

January 14, 2010

Monitoring the Situation in Haiti

Our hearts go out to the people of Haiti, for the trauma and loss they've already experienced since Tuesday night's calamitous 7.0 earthquake hit, with its epicenter not far from the densely populated capital of Port-au-Prince. News agencies report that thousands have perished, many are still trapped in the rubble of buildings, and hundreds of thousands of others are without shelter, medical care, or other life necessities. Governments and relief agencies are deploying to deal with what amounts to one of the worst disasters of modern times, with its impact compounded by the chronic poverty, deficient infrastructure, bare-bones medical care, and other problems that afflict the poorest nation in the western hemisphere.



[Logan Abass/United Nations](#) / CC BY 2.0

Damage from the Jan. 12 earthquake.

When people suffer in this terrible way, so do animals. The HSUS, Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, and our global affiliate Humane Society International are working on a preliminary assessment of Haiti's animal-care needs, taking into account the security, transportation, housing, and supply challenges that we would face in deployment. Fortunately, one of our veterinary teams had been conducting a program at a veterinary school in the neighboring Dominican Republic when the quake

struck. We are looking to determine if they can get into Haiti to conduct an on-the-ground assessment. We are also communicating with human relief agencies, and looking to cooperate with them. One difficulty is that there are no organized animal welfare groups anywhere in the country, and no animal shelters or veterinary schools. This lack of infrastructure will complicate any response.

Response issued by the Humane Society of the United States