

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 KATRINA

1 September 2005

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 Bulletin (no. 03/2005) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. The American Red Cross webpage (www.redcross.org) contains additional information about the response to Hurricane Katrina, as well as information on donating to the National Disaster Relief Fund.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

As the weakened remainder of Hurricane Katrina continued on a northern path along the east coast and east-central parts of the United States, its impact is now becoming clear in terms of the heavy death toll, widespread destruction, and the need to immediately provide critical assistance to thousands. The situation is critical in the worst affected gulf states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, particularly the city of New Orleans.

Latest reports estimate deaths could be in the thousands, and extensive wind and water damage is currently being assessed throughout the affected area where an estimated two million customers reportedly have lost power. Electricity is expected to remain out for several weeks. In Louisiana, Entergy reports power has been restored to 253,000 customers, while 643,146 customers remain without electrical service. Mississippi Power reports, after assessing three-fourths of the company's 8,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines, that approximately 70 percent will need to be rebuilt or repaired. They estimate it may be as long as four weeks to restore service in the worst hit areas to all customers who can receive it. Entergy reports 194,825 of their customers in Mississippi remain without electrical service. Alabama Power reports (as of 10 AM, Wednesday) 320,089 customers were without power throughout the company's service territory. Outages by division are as follows: Birmingham

(79,313), Tuscaloosa (62,289), Mobile (173,632) and Anniston (4,855). While urgent rescue and evacuation efforts continue to be the focus of relief efforts, there is serious concern over the lack of sanitation, clean water and food, including the potential threat of the outbreak of water borne diseases (the authorities have declared a state of emergency for the health situation). Authorities report that 80 percent of the city of New Orleans is under water, and media sources report the water level still rising due in part to broken levees and failed water pumps in the city. Meanwhile, security has become a serious concern as reports of looting increase, and rescue workers (as well as National Guard and police units) are diverted to contain the looting and lawlessness. Latest news reports indicate some 60,000 people are awaiting evacuation from New Orleans, primarily to Houston, Texas, some 350 miles away.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The full extent of Hurricane Katrina's devastation has become clear, and the task of responding effectively has grown proportionally. The full force of the U.S. Government is being brought to bear on the relief effort to meet the immediate needs of the thousands of desperate people who require assistance and relief. The American Red Cross (ARC) is working closely with other partner agencies and groups in the federal government and the non-profit community, and is coordinating efforts with local, state and federal agencies and partners to meet the enormous needs of thousands across seven states. The ARC is undertaking unprecedented relief efforts to bring lifesaving aid to tens of thousands left devastated by Katrina.

The ARC has launched a massive emergency relief effort, and continues to work intensively with partners to provide food and shelter to the victims in the affected areas. Close to 3,000 staff have been assigned to work on this disaster, more than 270 shelters have been opened (with many others on standby to open if needed) and over 76,000 people are currently being provided shelter¹. In coordination with the Southern Baptists, preparations are underway to build up to serving nearly 500,000 hot meals each day, and over 170,000 were served in the last 24 hours.

As ever-worsening conditions continue to become apparent, the American Red Cross warns residents to heed instructions from authorities. Rising water levels, impassable roads, downed power lines, sporadic gas fires and damaged structures all continue to be major hazards. Although the storm has passed, many affected areas are under new evacuation orders as levees are compromised and rushing waters rise.

Texas officials, supported by the ARC, have developed a plan to transport approximately 23,000 refugees from Louisiana to the Houston Astrodome for shelter and feeding services. The Red Cross is working closely with the government and health services partners, to develop health strategies and preventative measures to help the public and relief workers cope with the recently declared public health emergency. Based on the generosity of the American people, the ARC stands ready to meet the massive challenge of helping to rebuild lives.

The ARC instructs the public that best way to help is by making an online contribution to the Disaster Relief Fund at www.redcross.org. Or one can also help by calling 1-800-HELP-NOW. The American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to those in need for this disaster and thousands of other disasters across the country each year.

Individual Client Services

- has sent out chapter guidance regarding the handling of evacuees in unaffected areas, as well as packets to strategic partnership associations to recruit non-DSHR members for a project to be called Partners for Effective Emergency Response (PEER).
- physicians from Harvard University and Johns Hopkins University are at ARC national headquarters working with health services to develop health strategies for both the public and response workers.

Community Services

¹ Shelter numbers fluctuate based on the time of day. As a storm leaves an area, shelters normally close except for a few that remain open to house those people who cannot return home.

Mobile Feeding Vehicles: 94 Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) are in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama distributing food; 86 more are en route and will be distributing food within 24 hours, partnered with the Adventists and Second Harvest to do food distribution in Louisiana.

Sheltering

The ARC is mobilizing to provide blankets, cots, and food for the transfer of hurricane survivors from the Superdome in New Orleans to the Astrodome in Houston.

