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UN marks one-year anniversary of Haiti earthquake



12 January 2011 – On the one-year anniversary of the earthquake which devastated Haiti, the United Nations today remembered the disaster’s victims in memorial events in Port-au-Prince, New York and elsewhere around the world.

In the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, staff at the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti ([MINUSTAH](#)) gathered for memorial events which included a formal ceremony and the unveiling of a monument in honour of UN staff members who were killed in the earthquake. The head of the UN’s peacekeeping operations, Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy, attended the events.

At UN Headquarters in New York, [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon took part in a wreath-laying ceremony on Wednesday afternoon, timed to coincide with the hour at which the earthquake struck – at 4:53 p.m. on Tuesday, 12 January, 2010. Participants were asked to solemnly observe silence for a period of 47 seconds, which was the duration of the earthquake.

Members of the Security Council extended their condolences to the families of those killed and expressed their deepest concern for all those whose lives continue to be touched by the tragedy.

They recalled the sacrifice of MINUSTAH personnel who died in the earthquake and voiced their strong support for the mission’s continued efforts to assist the people of Haiti to recover from the disaster.

“The members of the Security Council continue to stand with the people and Government of Haiti in their ongoing work to rebuild their country, reaffirm on this day of remembrance their

sustained international support for Haiti, and call for the swift disbursement of remaining pledges in support of Haiti's recovery," the Council [said](#) in a press statement.

With a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale, the earthquake killed over 200,000 people, injured more than 300,000 and displaced 2.3 million people – nearly one quarter of the country's population. It levelled Haiti's capital, delivered a severe blow to the economy and infrastructure, and impeded nation-building efforts in the country. In addition, 102 UN staff members perished, constituting the highest loss of life from a single event in United Nations history.

At the memorial ceremony in Port-au-Prince today, Mr. Le Roy delivered a message on behalf of the Secretary-General. In that message, he called on the world to live up to the solidarity expressed in the wake of the earthquake, including at the Haiti Donors' Conference last March.

He also paid particular tribute to the dedication of UN staff in Haiti who survived the earthquake and worked to save lives in the following hours and days, as well as the hundreds of other UN staff from duty stations around the world who responded immediately to the call for volunteers.

At the memorial event in New York, the Secretary-General [paid tribute](#) to those who perished in the disaster and expressed solidarity with those who survived. "Today, we gather in solidarity – with the people of Haiti, with one another, with all who lost their loved ones on that tragic day, to the families of our 102 fallen colleagues, to all who suffered injuries, physical and emotional, we offer our deepest sympathies," Mr. Ban said.

He also noted that after a slow start, recovery and reconstruction is finally beginning in earnest in Haiti, with water being provided to one million people every day, food to two million people every month, and plans to help a new Haitian government get on its feet and fulfil its responsibilities to its people.

The Secretary-General also reaffirmed the UN system's commitment to assisting the people of Haiti to rebuild their country. "On this sad and solemn occasion, I want to say: The United Nations, the entire international community, stood by Haiti and its people in their darkest hour – together, we will walk with them toward a brighter future," he said.

In the Middle East, peacekeepers at the UN Interim Force in Lebanon ([UNIFIL](#)) today remembered the earthquake's victims at a wreath-laying ceremony at UNIFIL Headquarters in Naqoura in southern Lebanon.

In the Balkans, staff at the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo took part in a ceremony observing 47 seconds of silence. Speaking at the event, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Kosovo, Lamberto Zannier, expressed solidarity with the people of Haiti and all those who suffered losses.

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