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Information bulletin

Dominica: Tropical Storm Erika

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Date of issue: 28 August 2015	
Date of disaster: 27 August 2015	Point of contact: Kathleen Pinard-Byrne, Director-General, Dominica Red Cross Society
Operation start date: 28 August 2015	
Host National Society: Dominica Red Cross	
Number of people affected: Approximately from 10,000 to 20,000 people	Number of people to be assisted: Not available at this time
No. of National Societies currently involved in the operation: Dominica Red Cross, the Regional Intervention Platform for the Americas and the Caribbean (PIRAC), of the French Red Cross	
No. of other partner organizations involved in the operation: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	

This bulletin is being issued for information-sharing purposes only, and it reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Dominica Red Cross, with the support of the IFRC, will request a DREF once initial assessments and immediate needs information is available.

[<Click here for detailed contact information>](#)



Flooded section of the airport. Source: Dominica Red Cross

The situation

The island of Dominica sustained significant damage due to the passage of Tropical Storm Erika on Thursday, 28 August. A band of torrential rain caused by the system resulted in the 6 to 8 inches of rainfall in less than twelve hours and triggered massive flooding and several landslides.

Regional media reports indicate that Regional governments and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) are stepping in to help Dominica after recording loss of at least 14 lives and millions of dollars in damage. More than 20 people are also reported missing and presumed dead. There is minimal damage to the main hospitals in the capital and the north of the island with some damage to health clinics reported. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) provided a helicopter to Dominica from the organization's base in Miami to assist with response efforts.

The immediate national efforts are centered on search and rescue effort. The government of Dominica requested assistance in search and rescue, medical support and damage assessment. CDEMA and other regional partners, including PAHO, are currently deploying teams to the country. The French government has also provided one helicopter to assist with the search and rescue efforts. Initial reports from French

Civil Defence indicate that the most affected area is Petite Savanne (currently accessible by sea or air), which is an area with an estimated population of 1,200, where 20 houses were destroyed and 50 houses were damaged.

Most of the main roads are impassable and several bridges are blocked or damaged. The provision of essential services (water, electricity) has been disrupted, and landline and mobile phone service is intermittent. The agricultural sector and consequently livelihoods has been significantly impacted due to crop losses. All air and sea ports are closed pending further assessments.

The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) of the Office of Disaster Management (ODM) was established at an alternate location as ODM's headquarters is inaccessible at the moment.

There are reports of several landslides and massive flooding in Dominica. The essential service teams (including Dominica Red Cross) are currently in the field to conduct a rapid assessment. However, as the island continues to be impacted, it is still too early to provide comprehensive information on the situation.

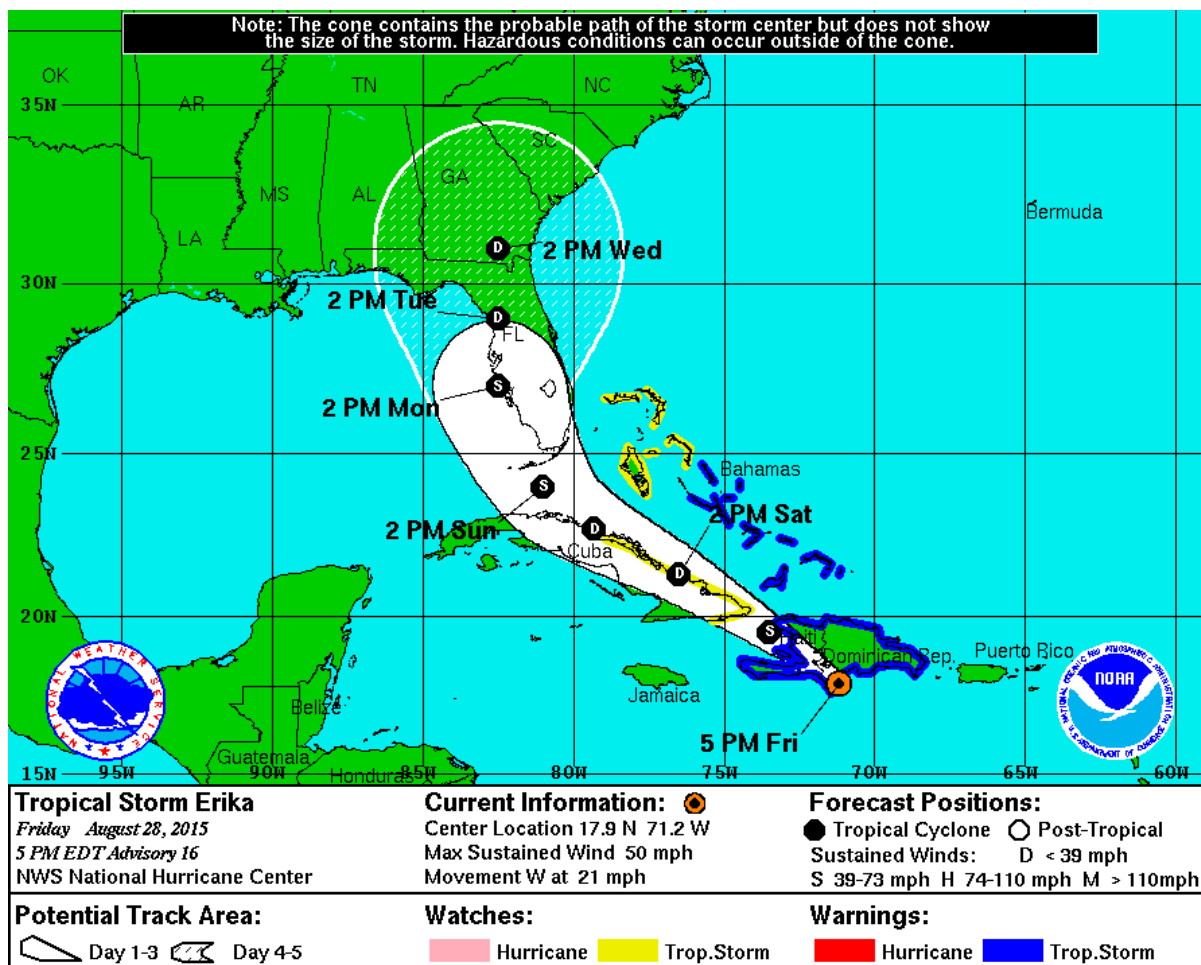
Main affected areas:

