

# SDF medics to be sent to Haiti

Leogane Haiti  
KYODO

Japan said Wednesday it will send another medical team to quake-devastated Haiti, this time consisting of medical and other personnel of the Self-Defense Forces, to join international rescue efforts.

Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa ordered the deployment after a meeting of top defense officials and SDF chiefs of staff, clearing the way for the roughly 110-member team to leave Narita airport Thursday night for Miami aboard a

chartered aircraft.

The team is expected to arrive at the Caribbean nation and start work Sunday at the earliest, using an Air Self-Defense Force C-130 transport plane now in Miami, officials said.

"It is quite important that we contribute for the people of Haiti, making use of the SDF's abundant experience in disaster relief missions," Kitazawa said at the outset of the meeting.

The team will join the 24-member civilian Japanese medical team that began work Monday in Leogane, some 40 km west of Port-au-Prince.

The Japanese civilian team, however, has drawn criticism from Medecins Sans Frontieres for focusing on the quantity of casualties handled over the quality of care provided.

Doctors and nurses were kept extremely busy on the first day, treating a large number of injured people in a hastily erected tent.

In hot temperatures, medical personnel treated count-

less quake survivors as medical equipment and supplies ran short.

About 10 patients at a time could be treated in the tent, which was set up on the grounds of a nursing school in Leogane. Simple operations could also be performed, and an X-ray facility and pharmacy had also been set up.

More than 1,000 people are living in tents just outside the nursing school grounds.

Michiaki Hata, a Shimane University doctor and the team's deputy leader, said he was surprised at the huge numbers of patients waiting in line. Hata said working conditions were much tougher than those he had experienced in China in 2008 after the Sichuan quake and in Pakistan in 2005 after another temblor.

The quake destroyed every medical facility in Leogane, which has a population of some 100,000.

A doctor of France-based MSF criticized the Japanese team's approach, saying they were only sterilizing wounds and applying bandages, not-



Now hold still: A member of a Japanese civilian medical team cares for a woman Monday in quake-hit Leogane, Haiti. KYODO

ing such treatment could cause patients to develop infections and eventually die.

The MSF doctor urged the team to spend more time on surgery and to provide adequate medical services while focusing treatment on a small-

er number of patients.

Hata said that while he would like to spend more time on treating the seriously injured, he is obliged to treat as many patients as possible.

Haiti locals welcomed Japan's assistance.

A 56-year-old man whose wife was injured expressed hope that the team would extend its scheduled two-week stay and remain for at least two months.

The team arrived in Haiti on Sunday via Florida.

## Times Guide

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