

## **American Red Cross releases \$1 million in aid to help earthquake relief efforts in Haiti; ICRC sets up family website**

**Wednesday, January 13, 2010** — The American Red Cross is sending money, supplies and staff to Haiti to support relief efforts there after yesterday's earthquake, which caused catastrophic damage and loss of life.

According to reports, as many as three million people may have been affected by the quake, which collapsed government buildings and caused major damage to hospitals in the area.

The Red Cross is contributing an initial \$1 million from the International Response Fund to support the relief operation, and has opened its warehouse in Panama to provide tarps, mosquito nets and cooking sets for approximately 5,000 families.

In addition to Red Cross staff already in Haiti, six disaster management specialists are being deployed to the disaster zone to help coordinate relief efforts. At this time, the American Red Cross is only deploying volunteers specially trained to manage international emergency operations.

There has been an outpouring of support from the public. To help, people can make an unrestricted donation to the International Response Fund at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or by calling 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767). The public can also help by texting "Haiti" to 90999 to send a \$10 donation to the Red Cross, through an effort backed by the U.S. State Department. Funds will go to support American Red Cross relief efforts in Haiti.

Debris and collapsed bridges are making access to many areas extremely difficult. Telephone service and electricity are out in many places. Haitian Red Cross staff worked throughout the night to rescue people still trapped in their homes and provide first aid. The priority remains to provide food, water, temporary shelter, medical services and emotional support.

The American Red Cross already had fifteen staff in Haiti providing ongoing HIV/AIDS prevention and disaster preparedness programs. All are reported to be safe and responding to the disaster.

Also, administered by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), [www.icrc.org/familylinks](http://www.icrc.org/familylinks) is a website designed to allow the possibility for persons in Haiti and abroad to register the names of relatives with whom they are striving to restore contact. It will progressively incorporate information offering responses to those queries.

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