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## Information Bulletin no. 2

### Hurricane Laura

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>Information Bulletin N° 2</b>	<b>Date of issue:</b> 31 August 2020
<b>Date of disaster:</b> Ongoing	<b>IFRC Focal Points:</b> <u>In Panama ARO:</u> Daniel Arango, Disaster Management Coordinator; Hurricane Season, Preparedness & Response; <a href="mailto:daniel.arango@ifrc.org">daniel.arango@ifrc.org</a>
<b>IFRC Category allocated to the disaster:</b> IFRC Alert II de-activated. <sup>1</sup>	
<b>National Societies activated:</b> American Red Cross	

*This bulletin is being issued for information only; it reflects the current situation and details available at this time.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

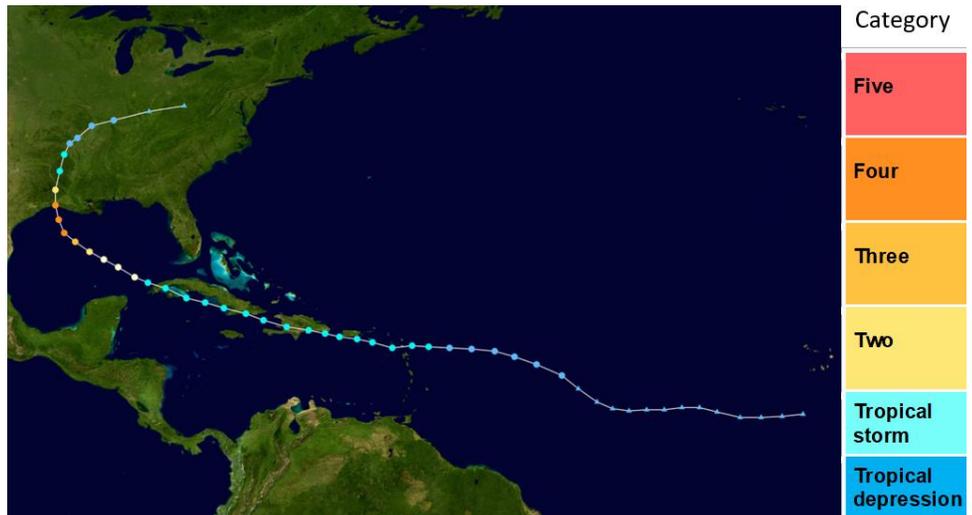
- Hurricane Laura tied the 1856 Last Island hurricane as the strongest hurricane ever recorded in Louisiana.
- Hurricane Laura was the first major hurricane of the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season.
- Laura first hit the Lesser Antilles as a tropical storm. It then moved across Hispaniola, killing 31 people in Haiti and 4 in the Dominican Republic. The storm then moved across Cuba, prompting tropical storm warnings and the evacuation of more than 260,000 people.
- AmCross mobilized nearly 1,000 trained disaster workers to support relief efforts on the ground or virtually.
- No funding support has been activated by the IFRC. The production of Info Bulletins for these storms will be discontinued.

<sup>1</sup> Issued when an event or crisis occurs and there is a need to take specific and predetermined protection measures and ensure that appropriate monitoring of the event is conducted due to its development, behaviour and characteristics, and the possibility the event causing adverse effects.

## CONTEXT

### Hurricane Laura

Laura first hit the Lesser Antilles and brushed Puerto Rico as a tropical storm, then moved across the island of Hispaniola, killing 31 people in Haiti and four in the Dominican Republic. The storm then moved across the length of Cuba, prompting tropical storm warnings and the evacuation of more than 260,000 people. Subsequently, the outer rainbands extended into the Florida Keys and South Florida. Laura then moved across the Gulf of Mexico, strengthening slowly at first, before a period of rapid intensification on August 26. That day, Laura became a major hurricane, and later attained peak winds of 150 mph (240 km/h), making it a strong Category 4 hurricane.



Early on August 27, Laura made landfall near peak intensity on Cameron, Louisiana. This was the tenth-strongest United States hurricane landfall by windspeed on record. The storm killed at least 22 people in the United States and inflicted an estimated 8.7 billion American dollars in insured damage on southwestern Louisiana and southeastern Texas.

Laura began to weaken quickly after moving inland due to frictional displacement and shear created by the trough that caused Hurricane Marco to dissipate two days earlier. While over northern Louisiana, Laura weakened to tropical storm status. Early on August 28, the storm weakened further, dropping to tropical depression status while over Arkansas. By that time, it was moving north-northeastward ahead of the westerly flow. Over the next day, Laura turned further east and eventually degenerated to a post-tropical cyclone over Kentucky on August 29.<sup>2</sup>

Laura, the strongest storm to hit Louisiana since 1856, has left severe damage to high-voltage transmission lines and other key infrastructure. The category 4 hurricane, damaged or destroyed about 500 electric poles and restoring power will be a long process. According to power outage tracking website poweroutage.us, over 309,000 customers remain without power in Louisiana. Some 54,000 are still impacted in East Texas<sup>3</sup>.

## DAMAGE ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE

### United States

Hurricane Laura left terrible devastation in her wake in Louisiana and Texas. Hundreds of thousands of people are without power or water as the region copes with the compounding effects of heat advisories and the coronavirus pandemic. Many roads are still closed due to downed trees and power lines, making access into some of the hardest-hit areas challenging. Many parishes still face evacuation orders in Louisiana, and it could be months before power is restored. While the full extent of damage is unknown, preliminary estimates indicate that thousands of homes could either be destroyed or have significant damage across Louisiana and Texas.

<sup>2</sup> [Weather Prediction Centre. NOAA. Post-Tropical Cyclone LAURA. Advisory no. 38. 29 August 2020.](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.foxbusiness.com/energy/louisiana-power-outages-hurricane-laura-oil-output-production-storm-aftermath>

The American Red Cross (AmCross) mobilized nearly 1,000 trained disaster workers to support relief efforts on the ground or virtually. AmCross has teams of volunteers circulating through accessible areas to assess the damage and provide ready-to-eat meals, water, and snacks. Beginning August 30, the American Red Cross and our partners set up service sites in Calcasieu and Beauregard parishes to provide water, food, and emergency relief supplies to the affected population. On the evening of August 29, various agencies helped about 20,000 people stay in emergency lodgings, including shelters and, in some instances, hotels. As people can return to their local communities after evacuating, AmCross will help ensure they have a safe place to go. AmCross workers are also helping to replace prescription medications, eyeglasses and offer emotional support to people whose lives have been turned upside down. In preparation to serve tens of thousands of meals daily, the AmCross is working with the World Central Kitchen, the Salvation Army, and the Southern Baptist Convention to set up kitchens.



*AmCross disaster workers supporting relief efforts. Source: AmCross, 31 August 2020.*

## IFRC ACTIONS

Close coordination has been constant and ongoing between the Americas Regional Office in Panama, the American Red Cross in Washington and the American Red Cross, Regional Delegation for The Americas.

This information bulletin has been prepared and coordinated in collaboration between the Americas Regional Office in Panama and the American Red Cross.

The IFRC de-activated its Regional virtual Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and activated its internal protocol. Alerts for these emergencies will be discontinued, and new disturbances will continue to be monitored.

### Resources

- [GO Platform](#) is constantly updated. Check future [Field Reports](#) from National Societies for updates.
- Regional [Preparedness dashboard](#)
- [Hurricane monitoring Dashboard](#).
- [2020 Regional Contingency Plan](#)
- [Twitter IFRC Americas](#)

## Contact information

**For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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#### How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.