

Press Release

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Haiti – one month after the quake: Malteser International sets up second health post in Darbonne

Porte-au-Prince/ Léogâne/Cologne. “Even one month after the devastating quake, the situation here still is far away from going back to normal”, reports Beate Maass, humanitarian coordinator of Malteser International, the relief service of the Order of Malta for worldwide humanitarian aid, from Léogâne. In the neighbouring town of Darbonne far more than thousand people are still without medical care. A mobile day clinic will provide aid for these people from now on, Maass continues.

On a daily basis, Malteser International treats people suffering even more from psychological than from physical problems. The mental stress they had and still have to cope with is apparent. Only very few Haitians know about the facts relating to an earthquake. The majority implicate a voodoo daemon in such kind of disaster. In Léogâne, this belief is widespread as the voodoo temple is the only building that was not destroyed. The survivors of the quake are therefore grateful for all explanations of the facts responsible for an earthquake.

Since 15 January the Malteser International team consisting of doctors, nurses, public health experts, logisticians and further emergency relief experts has been working in the crisis region. In the beginning, relief activities concentrated on first aid and medical care of the patients coming to the partly destroyed hospital “Francois de Sales” in Port-au-Prince and the participation in UN assessments of further hospitals in Haiti’s capital.

In the town of Léogâne which is situated to the west of Port-au-Prince and close to the epicentre of the quake, 90% of the buildings have been destroyed. Here, the Malteser International medical team has set up a health post for basic medical care including obstetrical care. With two emergency health kits including antibiotics, medical drugs and dressing material, Malteser International can assure basic medical assistance for 20,000 people for a period of three months. The medical unit sponsored by the company EADS provides an important basis for a long-term assistance for the people in Léogâne, Maass reports. The medical doctors are grateful for the good working conditions in this medical unit.

Malteser International is the worldwide relief agency of the Sovereign Order of Malta for humanitarian aid. The organisation provides aid in about 200 projects in more than 20 countries without distinction of religion, race or political persuasion. Christian values and the humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence are the foundation of its work. For further information: www.malteser-international.org and www.orderofmalta.org

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