

Latin American Countries Rush Aid to Haiti

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MEXICO CITY — Planes have started to land in Port-au-Prince with drinking water, food, special tools, rescuers and doctors as Latin American countries acted to help Haiti out of the aftermath of Tuesday's magnitude-7.0 earthquake.

Though no exact number of casualties was confirmed so far, experts of disaster management are expecting it to reach the tens of thousands.

Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive warned on Wednesday that the temblor might have caused 100,000 deaths. Haiti has a population of 8.3 million by a 2003 estimate.

A Venezuelan plane was among the first to touch down in Port-au-Prince with 14 tons of relief supplies and 39 rescuers.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said it was the first aid flight from his country, hinting there would be more into the Caribbean island state.

Two military planes took off from Brazil with 21 tons of relief supplies while the Brazilian government announced the country was providing Haiti with an emergency fund of 15 million U.S. dollars.

Chile was sending overnight a plane loaded with 12 tons of relief supplies along with doctors and rescuers with specially trained sniff dogs.

Peru is to send in 50 tons of relief supplies while Ecuador is to dispatch to Haiti dozens of rescuers.

Costa Rica is sending in 50 rescuers, mostly doctors and engineers.

Panama has also contributed 22 rescuers to the international effort as Nicaragua is flying two planes to fetch in international rescuers and their equipment along with 10 Nicaraguan rescuers.

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said what in need was immediate actions of humanitarian aid for the Haitian people and government.

Bolivia is preparing to donate blood and food to Haiti while Cuban leader Raul Castro expressed readiness to join the international rescue effort with Cuban doctors and medicines.

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