



## Many in Haiti afraid to go back indoors

Published: Jan. 27, 2010 at 2:15 AM

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti, Jan. 27 (UPI) -- Close to 100 percent of the population in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, sleep in tents or outside because they fear being inside buildings, an engineer says.

"It is very disturbing to see perfectly functional empty hospitals when in other regions of Port-au-Prince, patients are being treated outside under tents in the heat," Andre Filiatrault, a University at Buffalo civil engineering professor and director of the university's Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research, says in a statement. "Buildings are still standing, but people do not want to use them because of fear of aftershocks. We inspected several hospitals that are empty although the buildings were perfectly fine. We are trying to influence the owners and the United Nations so that people may reoccupy them."

Filiatrault is leading the team of structural engineers to help determine which structures left standing after the Jan. 12 earthquake and its aftershocks may pose a threat to human safety.

"We have inspected very large warehouses for the U.N. World Food Program, which contain several thousand tons of food and have not been accessed since the earthquake," Filiatrault says. "The construction of these warehouses vary from unreinforced masonry, concrete frames and steel structures. In general, these structures performed well, although some should not be used at all."

© 2010 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.