



Emergency Relief and Recovery

On August 14, 2021, a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti at 8:30 a.m. GMT, about 80 miles west of Port-au-Prince, in Nippes department. Catholic Relief Services and our partners are already at work to meet people's immediate needs for food and shelter.



A man searches the debris of a collapsed house in Les Cayes, Haiti, after the earthquake. Photo by David de la Paz/Xinhua/Alamy Live News

OVERVIEW

An estimated 1,419 people have lost their lives in the earthquake, and thousands were injured. The numbers are likely to rise as search and rescue efforts continue. Communities continue to feel aftershocks.

The earthquake destroyed homes, infrastructure and businesses, and displaced tens of thousands of people throughout the southern region, Grand Sud. The earthquake was stronger and shallower than the catastrophic 2010 earthquake that claimed more than 220,000 lives. While shallow quakes tend to be more damaging given the closer proximity of their seismic waves to the surface, this earthquake struck in a less densely populated area.

In the Grand'Anse, Nippes and Sud departments, dozens of public buildings—hospitals, schools, hotels, churches and businesses—suffered significant structural damage or have collapsed. At least 37,310 homes are known to have been destroyed. Landslides and damaged bridges have made roads impassable which, along with the deteriorating security, complicates the transport of critical relief supplies. Communications remain interrupted due to damaged infrastructure or high demand. In addition, Tropical Storm Grace passed over southern Haiti on August 16, causing additional hazards and complicating the search and rescue efforts. The Haitian government has issued a state of emergency.

37,310

HOMES ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. DOZENS OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS—HOSPITALS, SCHOOLS, HOTELS, CHURCHES AND BUSINESSES—SUFFERED SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURAL DAMAGE OR HAVE COLLAPSED

Devastation in Haiti after the August 14 earthquake. Photo courtesy of Caritas Internationalis



COMPOUNDING CRISES

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the displacement of thousands of families risks the spread of infection at a time when local health systems are already struggling to treat the wounded.¹ Of grave concern is the damage to hospitals, and water and sanitation infrastructure.

Just prior to this crisis, people in Haiti had been dealing with increasingly limited access to nutritious food and clean water due to drought, as well as political and economic instability. The security situation was deteriorating even before the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse at his home in Port-au-Prince in early July. In early June, the capital saw a significant increase in gang violence that resulted in the displacement of an estimated 19,000 people, who remain in camps in and around Port-au-Prince. Throughout Haiti, recent tensions and shootings in Port-au-Prince coupled with ongoing gang violence have hindered transportation. Food prices have risen sharply and the supply chain of goods like gasoline and diesel has stalled.

CRS AND CHURCH RESPONSE

CRS has a long history of programming in Grand Sud, with programs and offices in both Les Cayes in Sud department, and Jeremie in Grand'Anse department. Within 48 hours of the earthquake, CRS teams in Les Cayes distributed tarps, hygiene kits and kitchen sets for 200 families.

CRS is preparing to help families affected by the earthquake meet their immediate needs for relief and long-term recovery. The initial phase of our comprehensive, holistic response will focus on emergency support for shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene. These efforts will transition into a robust recovery program to repair and rebuild homes and infrastructure, and restore livelihoods. Care for people's emotional well-being will be woven in, especially for families dealing with distress, grief and trauma.

PRIORITY AREAS

- Emergency basic needs via direct distribution or cash assistance.
 - Food.
 - Household supplies and hygiene items.
- Shelter relief and recovery.
 - Emergency shelter materials, including tarps and corrugated iron sheeting.
 - Training of construction workers on safe building practices.
 - Repair or rebuilding of homes, or transitional shelter for the most vulnerable families.
- Water, sanitation and hygiene.
 - Provision of hygiene supply kits with a focus on COVID-19 prevention.
 - Access to potable water and sanitation.
 - Restoration or rehabilitation of damaged water infrastructure.
- Livelihoods.
 - Support livelihood restoration.
 - Training and investment to restore livelihood activities and launch new income-generating activities where necessary.
 - Prioritize local resources in relief and recovery efforts and market-based responses when possible.
- Protection and psychosocial support.
 - Psychosocial first aid for front-line workers, CRS and partner staff, and program participants and communities.
 - Family-based child protection and efforts to prevent separation of vulnerable families.
 - Outreach and support for women, especially given the increase in gender-based violence.
 - Mainstreaming protection efforts for the most vulnerable in all aspects of programming.

In all these efforts, CRS will prioritize a market-based response—ensuring we support the recovery of the market and local economy by using local materials, repairing and restoring local infrastructure, and engaging local suppliers, distributors and vendors in the programs.

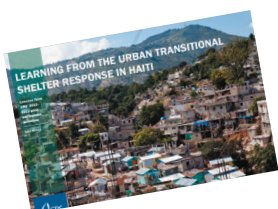
CRS hopes to raise \$5 million for this emergency relief and recovery effort.

HOW TO HELP

- Donate online: crs.org/supporthaiti
- Donate by phone: 1-877-HELP-CRS
- Donate by check: Haiti Response, Catholic Relief Services, P.O. Box 17090, Baltimore, Maryland 21297-0303

CRS in Haiti

CRS has worked in Haiti since 1954, supporting diverse relief and development programs. One of the major agencies to respond to the 2010 earthquake, CRS built 10,500 shelters, provided more than 10 million meals and created employment for 11,000 people. Many experiences from 2010—such as market-based responses, participant accountability, build-back-better techniques, and community-led approaches—are applied in this response. Read [this report](#).



1. OCHA. 16 August 2021. [Latin America & The Caribbean Weekly Situation Update \(9-15 August 2021\)](#).