



# HURRICANE MATTHEW: Emergency Relief

## OVERVIEW

Haiti is reeling from the blows of Hurricane Matthew, which crashed ashore on October 4, bringing 145 mile per hour winds, storm surges and up to 40 inches of rainfall. The category 4 storm has caused massive devastation and flooding in Haiti, which is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, and which has yet to fully recover from a catastrophic earthquake in 2010.

Southern Haiti, including the port town of Les Cayes, appears to be the hardest hit, with the South and Grand Anse departments suffering the worst damage. A key bridge linking the southern region to Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince, collapsed. The full extent of damage has yet to be known due to the hazardous conditions and the breakdown of communications, particularly in Grand Anse—where almost no communication has been possible since the morning of October 4. Up to 90 percent of houses in Jeremie, Grand Anse’s capital, are destroyed or seriously damaged, and agricultural fields have been decimated.

Rescue workers continue to try to reach affected areas, where many people have been hurt. The death toll of more than 110 in Haiti is likely to rise as authorities reach more communities. People have limited access to potable drinking water.

**“Hundreds of lives have been lost. We have seen roofs blown off houses, damaged homes and waters flooding the streets, but we still don’t know the full scale of the damage. We will be doing all we can to reach the most affected areas as quickly as possible,”** says Catholic Relief Services Haiti Country Representative Chris Bessey. **“We are very concerned about the damage to crops and food stocks in areas that are important bread baskets in the country. Any damage to crops could result in a spike in food costs for people already so vulnerable.”**



## HOW TO HELP

- Donate by phone:  
1-877-HELP-CRS
- Donate by check:  
Catholic Relief Services  
P.O. Box 17090  
Baltimore, MD 21203-7090
- Donate online:  
[donate.crs.org](http://donate.crs.org)



## CRS RESPONSE

CRS and local partners are responding now in some of the most affected areas in southern Haiti. Teams are still learning about the scale of damage, and are working to determine the most pressing needs as quickly as possible. CRS has prepositioned emergency materials nearby, including tarps and hygiene and living supplies, which can be distributed quickly to communities as needed. Prior to the storm, our engineers were dispatched to identify damage to buildings and infrastructure in

Les Cayes, Jeremie and Jacmel. They will work with community members and local government to identify needs for repair, rebuilding and recovery.

CRS has 132 Haitian staff and 11 international staff in the country. We have multiple offices nationwide, and 51 staff in Les Cayes. CRS has worked in Haiti for 60 years.

## PRIORITIES

**Emergency shelter:** CRS will provide emergency supplies—including tarps, ropes and blankets—to families whose homes have been damaged or destroyed. If there is a need to build emergency shelters, CRS will use local materials that are cost-effective and easy to assemble.

**Water, sanitation and hygiene:** CRS will likely distribute hygiene kits and build hand-washing stations, and ensure access to potable water in areas where the water infrastructure has been damaged.

**Living supplies:** CRS will provide cash for people so they can purchase vital living supplies, like hygiene kits and kitchen sets. If markets are not accessible, CRS will distribute supplies directly.

**“Our assessments taking place now will inform our response and priorities, as we know that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to emergency relief and recovery. Haitians make up more than 90 percent of our staff, and we enable communities to take ownership of their recovery. We will continuously work to ensure utmost dignity and empowerment—both in these early days of urgent relief, and in the coming months,”** says Bessey.

**CUBA:** Heavy flooding is reported in Guantanamo and Holguin provinces, with moderate flooding in Las Tunas and Camaguey. Coastal flooding is reported in the southern keys, off Ciego de Avila in central Cuba. Eastern Cuba took the brunt of the storm, and damage is worst there. Residents of Baracoa—which is on northeastern tip of Cuba—are cut off due to destroyed roads.

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:** In the Dominican Republic, 4 deaths have been attributed to the hurricane, and nearly 23,000 people have been displaced or evacuated. Overflowing rivers have caused flooding, and power outages caused by strong winds have affected many municipalities. Ocean swells of up to 8 feet remain a menace along the coast between Peravia and Pedernales.

**JAMAICA:** Damage assessments are still underway and will further guide our emergency response efforts.

## IMPACT ON HAITIAN COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY THE 2010 EARTHQUAKE

The impact of Hurricane Matthew has the potential to affect inroads made in Haiti’s recovery from the 2010 earthquake that claimed 230,000 lives and decimated infrastructure. In our recovery efforts since the earthquake, CRS has helped hundreds of thousands of people with comprehensive support, including rebuilding homes, roads and the historic St. Francis de Sales

Hospital. We also improved agriculture for greater resilience in rural areas, and strengthened job skills and opportunities. CRS will adapt and continue these recovery efforts in areas that have been affected by both crises. To learn more about our response to date to the 2010 earthquake, visit: [crs.org/stories/haiti-what-you-help-make-possible](http://crs.org/stories/haiti-what-you-help-make-possible).

### *A Prayer* for People Affected by Hurricane Matthew

Compassionate God,

We pray for all those in the Caribbean affected by Hurricane Matthew, and offer the words of Psalm 29:11:

“May the Lord give might to his people; may the Lord bless his people with peace!”

Lord, give might to those who need your strength to carry on. Fill their troubled hearts with your peace, and move us with your compassion, that we may respond generously to those in need.

Amen