

US offers assistance for Chennai flood victims

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Washington: The US has expressed its deepest condolences to the families of the people affected by the worst floods in Chennai and has offered assistance to address the humanitarian challenge "especially in the case of strong partners like India".

"The US stands ready to assist the people of Chennai, Tamil Nadu, as well as the Government of India as they face the worst flooding in decades," State Department Deputy Spokesman Mark Toner told reporters at his daily news conference on Thursday.

"We express our deepest condolences to the families of the people who have perished in these floods, and our thoughts are with those families who are still trapped and whose livelihoods are affected," he said.

"The US is in touch with the Government of India to discuss ways that we can provide any assistance at this difficult time," Toner said.

"So far it has not received any request for assistance. We've offered our assistance. Certainly, India is a very developed government with its own domestic services or capabilities to provide emergency assistance. That said, it's something we normally do especially in the cases of?," he said.

"Especially in the cases of strong partners like India, where we offer whatever assistance we can in the aftermath of natural disaster," Toner said.

Chennai has a US Consulate.

"On December 3, the US Consulate General in Chennai issued an Emergency Message for US citizens, obviously warning of the severe flooding taking place in the region," he said.

"It's closed for all services today and tomorrow, and we advise US citizens to divert all travel to the area. Those in the region are advised to shelter in place, but they also should ? both Indians and American citizens should monitor the consulate general's website for updates on that," Toner said.

- PTI