

# Baptist World Aid workers say situation in Haiti still desperate

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FALLS CHURCH, Va. (ABP) — A Baptist rescue team in Haiti described the situation there as desperate more than two weeks after a massive earthquake the devastated the island nation Jan. 12.

Bela Szilagyi, director of Hungarian Baptist Aid and a leader of a Baptist World Aid Rescue24 team since three days after the quake, [told](#) Baptist World Alliance officials Jan. 26 that thousands of people are fleeing Port-au-Prince, a capital city plagued by food and water shortages and long lines at gas stations where fuel has quadrupled in price.



A BWAid Rescue 24 team member treats a woman injured in the Jan. 12 Haiti earthquake. (BWA photo)

Szilagyi said the Rescue24 team, consisting of two Hungarians, five from North Carolina Baptist Men and three Haitians, provided medical treatments for several hundred persons at a community clinic in Pétionville, a suburb of Port-au-Prince.

"Hundreds of people have been waiting for medical care in the hall and even in the parking lot at the clinic," Szilagyi said. Many, he said, had broken limbs and pelvises, fractured skulls and badly injured ankles and feet. "Most of the injuries were already infected because of not having medical care for such a long time," Szilagyi reported.

The Baptist World Alliance continues to make appeals to Baptists around the world to [donate](#) funds for Haitian relief, which will be done largely through Baptist groups in the country. Already, more than \$150,000 have been pledged or received from Baptists in South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, India, Germany, the United Kingdom, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Belgium, South Africa and the United States.



Bethill L'Amerique, right, 16, and sister Bioutelle, 11, center, managed to rescue their mother from concrete rubble. Their father, Baptist pastor Bienne L'Amerique, was killed. Brother Berlau George, 13, was not at home but at his grandmother's house. (BWA photo)

Earlier Szilagyi [spoke](#) with family members of Bienne L'Amerique, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Port-au-Prince, [one](#) of 150,000 confirmed deaths so far. Government officials said the death toll could reach 300,000.

L'Amerique's 11-year-old daughter, Bioutelle, told Szilagyi she was reading on the first floor when a chasm opened and their two-story home fell into it. Her brother, Bethill, 16, said he was watching television upstairs. He said he was unhurt and helped pull his sister from the rubble. They heard their mother screaming, he said, and managed to pull her free from the concrete rubble.

Bioutelle said her father was in the living room with his mother and a section of the ceiling fell on him when he stood to leave the house. He was buried too deep for the family to reach him and did not speak or move. "My mother is saying that it is possible that he died immediately when the

ceiling fell on his head," Bethill reportedly said.

*-Bob Allen is senior writer for Associated Baptist Press.*