

Doctor Rescues Two Injured in Haiti after Solo Landing

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

Thursday, 14 January 2010 00:00



A [Tzu Chi International Medical Association](#) (TIMA) doctor on Thursday made an emergency flight to Haiti in a plane that had to make a solo landing, to rescue two Taiwan diplomats injured in the devastating earthquake and give them treatment abroad.

Tens of thousands of people are feared dead and many are trapped in the rubble of buildings that have collapsed, after the earthquake measuring seven on the Richter scale hit the capital Port-au-Prince on Tuesday. Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere, is very ill-equipped to deal with a catastrophe of this magnitude.

During the quake, two diplomats in Taiwan's embassy in the capital were injured; ambassador Hsu Mian-sheng had a fracture of his left leg and counselor Chi Wang-de a serious chest fracture. The hospitals in the capital collapsed; the only medical facilities available were those provided by Medecins Sans Frontieres, the French charity. The Taiwan embassy in Santo Domingo, capital of the Dominican Republic who has a land border with Haiti, turned for help to Tzu Chi member Dr Chang Chong-wu. Chang is also a member of the TIMA, which conducts free clinics in countries around the world. Late Wednesday afternoon, Chang boarded a specially equipped medical plane for the 45-minute journey to Port-au-Prince. As he approached the airport, the pilot realized that it had no control tower and no radio communication; he had to land the plane entirely on his own. He told Chang to return as soon as possible with his two patients so that they could leave before dark. Chang found the two quickly and they made the flight back to Santo Domingo.

The next morning, five Tzu Chi volunteers went to the city's Cedimat hospital to visit the two patients. Security at the door was strict and the guards checked with the two before the visitors were allowed in. When ambassador Hsu and his wife saw the visitors, they burst into tears; the trauma of living through such an experience was coming home to them. They said that Haiti desperately needed water, food and the help of Tzu Chi volunteers. Hsu's life is not in danger but his injury, and the shock of the earthquake, has left him in an excited heart. Aware of the extent of the disaster and the suffering of the Haitian people, he is keen to recover as soon as possible and provide help to the victims.

Chi told the volunteers that he had been trapped for six hours after the earthquake before being rescued. "My rib was crushed by a pillar. The quake was followed by many tremors; they caused constant pressure and pain. In addition, everything was dark. My heart is still shivering."

The volunteers expressed the sincerest greetings of [Master Cheng Yen](#) and Tzu Chi members all over the world and their hopes for their earliest recovery. The volunteers in the Dominican Republic are waiting for the earliest opportunity to go to relieve the sufferings of the Haitian people.