

World NEWS

In Haiti after the earthquake: A running diary

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By CHARLES ECKERT Special to Newsday

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Members of the New York City Urban Search and Rescue Task Force and the [Virginia](#) Search and Rescue Team rescue Kiki and his sister Sabrina on Tuesday, one week after a 7.0 earthquake trapped the two inside their home. [Click here to read Charles Eckert's diary from Haiti.](#) (Jan. 19, 2010) Photo Credit: Charles Eckert

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Charles Eckert is a freelance journalist for Newsday reporting on the aftermath of the



earthquake in Haiti.

Friday, Jan. 29: Delmas section of Port-au-Prince

"Where do they start?" a fellow photojournalist asks. We are walking the streets near our hotel. We take photographs as people dig through rubble, searching for their belongings. Some stare in disbelief at what has happened to their lives.

Among the rubble: family pictures, Christmas ornaments, a child's doll.

A man sits in front of the remains of his house. The top floor is somewhat intact, sitting at a 30 degree angle on top of the wreckage of the lower floors. Where does he start? He is alone, seemingly overwhelmed by what lays before him. Clearing the debris will require heavy machinery. At best he will salvage a few items.



Video

Journalist for Newsday reports from Haiti

Where does Haiti get the money and materials to rebuild? Building earthquake-resistant structures is costly. Haiti is incredibly poor.

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Adolphe Frantz stands in front of the remains of his home. He will not go inside to retrieve what's left of his family's belongings. The rest of his family has joined an aunt in the Dominican Republic.

He stays because before the earthquake he had "a good job" at the Coca-Cola bottling facility. It has yet to reopen.


Frantz knows he can't rebuild with the same materials again. Without financial help, he says, he too will have to leave Haiti.

>>PHOTOS: See Charles Eckert's latest photos from Haiti



World
Friday, Jan. 22, 2010
Photos: Charles Eckert in Haiti for Newsday

Today I join ActionAid as they go on a pilot run for their planned distribution of humanitarian aid. Although they they are the type of nongovernmental organization that would rather "teach someone to fish instead of giving them fish," the

 Real-time results from Twitter for Haiti
OR #Haiti

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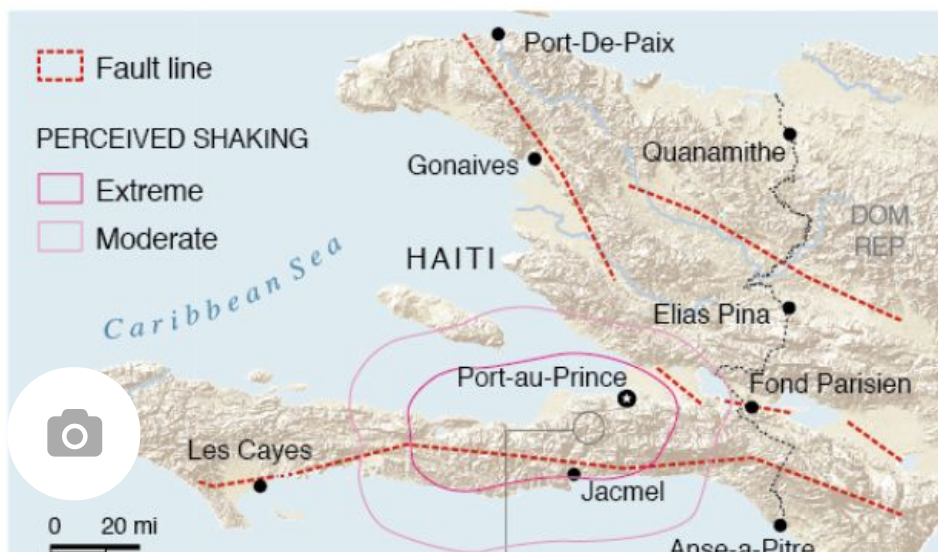
scope of this disaster has them, for the short term, changing their approach.

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And so they give: canned salmon, rice, maize, flour, water-purification tablets and cooking oil. Two weeks' worth for 100 displaced families living in a walled compound in Mariani, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. Until today the families have received no aid since last week's earthquake. Some still have homes but are scared to stay in them. Others have only what they could scavenge from the ruins. Most say they have been eating only what they can find. They are well aware that their water supply is compromised.

There aren't many thanks as families receive the supplies. It seems everyone is too exhausted for formalities. They line up at first. But as the pile of bags of rice, sugar, and maize grow smaller, the crowd grows larger. The lines turn into a circle around the humanitarian workers, squeezing tighter and tighter.

Tempers flare; the aid workers form a human chain to keep some order. They have brought enough for the hundred families living in the compound. They didn't account for the people who would climb the compounds walls. Those families also need food. With only two Haitian police officers for convoy protection, our security could be in jeopardy. We have to leave.



World

GRAPHICS: Earthquake in Haiti

It seems that all the residents of Port-au-Prince sleep on the streets. They are wise. Yesterday morning we were awakened by the shaking of our hotel room. It was a 5.9 magnitude aftershock.

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Although it lasted only seconds it felt like an eternity. I could only think of escape and ran out of the room in my underwear and a T-shirt. This earthquake was smaller and shorter than last week's. I was terrified.

All around Port-au-Prince are makeshift signs asking for help in English, French and Spanish. From Bel Air you can see the giant hospital ship. Black Hawk helicopters are constantly buzzing above the city. The 82nd Airborne is deployed on the ground.

I understand that aid is being distributed. Most Haitians in the city haven't received it. They are using what remains to start anew.

Today there were small tremors as I was waiting to be interviewed by News12 at the old Holiday Inn Hotel. I nearly jumped off the second-story balcony. Something about an earthquake is extremely unnerving.

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