

Christian Humanitarian Group Urges Congress to Act on This Crisis

A Christian humanitarian aid organization is calling on Congress to provide appropriate funding for the fight against the Zika virus.

Malteser International Americas says its volunteers have been “on the front lines of the Zika outbreak” in northern Colombia since its initial outbreak. Its leaders have reported they were able to mobilize against Zika quickly by using established channels and techniques resulting from their work on the ground with pregnant women and children.

The organization is now reaching out to members of Congress, urging them to not wait before acting upon the international medical crisis. Its director, Ravi Tripptrap, says investing in preparedness is vital to national security, and would potentially save thousands of lives and billions of dollars.

“According to the United Nations, every \$1 of aid spent on preventing disasters saves an average of \$7 in humanitarian disaster response,” he said. “We learned that prevention of the spread of the disease and quick action can be far more effective than providing emergency relief after a disaster.

“Education is invaluable and money for simple solutions like bed nets, mosquito repellent and other items to prevent the spread of the disease can be effective in controlling Zika, and can also be cost effective.”

The first death from the Zika virus has been reported in Puerto Rico. Meanwhile, flooding in the south and the oncoming hot and humid summer months—which create ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes carrying the virus—will only compound

the urgency to act quickly, the organization added.