

Aid to Hurricane Ida Survivors in El Salvador

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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As Hurricane Ida swept across the Gulf of Mexico, a low-pressure system out of the Pacific brought torrential rains to El Salvador, leaving behind floods and mudslides. As of November 18, 194 people have been killed, while 80 people are missing, and 15,090 people are left homeless. The capital of El Salvador, San Salvador, and San Vicente province are the hardest-hit regions.

Tzu Chi volunteers in El Salvador immediately mobilized to provide emergency relief work in four cities: La Libertad, Soyapango, San Vicente and Apopa. The volunteers prepared food, clothing and eco-friendly blankets (shipped from Tzu Chi Taiwan headquarters) to be distributed to the survivors and evacuees.

On November 10, the team of volunteers arrived in La Libertad to conduct relief distribution in two schools close to the city center. Ever since the disaster happened, most of the evacuees in the area have been staying in the two schools awaiting relief supplies. Most of the evacuees were children and elderly people, since many of the younger generation have left their hometown for work.



On November 11, the team of volunteers arrived at a shelter in the city of Apopa. Most of the town was buried by the mudslide. Heavy rainfall also caused the riverbank to burst. The mudslide and flood destroyed hundreds of homes. A 26-year-old resident and his wife and one-year-old child were lucky to escape from the devastating disaster. He said, "At two o'clock in the morning, it was raining really hard. Suddenly, the ground started to shake, and I heard a loud banging sound. Next, I found myself lying amidst rubble in what used to be my home." Another resident said, "It was terrible. Rocks came rushing down the mountain and fell on my roof. They split my home into two. I heard people around me screaming..." After the mudslide occurred, military personnel and local residents used shovels and their own hands to dig and find the missing people. Two elderly were brought into the shelter, and Tzu Chi volunteers immediately put clothes on them and brought them hot soup and blankets. The elderly couple had originally taken shelter at a cave on higher ground when they saw the river's water level rising. The military personnel in the area found them and brought them to the shelter.

On November 12, Tzu Chi volunteers as well as some residents of the Great Love Villages (Tzu Chi built two Great Love Villages with 1,175 homes in Sacacoyo and Chanmico, El Salvador for survivors of the 2001 earthquake) traveled to the city of Soyapango to provide relief distribution. The roads were damaged, so it took some time to reach the destination.

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