

Beat: Miscellaneous

Up to 1.8 million Haitians affected by Hurricane Sandy

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USPA News - Some 1.8 million Haitians have been affected by Hurricane Sandy after it moved through the Caribbean as a category two storm last week, according to an initial assessment of the situation carried out by the United Nations (UN) relief agency this week. Initial data collected by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) showed Sandy, which killed up to 75 people in Haiti alone, significantly damaged critical infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospitals in addition to destroying thousands of homes in the Caribbean country.

"Floodwater had been receding since Sunday but more than 18,000 homes have been flooded, damaged or destroyed," Jens Laerke, an OCHA spokesperson, told reporters in Geneva on Friday, adding that food security remains a main concern as the country is now struggling with the combined impact of hurricanes Sandy and Isaac, which hit in August, as well as drought. The region is also still recovering from a catastrophic earthquake in 2010 and an ongoing cholera outbreak. Laerke said preliminary data from the assessment shows food security has been severely affected by the latest disaster, with up to two million people now at risk of malnutrition. In addition to food insecurity, OCHA said it is concerned about the nearly 350,000 people that are still living in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the earthquake in 2010. Laerke noted that while most vulnerable IDPs in camps that had been evacuated before the storm have returned home, some 1,500 people remain in 15 hurricane shelters. Because of the impact of the hurricane, OCHA said it is now considering an emergency revision of the Consolidated Appeal (CAP) to accommodate increased needs.

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