



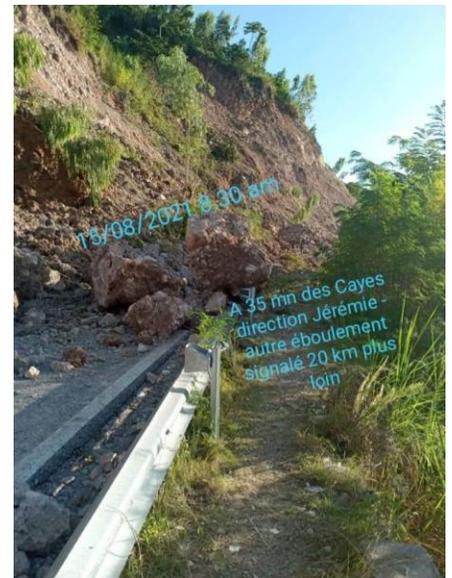
***There is no point in being Haitian if you are not prepared to get your heart broken over and over again.***

August 16, 2021

Dear Friends and Supporters of Haitian Connection,

Saturday morning, August 14, 2021, at 8:30 am a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the southwest part of Haiti, in the location that I have worked in for the past 23 years. When I saw the pictures for the devastation in Jérémie, I recognized every building and location, and my heart broke. I barely escaped the earthquake in 2010 in Port au Prince, lived through the hurricane in the Grand'Anse in 2016, and experienced the insecurity of the last several years. Even if you are not Haitian, but have grown to love this country and its people, be prepared to have your heart broken over and over again.

As of today, Monday, August 16, 2021, the civil protection agency has counted 1, 297 dead, 5,700 injured, and 13,000 homeless. Many of the injured have open wounds, and they have been exposed to not so clean elements. Medical personnel expect a lot of infections. Add to that the lack of clean water. On Sunday, August 15, 2021, the St. Antoine hospital in Jérémie, the main hospital in the Grand'Anse department, ran out of water. One (of the many) big problems is that people can't find drinking water. They normally purchase it in bottles or small sacks, but due to a landslide which is blocking the main road in/out of Jérémie, water has no way to get to town. The land route is cut off. This road that connects Les Cayes (the other town that was severely impacted by the earthquake) to Jérémie and which took years to build, is now impassable. Helicopters are taken the injured to other locations, but they can only take 4 people at a time.



Another problem is that gangs who control the exit route out of Port au Prince have kept the road closed for over 2 months now, so if you pass it is at your own risk.

Much of the damage both in people cost and material cost is in the countryside which is very difficult to access. And as is usual the case, help will get to them last. Haitian Connection has long partnered with several communities in the country and I am getting reports from them. I can hear it in their voices that they are still in shock. One of the communities is Latibolye, the school is damaged, the rectory is completely uninhabitable and many houses have turned into rubble. Esther Jacques, our community leader reported to me that while her house did not sustain any damage many of the other houses did, including some that Haitian Connection built. Latibolye was the first community in which we built, so the houses are now well over 10 years old. The more recently-built homes have stood up to the earthquake and were not damaged.



School in Latibolye where we hold our literacy program.

Our partner, Jérémie Breadfruit Flour in Doudouch, is producing as many konparets (sweet bread) as possible to give to the population thanks to the help of Trees That Feed Foundation. The bakery is still functioning. This is good news, because food scarcity is expected.

Our partners in Jean Bellune, especially Fr. Jean-Rony, reports that the elementary school building in his community has become inhabitable and is a total gut. Thankfully the secondary school building seems to have not sustained a lot of damage and classrooms are still usable. Also the kitchen that Haitian Connection built last year was not damaged. Thank God.

Of course, with many schools destroyed, I do not think schools can open September 6. The children have already lost as much school time the last 2 years and they will lose time again.



Our afterschool building in downtown Jérémie amazingly enough is still standing and sustained no damage. So that is one place we can start the new school year.

Our mental health workers are lending psychological support where they can while dealing with their own losses. The accumulated trauma is a lot to carry, and we hope to mitigate some of it by just listening and giving people a space to talk about the impact of this earthquake. We did the same thing after the hurricane in 2016. Jérémie is experiencing a lot of aftershocks, so people sleep out on the street. I cannot even imagine.

**As a small NGO Haitian Connection will do what it can. Our intention is to really target where to help, especially in sustaining the programs that we have started. As you know 100% of funds go directly to the people.**

So, if you are moved by all this, money at this point is of greatest help, and I will keep you informed as to how it is applied. You can send it via PayPal, on our website at [www.HaitianConnection.org](http://www.HaitianConnection.org).

And prayers do help, please keep them coming. Gratefully,

Renate