

Navy, Coast Guard Units Rush to Aid Haitian Earthquake Victims



Canadian Medical Assistant Team Cristina Coams alongside with Petty Officer 1st Class Rob Updike and Hero Client Rescue paramedic Nadia Van der Heyden evaluate an injured female Aug. 15, 2021. *U.S. COAST GUARD / Petty Officer 3rd Class Erik Villa-Rodriguez*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Under the direction of U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Navy and Coast Guard units have been deployed to provide disaster relief to the victims of the Aug. 14 earthquake that struck southern Haiti. More than 1,400 people are confirmed dead from the 7.2-magnitude earthquake, according to press reports.

U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has established a joint task force on Aug. 15 to handle the relief efforts. The command also established a Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) Situational Awareness Team in the Haitian capital, Port-Au-Prince, to help coordinate the relief efforts.

The U.S. Coast Guard responded Aug. 15 with several helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft to help evacuate injured people.

“On August 15, at the request of the Haitian Government, the Coast Guard surged aircraft and personnel to help critically injured patients from impacted areas to Port au Prince where they may obtain higher levels of care,” said Coast Guard Seventh District Commander, Rear Adm. Brendan C. McPherson. “Additionally, we are coordinating with USAID and U.S. Southern Command to move urban search and rescue responders, medical personnel and supplies to impacted areas. Our crews are trained and empowered to use sound on-scene initiative to

judge the risks as they respond to the most urgent requests for help. Our people have a true bias for action and know how to lead through a crisis.”

Kirby said the Navy was sending the San Antonio-class amphibious platform dock ship USS Arlington to Haiti. The ship is carrying two MH-60 helicopters and one landing craft.

Also en route is the USNS Burlington, a Spearhead-class expeditionary fast transport operated by the Military Sealift Command, which is carrying ScanEagle surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles.

Two P-8A maritime patrol aircraft deployed to El Salvador have been staged near Haiti to provide support for the relief efforts with imagery of damaged areas of the country.

Two UH-60 and two CH-47 helicopters from Joint Task Force-Bravo are also en route to Haiti, where they will provide critical airlift support to ongoing relief efforts.

Kirby also said that four field hospitals also were being dispatched to Haiti.

The Coast Guard 7th District said its efforts from Aug. 15-16 included more than 38 Coast Guard members deployed, 34 aviation evolutions, 51 people saved and 12 people assisted.

Seventy-two Fairfax County Fire Department’s urban search and rescue crews, USAID Disaster Assistance Response Teams, medical personnel and first responders transported 5,500 pounds of medical supplies.

Coast Guard assets deployed for the relief efforts include two Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrews, a Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter aircrew, a Coast Guard Air Station Miami HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircrew, a Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater HC-130 Hercules aircrew and the Coast Guard Cutters Reliance,

Winslow Griesser and Margaret Norvell.