Beat: News

Kings of Spain visit La Palma and promise aid to those affected by the volcano

Red level for flights in Canary Islands

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USPA NEWS - The Kings of Spain traveled to the Canary Island of La Palma on Thursday, where they visited the area affected by the eruption of the Cumbre Vieja volcano and were interested in the work of the emergency services and the situation of the affected neighbors. Felipe VI and Queen Letizia went to the accommodation area for dependent people and displaced people, where they visited the facilities. There, the Kings held a meeting in the courtyard with a representation of the security forces and organizations that manage the seismic-volcanic crisis on the ground.

The Kings of Spain went to the Cabildo de Santa Cruz de la Palma, where the President of the Government, Pedro Sanchez, was waiting for them to attend the meeting with the Technical Committee of the Canary Islands Volcanic Emergency Plan (PEVOLCA). The President of the Government of the Canary Islands, the president of the Cabildo of La Palma and the head of the Environment and Emergencies Service of the Cabildo of La Palma, Miguel Angel Morcuende, took part in this meeting, and explained the general situation of the emergency. Subsequently, the Chief of Operations of the Spanish Red Cross, Manuel Marrero, presented the situation of the displaced people and those affected by the eruption of the volcano. Finally, the director of the National Geographic Institute (IGN) in the Canary Islands, Maria Jose Blanco, explained the geological situation.

After the meeting, the Kings held a brief meeting with the PEVOLCA Scientific Committee, at the end of which they went to the Forward Command Post. There they made a visit to the facilities from where the 112 emergency managers, Cabildo, Civil Guard and Military Emergency Unit conduct operations. Felipe VI and Letizia moved to the nearby church of Todoque, where they were received by the mayor of Los Llanos de Aridane, Noelia Garcia. There they were able to observe the damage caused by the lava in the municipality.

The King expressed his solidarity and affection with all the inhabitants of the island. "The message we want to convey is that the Queen and I wanted to be here, in the Canaries, in La Palma, close to all those who are suffering the consequences of this volcano, Cumbre Vieja, which is causing so much damage in the municipalities of the zone," said the Monarch. "We want to convey our solidarity, our affection, our affection, and also that of all Spaniards, who these days are so aware of the palm trees and, here, of the residents of these municipalities so seriously affected," he added.

“I want to say that this Isla Bonita, as it is known, which is a jewel, will continue to be so and I am sure that the palm trees will come out ahead and today they are in the hearts of all Spaniards. It is a tragedy, without a doubt. It is not easy to put yourself in the shoes of all those who have lost so much these days. Entire families who had their hopes, their lives, dedicated to sustenance, work, so much accumulated sacrifice and even the memory, memory of their life, that of so many and so many emigrants who also left and who have returned to rebuild their lives and who also they have lost everything they worked to achieve. Families that they stay, I say it in these terms, literally almost without anything at once, without a house, without equipment, without clothes, without food, without resources, without jobs. Without anything, but with life and with the help and solidarity of others,” said Felipe VI.

“We have to do everything in our power to support these families, preserve their safety, guarantee their tomorrow and rebuild on La Palma everything that nature has taken away. Not perhaps in the same place, there are things that cannot be recovered, but perhaps in other places,” explained the King. “I want to say to the affected families that for the recovery of your lives, your activity, your future, there will be no shortage of help. Here are all the administrations represented and that commitment is very clear. They will do everything in their power. But not only administrations, also private entities, also many citizens who altruistically want to help. Many canaries, many from the peninsula, who are doing their best to lend a hand.”

"It will cost a lot to return to normality, no one can deny that, but La Palma will get ahead," said the King. “All these families, despite the disaster that hit them, are going to have a future because together we are going to help put their lives back together. We have to help them,” he added. “These are days and nights of immense sadness and anguish for so many families as we have seen now on this visit. Today it is not easy to give comfort but I do want, we want, with all my affection, to give hope. Hope that, step by step, with everyone's help, they will be able to rebuild their lives. And in that reconstruction, because that hope for the future goes into it, we have to ensure education for the boys and girls of La Palma. Because they will be the ones who build and live the best future for this island.

Thank you."

For her part, Queen Letizia affirmed that she saw "with great sadness" and "with great pain" the affected families. She highlighted “the ability to put yourself in the shoes of these people. It is what will also make us grow as a society” and she stressed that, in conversations with neighbors, they have agreed to ask them “not to forget us.” The Kings held a meeting with affected people from the municipalities of El Paso and Los Llanos de Aridane, and with affected people from the banana sector in the area.

The island of La Palma is the main producer of bananas in the Canary Islands, with almost 50 % of the total production. The cultivation of this fruit is threatened by the lava that this Thursday, for the fifth consecutive day, continued to destroy everything wherever it passes. The speed of movement of the lava has slowed down a lot and experts are beginning to doubt that it will reach the sea. The flat terrain and the cooling of the lava prevent it from moving forward. Now, the concern is the ash that the volcano expels. The direction of the wind can cause the toxic cloud to cover almost the entire Spanish peninsula, causing acid rain that is harmful to health.

The Canary Islands air control raised the risk for flights to or from the Canary Islands on Thursday to a red level. The gases expelled by the volcano make it difficult for aircraft to fly. Since September 11, La Palma has suffered numerous earthquakes and the deformation that the National Geographic Institute recorded in its volcanic surveillance network. Finally, the magma reached the surface on Sunday, September 19.

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