



NDYS in Action, Newsletter

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The VOICE of YOUTH is NEEDED!

Editor: Daniel Paz,
Salta, Argentina



Topics

Climate Change and disaster reduction

Many people were affected by floods in Egypt.

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Days after flash floods killed several people and forced hundreds of families out of their damaged homes in the Sinai Peninsula, government assistance is yet to arrive, survivors say.

"Our conditions are so desperate," Nuweiga Gemeiaa, said a local resident whose home was destroyed in the 18 January floods. "We sleep in the open, but the government hasn't done anything effectual so far to give us either shelter or money to compensate [us] for what we've lost." Gemeiaa was one of hundreds of people who clashed with Egyptian police on 20 January after accusing the



The government has promised to give 25,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$4,545) to each household badly affected by the floods in Arish in northern Sinai and in Ras Sidr in the south. South Sinai Governor Mohamed Abdel Fadiel Shousha said on 23 January that he had formed five committees to assess the flood damage. Speaking on Egyptian TV, Shousha said his staff would go from home to home to assess damage and give proper compensation for victims.

Officials from several NGOs met politicians in Cairo on 23 January to discuss how they could offer help to the Sinai floods victims. They promised to send aid convoys with food and money. They also agreed to open telephone hotlines to receive donations from the public. So far, only minimal rescue work has been carried out by the Egyptian army and small amounts of aid from the vicinity have been delivered.

Until further assistance materializes, Gemeiaa and more than 350 families will have to wait in the open. They say conditions are so bad that some of them have broken into undamaged homes to take food and money.

Gemeiaa and his wife and four children have been spending their nights in an olive farm a few hundred metres away from their damaged house. "What happens here now amounts to starvation," said Hussein Salem, a local resident. "Some shops started to open, but we've no money to buy food. Everything went away with the water."

Starting on 18 January, three days of heavy rain in disparate locations in Egypt - south Sinai, Aswan in southern Egypt and the eastern coastal town of Hurgada - killed more than six people, injured hundreds and made thousands homeless.

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In Kenya people are waiting for help.

Source: www.irinnews.org

In Kenya people are waiting for help



This is the view of a street now.

Thousands of flood-affected households still require assistance as ongoing rains in parts of Kenya continue to cause population displacement and destroy property and crops, according to humanitarian sources.

"Countrywide, 8,270hh [households or 40,165 persons], have been displaced and 40 people killed by floods. Livelihoods have been greatly interrupted and thousands are in dire need of relief aid," according to a recent update by the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS).

The National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC) estimates that up to 58,000 people had been affected by the flooding in the October-December 2009 short rains, stated a 22 December 2009 to 22 January Kenya Humanitarian Update by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

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The latest to be displaced by the flooding, due to ongoing El Niño-related rains, include 53 families in the village of Dagamra in the coastal district of Magharini where 404ha of green maize were also destroyed.

According to the KRCS public relations manager, Titus Mung'ou, the flooding occurred just as "the farmers were ready to receive their harvest. Some [of the farmers] are [wading] through the water to pick [what] maize they can," said Mung'ou.

The flooding was caused by the River Sabaki breaking its banks on 13 January and going about 500m off its normal course, he said, adding that non-food items such as tarpaulins and mosquito nets had been provided to the affected families.

Source: www.irinnews.org

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The situation after the catastrophe.

The situation after the catastrophe

The Haitian government estimates at least 500,000 need shelter after the 12 January earthquake devastated the city, but the challenge is to find options that will get people through the upcoming hurricane season, which typically starts in May, said Jean Phillippe Antolin, with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is coordinating UN efforts to provide shelter.

The government has identified at least 30 sites to turn into temporary tent communities in Port-au-Prince, most in areas where people are already



This is how they live now. Space and

Antolin said that the numbers needing shelter outstrip current resources - even for temporary tenting. "We cannot come up with tents for up to 700,000 people - we simply do not have them at hand." He added that even where available, a tent-based community approach would be at best good for the next three months.

In a working draft of a shelter strategy for earthquake victims, the UN has proposed alternatives. They include providing support to host families to take in those made homeless, as was done after last year's hurricanes; providing materials to improve safety and comfort in areas where people have gathered; assessing which houses are safe for reoccupation; and as a last resort, to build new settlements, which IOM's Antolin said would be the most complicated option. "Unless there is already donor-backed construction under way, this option is the least feasible," said Antolin.

The government is, however, evaluating how many people can be relocated to an Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)-financed construction in the Croix-de-Bouquets neighbourhood.

Sites may have been chosen, mayors notified, NGOs lined up, but what is still missing to prepare temporary tent communities is heavy equipment and land surveyors, according to IOM.

Antolin also said that the first step to improving living conditions for those made homeless is to assess the safety of their living spaces, dig drainage and make sure the sites comply with government regulations. "To do that, we need engineers to assess the land and heavy equipment to prepare the space. We do not have either." "Without those two, we cannot even start worrying about the shortage of tents because we will not have anywhere to place those tents." He said discussions were under way with the US army's corps of engineers.

Groups that are managing communities approved as temporary settlements include Islamic Relief UK, the Portuguese civil defence, the Turkish Red Crescent and the German Red Cross.

Oxfam International is working at sites called "spontaneous gathering" spots by the government, and will continue recovery efforts in Haiti for the next three years while supporting communities around the settlements, said the programme officer Rick Bauer. "If we do not work with surrounding communities, the temporary tents become snob settlements and service magnets."

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Groups that are considering camp management include the US-based Samaritan Purse, UN Environmental Programme, Handicap International, the NGO Amurt & Amurtel and Médecins Sans Frontières.

Samaritan Purse has announced it is expecting a barge of equipment to dock at Port-au-Prince on 29 January, which will be made available to groups preparing land for tent communities.

Haiti is likely to continue experiencing aftershocks from the magnitude-7 earthquake for months and possibly years to come, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS), an earth and life sciences research organization. The Haitian government needs to take into account the inevitability of future earthquakes in its rehabilitation plans, said USGS senior science adviser, David Applegate.

“With tent communities you do not face so much the risk of building collapse in earthquakes, but rather secondary risks of landslides and drainage problems. Long-term reconstruction must take into account proximity from the fault line, while short-term relocation must pay attention to flood-prone zones,” said Applegate.

Haiti is bisected by two major plate boundary fault zones. Over the past three centuries, earthquakes comparable to or stronger than the 12 January disaster have struck Haiti at least four times, including those in 1751 and 1770 that destroyed Port-au-Prince.

Source: www.irinnews.org



Comments: It is hard for me to know how people in Haiti are spending their days. I am very sad. Hope they can get over this and recover with a strong faith.

In Kenya the season of floods will cause many problems again; my wish is they could face it and have better preparation. Now we will see if authorities worked on the topic...

■ For more information please contact ■

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