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HAITI QUAKE

DNA test to reunite Haitians

2010-01-31 10:16

Madrid - Spain said on Saturday it will provide Haiti with a DNA testing system to help reunite lost children with their families and combat the trafficking of minors in the aftermath of the earthquake on January 12.

Haitian officials will take saliva or blood samples from minors separated from their families in the disaster, as well as from parents who have reported missing children, Spain's foreign ministry said in a statement.

"With these samples a database will be created which will be available for Haitian authorities," it added.

Last week the UN Children's Fund said there have been 15 documented cases of children disappearing from hospitals since the earthquake hit Port-Au-Prince and surrounding areas.

The genetic testing system, called DNA-Prokids, has already helped identify more than 230 victims of child trafficking in 12 countries, the ministry said.

It was developed by the University of Granada in southern Spain and was rolled out in several nations in 2009. Spain will provide it to Haiti free of charge.

The US said on Friday it was helping to remobilise the Haitian police's child protection brigades, as part of a broader effort to register unaccompanied children and reunite them with their families.

The 7.0-magnitude quake killed around 170 000 people and left one million Haitians homeless and short of food, water and medical attention.

- AFP

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