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## News Release NEWS RELEASE

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FOR MEDIA ONLY

### **American Red Cross Pledges Initial \$1 Million to Haiti Relief** *Send a \$10 Donation by Texting 'Haiti' to 90999*

**Editorial note: Call (202) 303-5551 to speak with an American Red Cross spokesperson.**

**WASHINGTON, 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.

To date, there have been no requests for blood products from the government of Haiti. However, some patients at an affected facility in Haiti have been moved to a Guantanamo Bay hospital, and the Armed Services Blood Program has asked both the Red Cross and Florida Blood Services for support for those patients. In addition, the American Red Cross will be sending a shipment of blood products to the United Nations Mission in Haiti.

While communication with those in Haiti is still difficult, people should contact the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747 if trying to reach a U.S. citizen living or traveling in Haiti. If trying to reach a Haitian citizen, callers should continue to call or contact other family members who live nearby.

While donations are coming in for Haiti relief, the initial American Red Cross response is made possible in part by contributions from members of the Red Cross Annual Disaster Giving Program (ADGP). The following partners designate a portion of their ADGP commitment to the International Response Fund:

American Express, John Deere Foundation, Kimberly-Clark Corporation, Morgan Stanley and State Street Foundation.

**About the American Red Cross:**

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.*