

# Earthquake in Haiti

January 2010



On 12 January 2010, at approximately 16:53 local time (21:53 GMT), a 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck the impoverished Caribbean island of Haiti. The quake, the epicentre of which was only 15km south west of the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, caused enormous damage.

An estimated 50 percent of all buildings in Port-au-Prince, including the offices of the World Bank, the United Nations headquarters, several foreign embassies, the control tower at Toussaint Louverture International Airport and three major hospitals, either collapsed or were badly damaged. The situation elsewhere in Haiti was similarly dire. In Leogane, one of the country's main tourist destinations, located 29km west of Port-au-Prince, the UN estimated that 90 percent of the town had been destroyed. In the southern resort city of Jacmel, an estimated 70 percent of the buildings collapsed or were badly damaged. Water and electricity supplies were cut in the affected areas and the mobile telecommunication network badly compromised. Estimates suggest that 200,000 people lost their lives and that a further 1.5 million were left homeless and/or injured. A series of aftershocks only exacerbated a dire and deteriorating situation.

## red24 response

### 1. Alert and inform

red24's Crisis Response Management (CRM) Centre monitors global developments on a 24/7 basis. Immediately after receiving confirmation of the quake, we notified clients of the situation by email and SMS.



*Haiti: A magnitude 7.0 earthquake has struck off the coast of Haiti. Initial reports indicate that there has been substantial infrastructural damage; public amenities and services, including electricity and water supply, sanitary provision, transport, and health care are thought to have been severely affected or discontinued in many areas. Transport services into and out of the country may be limited.*

A red24 security briefing was prepared and distributed to clients via email and our website. Update emails and SMSes were also sent out as developments dictated, and information was regularly updated.

## 2. Crisis management planning

red24's crisis response team met to assess the situation, and consultants in the US and Latin America were put on standby to assist affected clients. As the scale of the earthquake became apparent, additional resources - both on the operational and analytical sides - were quickly dedicated to the situation and the decision to deploy consultants was taken. red24's consultants, who are former members of UK and US special forces units, arrived in the Dominican Republic early on 13 January. They quickly established an operational hub, secured the use of a fixed-wing aircraft, a helicopter and two four-wheel drive vehicles, and liaised with contacts in the Dominican Republic and Haiti to ensure access into the affected areas.



*red24's Crisis Response Management Centre is actively monitoring developments in Haiti. We currently have security consultants on the ground who are aiding clients in the country. Should you require assistance, please do not hesitate to contact red24.*

## 3. Reactive crisis management and response

Several clients contacted red24 to request assistance. We committed to doing whatever was logistically possible to help them.

### Evacuation

Consultants were tasked with locating and evacuating a number of people who had been visiting or living in Haiti at the time of the earthquake. There were reports from colleagues, friends and families back home that some of these people had been injured in the quake. The CRM Centre began trying to contact people in Haiti in order to inform them of the situation and to assess their condition. Two teams of consultants who had already deployed to Port-au-Prince began the challenging task of locating individuals in the city and assisting in their evacuation. Flights, visas and accommodation plans were arranged to ensure as smooth an exit out of the country as possible. Where commercial or humanitarian flights were not possible, private planes were chartered. In one of the groups being evacuated, an individual became

separated and lost. Consultants were immediately deployed to retrieve her; once found, she remained in the company of the consultants until she could be safely evacuated.

### Missing persons

Another task for the consultants was to be the eyes and ears of employers, insurers and family members waiting for news of those who had not yet been found. Consultants obtained as much information as possible about the last known locations of missing persons, monitored official rescue efforts at those locations, and liaised with government agencies and humanitarian groups assisting with the crisis. Armed with a detailed description of the missing individuals, the consultants also searched hospitals, embassies and other relevant locations. These efforts are ongoing.

### Security escort

red24 provided a security escort service for an internationally recognised media organisation, which had a team needing to travel overland from the Dominican Republic into Haiti and on to Port-au-Prince. The combination of heavily damaged road infrastructure and increasing levels of violence made this journey potentially hazardous. red24 arranged entry into Haiti, identified the safest route to the capital, and ensured that the news team and its equipment was escorted safely to Port-au-Prince.