in Haiti for distribution in response to sudden-onset disasters such as earthquakes and other shocks.



2,000

Number of hygiene kits distributed by IOM with USAID/BHA support

Regional governments are mobilizing shipments of relief commodities to support response efforts in Haiti. On August 16, the Government of Chile (GoC) dispatched a flight to Haiti carrying 16 MT of food commodities and medical and WASH supplies. The GoC is also engaging the governments of Costa Rica and Panama to provide air transport for additional commodities. In addition, the Government of Mexico dispatched two military aircraft carrying 60 personnel with specialized USAR and medical skills, in addition to approximately 20 MT of relief commodities, including medicines and medical supplies, food assistance, and USAR equipment. Furthermore, the Government of Colombia sent two aircraft carrying USAR personnel and food and relief commodities, such as WASH items and tents.

UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths allocated \$8 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund on August 15 to support the provision of relief items and health care services, safe drinking water, shelter items, and WASH assistance to affected households. The European Commission's Department for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and the Government of the Republic of Korea have also announced nearly \$3.5 and \$1 million in emergency funding, respectively, to meet immediate needs.



2

USCG helicopters deployed to assist with medical evacuations

## HEALTH

On August 15, the USCG deployed two helicopters with medical staff and supplies to Haiti. Alongside supporting USAR and logistics efforts, the helicopters are also transferring critically injured patients from affected areas to Port-au-Prince, as available. As of August 18, the USCG had flown 100 sorties, performed medical evacuations for more than 200 people, and transported 143 medical and USAR staff—including members of the DART—and 5,500 pounds of medical supplies to affected areas.

The GoH Ministry of Public Health and Population activated an emergency health crisis cell to coordinate information on needs and response efforts with health partners, according to the UN. As of August 16, the GoH had deployed engineers to assess structural damage at health facilities and deployed 15 trucks carrying medical supplies to earthquake-affected areas. In addition, specialized medical personnel deployed with supplies to treat trauma and orthopedic needs among earthquake-affected populations. As of August 18, GoH medical teams had treated more than 1,700 injured people in Grand'Anse, Nippes, and Sud, as well as facilitated the transfer of at least 12 individuals to health facilities in Ouest Department for treatment.

The The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) country office in Haiti has activated its emergency plan, while PAHO and the UN World Health Organization (WHO) declared an emergency for Haiti and neighboring Dominican Republic for the duration of 2021. PAHO and WHO are coordinating with the GoH DGPC, local authorities and health officials, and other UN agencies. In addition, the GoDR is delivering medical supplies and

non-food items to Haiti by air. Meanwhile, the Red Cross and hospitals in unaffected areas are providing surge assistance, while Médecins Sans Frontières has deployed teams to Les Cayes, Jérémie, and Sud's Port-Salut commune.



**50,000**

People supported through prepositioned USAID/BHA shelter commodities

## SHELTER

The DART is coordinating with relief actors to facilitate the distribution of shelter commodities prepositioned in Haiti, including blankets, hygiene kits, kitchen kits, and shelter repair kits to support nearly 50,000 people. USAID/BHA also activated a shelter advisor to support the provision of shelter assistance.



**110**

MT of contingency food commodities released by USAID/BHA to WFP for food assistance operations

## FOOD SECURITY

As of August 18, USAID/BHA had released 110 MT of food—including beans, rice, and vegetable oil—from its contingency stock managed by WFP to distribute hot meals to people at hospitals in Jérémie and Les Cayes. WFP will continue to provide daily hot meals to the several thousand people injured by the earthquake during their hospitalization. Moreover, WFP plans to provide ready-to-eat meals to individuals in emergency evacuation shelters, among other interventions.

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## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](http://interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](http://cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](http://reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](http://usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)