

CURRENT SITUATION

Hurricane Matthew, the most powerful Caribbean hurricane in nearly a decade has left thousands of people displaced in Haiti, with officials struggling to reach the worst hit areas. Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries, and many residents live in flimsy housing in flood prone areas.

There have been a number of deaths in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which together comprise the island of Hispaniola. Death tolls are expected to rise as the extent of damage emerges. In the port town of Les Cayes an estimated 70,000 people were affected by flooding, and many of the area's fragile houses have lost roofs. With advance warnings at least 10,000 people were evacuated to shelters, but the UN has since reported overcrowded hospitals and fresh water shortages, with fears of waterborne disease. An estimated four million children may have been exposed to hurricane damage.

SHELTERBOX RESPONSE

ShelterBox already has aid stored in Haiti and large stocks of aid in Panama, ready to assist during the hurricane season. With airports closed, some of this aid has already been dispatched from Curacao aboard the Dutch Navy vessel HMNS Holland. The aid includes water filtration equipment which will be vital given the flooding, solar lighting to assist during electricity blackouts, blankets, special shelter kits of tools and tarps to help weatherproof damaged buildings.

An SRT is heading out this week to assess damage and need. The team includes: Andre Bloemink (CA), Peter Leach (UK), Rachel Swist (UK), Mike Peachy (NZ), Yi Shun Lai (US) and Bill Woodard (US).

EXPERIENCE RESPONDING IN HAITI

ShelterBox has responded in Haiti previously after hurricanes in 2004, 2007 and 2012, as well as the devastating earthquake in 2010 which left 1.5 million homeless, injured around 300,000 people, and left over 230,000 dead.

ShelterBox responded immediately after the quake struck and provided more than 25% of all emergency shelter in Haiti. The deployment went on to be the biggest, longest and most complex in the history of the international disaster relief charity.

LOOKING AHEAD

Precautions are being taken already in Florida, the Bahamas, and along the Eastern seaboard as Hurricane Matthew tracks north. ShelterBox Operations will continue to monitor the storm's effects to these areas. ShelterBox USA has dedicated webpage to provide ongoing updates.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

As has been the case in the past, I know you and your Clubs will rally to ensure we are able to make a major contribution to assisting those affected by this devastating natural phenomenon. The ShelterBox Australia website provides the mechanism for Clubs and individuals to donate. Because we don't yet know exactly what aid will be required, we ask you to consider making your donation to ShelterBox Solutions, rather than to ShelterBoxes. This will give us maximum flexibility to source and provide aid tailored to meet the needs of the people.

Please provide this information to your Clubs, and encourage them to assist us once again. The need today is as great as it ever is. Events such as these highlight to cooperation between Rotary and its disaster aid project partner, ShelterBox

Thank you for your support

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ROWLEY TOMPSETT

Chair

ShelterBox Australia

Past Governor, Rotary District 9710