



Los Angeles Wildfires

Situation Report #1

January 10, 2025

Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team is on the ground in Los Angeles, in response to the devastating wildfires which have displaced more than 180,000 people, burned more than 35,000 acres of land, and damaged or destroyed more than 9,000 structures.

Situation Overview

Since January 7, at least 10 wildfires have broken out in densely populated areas of Los Angeles County, with six fires still raging and the majority of acreage uncontained at the time of this report. The two largest, the Palisades Fire near Pacific Palisades and the Eaton Fire near Pasadena raged for multiple days at 0% containment and have spread across more than 53 square miles.

Most of Los Angeles County has received less than a quarter inch of precipitation since October. These extremely dry conditions, combined with heavy winds coming off the mountains and gusts exceeding 100 mph, are expected to return next week, elevating the risk of new fires and raising fears in local communities about the potential of fires to spread to even more densely populated areas.

More than 180,000 people have been displaced and an additional 200,000 are under evacuation warnings. City and county governments have opened shelters for displaced

Key Updates

- Since January 7, at least **10 wildfires have broken out in Los Angeles County**, displacing 180,000 people and placing an additional 200,000 people under evacuation warnings.
- Dry conditions and powerful winds, with **gusts exceeding 100 mph** in some areas, caused the fires to spread rapidly in **densely populated areas**.
- Meteorologists warn that **high winds are expected to return next week**, raising the risk of new fires.
- Project HOPE is partnering with SAMU to **deploy a team of emergency response experts** to Los Angeles County to assist first responders.
- Project HOPE is **coordinating with free and charitable clinics, shelters, and local officials** to identify gaps in current response efforts and deliver PPE.

families and California has declared a state of emergency.

Across Los Angeles, access to clean air and water is threatened, with water infrastructure compromised by debris and ash. Widespread smoke and particle pollution is causing unhealthy air quality across much of the city, which can cause serious health problems including heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks, and difficulty breathing.

Additionally, exposure to climate events increases the risk of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Children, who have had their daily routines and senses of safety disrupted, are likely to experience long-lasting psychological distress. There will be a great need for mental health support during the emergency and throughout the recovery phase as families rebuild and attempt to regain a sense of normalcy.

Project HOPE is Responding

Project HOPE has an emergency response team on the ground who are assessing the conditions at shelters and health clinics across the greater Los Angeles area, while coordinating with government officials and local organizations to identify the greatest health and humanitarian needs. As with any U.S.-based emergency response, we are focused on how best to support those who are most vulnerable during disasters, including children, women, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, and historically marginalized communities.

Project HOPE is actively procuring high-need items for shelters and health clinics, including personal protective equipment (PPE) with a focus on high-quality particulate-filtering masks to reduce smoke inhalation, as well as items like hygiene kits and bedding materials for evacuees who were forced to flee quickly, and for those who have lost everything. The team plans to distribute hygiene kits starting January 11.

Our team is also coordinating with our longstanding partner, the National Association of Free & Charitable Clinics, to assess outstanding needs at local health clinics who primarily serve under-resourced communities. Already, we have identified an urgent need for surge staffing at clinics in the impacted areas and are recruiting volunteer health workers, which will help to alleviate the pressure on staff members who are evacuated and/or unable to get to/from work. One clinic our team visited does not have any practitioners on duty right now because they have either lost their home, evacuated, or are awaiting potential evacuations.

Additionally, our longstanding partner SAMU is mobilizing an emergency response team to support needs related to emergency logistics and debris clearance for search and rescue or recovery operations. Project HOPE and SAMU previously conducted joint responses to the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and Morocco in 2023 and Hurricane Milton in Florida in 2024, providing search and rescue assistance, delivering supplies, and assisting first responders.

As the impacts of this crisis unfold, Project HOPE is prepared to provide additional support related to mental health and respiratory health needs, which we expect will have both urgent and long-lasting implications for impacted communities.

“I’ve faced crises and emergencies across the country and world, but the apocalyptic conditions unfolding here in my own community of Los Angeles are unlike anything I’ve ever experienced. The immediate destruction is staggering, but the long-term impacts will be felt for years to come – impacting people’s mental health, straining our health systems, and leaving thousands without a home or community to return to.”

- Chessa Latifi, Deputy Director of Emergency Preparedness and Response

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