



IFRC | One month on: Haiti Red Cross teams focus on stopping cholera and aiding tens of thousands of people in isolated hurricane-hit communities

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Port-au Prince — Since Hurricane Matthew struck Haiti one month ago, the Haiti Red Cross Society and other Red Cross partners have reached over 31,000 people with medical care, relief items, clean water, sanitation and hygiene support, with efforts focusing on stemming cholera and other diseases.

“The hurricane was catastrophic for the people of Haiti and its devastation only increases concerns about the spread of disease,” said Dr Jean-Pierre Guiteau, President of the Haiti Red Cross Society. “Since the storm, the existing cholera epidemic has worsened, threatening the health of Haiti’s people and the future of the country.”

Health authorities in Haiti report over 3,400 suspected cases of cholera in Haiti since Hurricane Matthew made landfall.

More than 3,000 Haiti Red Cross volunteers, working with nine partner National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on the ground, have been delivering relief to some of the most remote areas hit by the hurricane, and scaling up activities to prevent the spread of diseases.

The Haiti Red Cross will be supporting a cholera-vaccination campaign to begin on 8 November – led by Haiti’s Ministry of Health and supported by the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other partners. Red Cross teams will provide the logistical assistance needed to bring the vaccine to 16 communities in Grande-Anse and the South. Some 350 Red Cross volunteers will also conduct door-to-door outreach to promote the campaign, which aims to administer the vaccine to over 820,000 people.

“The vaccination campaign, as well as improving water quality, sanitation and hygiene, should increase our effectiveness in cholera prevention across areas hit by Hurricane Matthew,” said Dr Jean-Pierre. “The ability of Red Cross volunteers to access remote and vulnerable communities will be critical to that effort.”

To limit rates of infection and reduce vulnerability to disease and ailments, Red Cross teams have distributed 4,500 relief kits in recent weeks, with items such as soap, buckets, food, water purification tablets and plastic sheeting, while promoting good hygiene, healthy practices and ways to prevent disease spread.

“The devastation is staggering and logistical challenges remain immense, but there’s been significant progress in meeting urgent needs,” said Walter Cotte, Director of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for the Americas. “The focus now must be on ensuring recovery efforts have a lasting impact and building long-term community resilience.”

Red Cross mobile medical clinics have been traveling to isolated storm-ravaged villages and to date have treated some 800 people without access to nearby health services. Other Red Cross teams are repairing, improving or installing water treatment and distribution systems.