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## Volunteers come forward to help flood-hit people

Sultan Al-Tamimi | Arab News

JEDDAH: Thousands of Saudi youths volunteered on Sunday morning to help people affected by the flash floods that hit Jeddah around 10 days ago.

The volunteers met at the Jeddah Centre for Forums and Events, which is serving as the headquarters for all volunteer efforts.

The center opened on Saturday Nov. 28, a few days after the floods. Nine local charitable organizations are working together to provide relief to affected people.

According to Sarah Baghdadi, a JCCI official who is managing the charity operation, more than 5,000 food baskets are being distributed every day to families in all of the main affected areas, including the Quw aizah, Kilo 14 and Al-Harazat districts which topped the list of all of the areas receiving help. "I think every parent should be proud of these young women and men," said Baghdadi.

"These youths are working hard to help families in these areas, they are also working hand in hand with the Civil Defense and the Red Crescent in providing volunteer help and able hands in distributing aid to families," she added.

"There are more than 1,500 volunteers ... including both men and women. We hope our joint efforts will result in providing some relief to families affected by the floods," said one volunteer.

"The floods destroyed the homes of some families and claimed the lives of others and that was just before Eid Al-Adha, so you can only imagine how these families are feeling," said Dalal Khayaat, a 21-year-old student and volunteer.

"Our work here will hopefully provide them with some relief." The baskets that are being distributed include food, first aid, blankets and clothes. Many people can be seen visiting the center on a daily basis bringing these items.

"I came here on Sunday. A friend of mine told me about what is happening here on Facebook. When I arrived there was only seven of us, now there are many more people," said Khayaat. One volunteer, however, complained of people donating clothing that is in poor condition. "I think it is shameful that some people are donating clothes that are tatty. These are not trash pens — these items will be given to people who are suffering. You really don't want them to feel worse by giving them clothing that is in poor condition," he said.

"I volunteered for the sake of Allah and for nothing else. I think no one in this city should have to experience this. These people are family to me ... and this is what families do in times of crisis," said 20-year-old volunteer Haitham.

People in the city who would like to donate money or food can do so by either going to the Jeddah Center for Forum and Events or Tel: 02 6581122, 02 6056025, or 02 6055406.

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