- The island has been affected by torrential rains since 2 a.m. on 28 August.
- Houses along the shores of the rivers have been damaged and flooded
- Electricity is down in some areas
- Telephone and mobile network services are intermittent
- Internet is down
- 5 people have died as a result of landslides (3 people in Good Hope, and two brothers drowned in the Bath Estate River); in total, there have been 35 deaths.
- The airport is closed and currently flooded
- Many roads are impassable
- Several bridges are damaged or structurally unsafe
- The Office of Disaster Management building is not accessible. The National emergency operation centre (EOC) was established at 1:30 p.m. today at an alternate location
- The National Society's headquarters has not been affected

On 28 August, the Dominica Red Cross informed the Americas regional office in Panama by telephone that the rain had stopped, but many communities are isolated as roads and bridges are affected. There are approximately 20,000 people on the island without cellular service. There were two communities in the south that were impacted by a landslide that left 30 people missing. There is shortage of water, food supplies and milk for babies. An estimated 10,000 to 20,000 people have been affected; however, the exact number of affected people cannot be determined at this moment. There is one main hospital in the capital city, but it has limited resources and personnel. There is one hospital in the northern part of the island, but it can only be accessed by air. There are 52 health centres on the island, but some have been flooded.

Tropical Storm Erika current situation

At the time of the writing this information bulletin, Erika was headed toward the Dominican Republic with heavy rains and gusty winds.



Summary of watches and warnings in effect as of 4 p.m. (Panama time) 28 August:

A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for...

- * Dominican Republic
- * Haiti
- * Southeastern Bahamas
- * Turks and Caicos Islands
- * Central Bahamas

A Tropical Storm Watch is in effect for:

- * North-western Bahamas
- * The Cuban Provinces of Ciego de Avila, Camaguey, Las Tunas, Holguin, and Guantanamo

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The National Society is continuously in communication with the IFRC. There continue to be delays in reaching volunteers due to the intermittent availability of telecommunication services. Many of the Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) have been in contact with the National Society, and they will relay information as the communication systems allow. A national hotline operated jointly by ODM and the Dominica Red Cross Society has been established. The public has been advised to contact 1 (767) 448-8280 for information.

Volunteers are conducting initial damage assessment and relief distribution in collaboration with the local fire service and police department in the accessible communities. The National Society has pre-positioned household supplies stock for up to 300 families. A limited number of hygiene kits and cleaning kits are also available. Some of the immediate relief items required will include food, water and building supplies.

The French Red Cross headquarters confirms that PIRAC will deploy 2 people to assist with damage assessments and water and sanitation if necessary. PIRAC reported that the Regional Council of Martinique activated a Caribbean solidarity mechanism to ship resources to Dominica as needed. French Civil Defense has also launched aerial reconnaissance to conduct an initial situation overview of the island, and it will determine other actions following the results of the initial overview.

Since the onset of the emergency, the IFRC has maintained daily contact via telephone and electronically to support the development of an initial plan of action to deploy IFRC disaster management coordinators and initial operational costs, including preliminary assessments. The IFRC's emergency operations centre in Panama has been activated and coordination meetings have been held and will be ongoing through WEBEX. Please contact PADRU to join these meetings. Two IFRC disaster management delegates will be deployed on 29 August to Dominica to support the National Society with rapid assessments and for the drafting of a DREF plan of action or an emergency appeal depending upon the extent of the damages.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **IFRC Regional Representation:** Lorraine Mangwiro: email: Lorraine.Mangwiro@ifrc.org
- **IFRC Regional office in Panama:** Inigo Barrena, PADRU coordinator; email: c.i.barrena@ifrc.org.
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- **Regional Logistics Unit (RLU):** Stephany Murrillo, email: stephany.murillo@ifrc.org.

For Resource Mobilization and Pledges:

- **In IFRC Regional Office in Panama:** Ursula Araya, email: Ursula.araya@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- **In IFRC Regional Office in Panama:** Priscilla Gonzales, email: priscila.gonzales@ifrc.org



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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 Disaster 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.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.