

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## UNITED STATES: HURRICANE IN FLORIDA STATE

17 August 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

**This Information Bulletin (no. 01/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.**

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

### The Situation

Hurricane Charley, one of the most destructive hurricanes in recent years, caused widespread damage across the state of Florida in the United States on Friday, 13 August. Charley was a Category 4 hurricane as it passed over the Florida panhandle, causing 19 deaths and leaving behind an estimated USD 15 billion worth of damage. The hurricane made landfall on Friday afternoon in one of the most heavily populated parts of the state. Heavy winds knocked down trees and power lines, ripped the roofs off of houses and destroyed mobile homes in the storm's path. The hurricane later weakened as it passed over North and South Carolina, causing only minor damage. Hundreds of thousands of people were left without electricity and water, and many were left homeless. President George W. Bush declared the region a disaster area, which means that Federal funds have been made available for the relief and clean-up effort.

Hurricane Charley was a Category 1 storm as it passed just south of Jamaica and over the Cayman Islands, bringing heavy rains and high winds. In Jamaica, a man was killed trying to rescue six other people from floods that occurred in St. Elizabeth parish, on the country's southern coast. There were reports of flooding and downed trees in both countries, which closed down roads, submerged crops and caused brief power outages. Hurricane Charley later strengthened to a Category 2 hurricane as it moved north over Cuba. Hurricane warnings were in

affect throughout the central and western regions of the country, and the hardest-hit areas were Pinar del Rio, Cienfuegos and La Habana. Some 235,000 people were evacuated from these provinces as the storm approached. In the city of Havana, 49,000 people were evacuated from precarious colonial-era building. There were three reported deaths in Cuba.

By the numbers: Hurricane Charley's damage in the United States

Estimated damage	Approx. USD 11 billion*
People without power	890,000
People who have applied for disaster aid	11,000
People the state has requested housing for	10,000
National Guard troops who have been activated	4,400

\*Includes only insured homes

Source: The Associated Press

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The response to Hurricane Charley has been the largest American Red Cross (ARC) response to a natural disaster. In preparation for Hurricane Charley, 32 shelters were opened throughout Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina with a total population of 46,839. There are currently 30 shelters open in Florida. Some 98 emergency response vehicles have been deployed to the most affected areas in Florida and 76,376 meals and snacks had been served as of 1 p.m. Saturday, 14 August.

The ARC is working with the Southern Baptists to feed 100,000 people a day. Seven kitchens are supporting Red Cross fixed and mobile feeding operations in Fort Myers, Wauchula and Arcadia, Florida. Trailers with comfort kits and clean-up kits have reached the most affected areas and are being distributed. Comfort kits contain items such as soap, shampoo, wash cloths and razors to meet basic hygiene needs. Clean up kits consist of a bucket, broom, mop and sponge, as well as cleaning and disinfecting solutions.

The Response Centre in Falls Church recruited 80 Disaster Services Human Resources System workers and 45 local volunteers to help staff round-the-clock operations. The Disaster Services Human Resources System (DSHR) is a database of trained volunteers who are able to respond to regional or national disasters within the USA. A total of 650 trained DSHR Red Cross workers were deployed to supplement the Florida chapters' local volunteers and assist them with their communities' recovery efforts.

Three Emergency Communications Response Vehicles (ECRV) are in Florida in Fort Meyer and Port Charlotte. Each ECRV supplies an additional 50 phone lines from the vehicles. Six communications "Flyaway Kits" are already in place in Orlando, which can also supply additional phone lines.

The American Red Cross webpage ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)) contains additional information about the Red Cross response to Hurricane Charley, as well information about donating to the ARC's Disaster Relief Fund.

*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>*

*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

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