Feeding

- Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) sites are feeding at 20,000 meal/day capacity in:
 - Ø Mississippi: one SBC kitchen cooking in Meridian, seven SBC kitchens en route and one SBC kitchen moving.
 - Ø Alabama: one SBC kitchen cooking in Mobile, one will be cooking dinner tonight (1 September - Woodsman of the World kitchen-ARC supported) and one SBC kitchen en route.
 - Ø Louisiana: one SBC kitchen cooking in Alexandria and eight kitchens are en route.
- moving the Spirit of America to Covington, LA and Henry's Kitchen to Wiggins, Mississippi.
- Sysco Kitchen is in Baton Rouge awaiting areas of need to be better identified for site placement tomorrow (2 September).
- ten SBC kitchens (with a daily capacity of 200,000) are on stand by to set up in areas as needs are better identified.

Partner Services

- Government/Emergency Management Liaison: Red Cross liaisons continue to support the Emergency Operations Centers in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama in providing for the mass care needs of the affected populations by sharing critical response information, offers and requests to state emergency management partners.
- Federal: the Department of Homeland Security Secretary declared that the damage wreaked by Hurricane Katrina was an Incident of National Significance and activated the National Response Plan, which will ensure the best possible coordination of all Federal, state, local, NGO and business disaster response resources.
- Red Cross was deployed as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Housing Association Command Task Force.

Material Support Services

Logistics staff have been deployed to the Astrodome in Houston, Texas and are working on equipment requirements with Federal Government.

Public Affairs

- have fielded more than 800 media inquiries yesterday and the level of activity continues to increase.
- eight RRT members on the ground – two in Washington, DC and more on the way, and are formulating messages on emerging issues e.g., evacuation from the Astrodome.
- are updating CrossNet and pushing messages to the field.
- is working with the Federation's media service office in Geneva in facilitating international media requests.
- President Marty Evans was featured on all major networks Tuesday, August 30.

Fundraising

- NBC will be conducting a commercial-free telethon to benefit the American Red Cross on Friday night between 8pm-9pm EDT from Rockefeller Center in New York City. The show, will be hosted by Brian Williams and Matt Lauer, and will show graphics with 800-HELP-NOW and www.redcross.org

Preparedness

Efforts are focusing on creating a community building and education outreach project for long-term shelters with the highest populations and greatest need to help in community building within shelters, and addressing the stressful situations and providing tools and strategies for successfully interacting with others in the shelter

communities. The ARC will use the Masters of Disaster and Facing Fear curriculum materials with youth and their families. A multi-function team will coordinate and conduct train-the-trainer workshops to engage leaders and educators currently being sheltered in order to create a self-sustaining community effort and coordination of ongoing activities. A turn-key approach will be utilized to ensure efforts can be duplicated as needed.

Biomedical Services

- the Alabama & Gulf Coast Region cancelled six blood drives today (collection loss of 150 units).
- the Alabama & Gulf Coast Region delivered 41 blood products to Memorial Hospital Gulfport.
- ARC national headquarters has sent an engineer to survey/assess damage at Mobile and Biloxi.
- BSOC relayed information to HHS regarding a failing generator at the Gulfport Hospital. HHS has forwarded a request to FEMA to for action.

Response and Activation of Other Agencies

Texas officials have worked out a plan to bring up to 23,000 refugees from the Superdome to Houston's Astrodome. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco has said she wanted the Superdome evacuated within two days, along with other gathering points for storm refugees. The situation inside the dank and sweltering Superdome was becoming desperate: The water was rising, the air conditioning was out, toilets were broken, and tempers were rising. Blanco said the devastation in New Orleans was deepening, and there was no choice but to abandon the city. Red Cross will be supporting Astrodome sheltering with catered feeding, shelter operations and registration.

The Pentagon began mounting one of the biggest search-and-rescue operations in U.S. history, sending four Navy ships to the Gulf Coast with drinking water and other emergency supplies, along with the hospital ship USNS Comfort search helicopters and eight swift-water rescue teams. Red Cross workers from across the country converged on the devastated region. U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt said 2,500 patients would be evacuated from hospitals in Orleans Parish, but it wasn't immediately clear where they would be moved.

Police were working to get more generators to Charity Hospital and its 300 patients. The most critically ill would be evacuated first, with the rest to go later this week. Other hospitals were also scrambling to get patients out. Tenet Healthcare Corp. said it was evacuating its 317-bed Memorial Medical Center and 187-bed Lindy Boggs Medical Center in New Orleans. The company's 203-bed Kenner Regional Medical Center in Kenner, 207-bed Meadowcrest Hospital in Gretna, and 174-bed NorthShore Regional Medical Center in Slidell remained open with back-up power but also suffered water and wind damage.

Teams of medical specialists from eight states outside the affected area have been deployed to the Gulf Coast states to assist in the response effort to Hurricane Katrina. Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) deployed the Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMAT) to be ready to assist communities in the area with emergency medical needs following Hurricane Katrina. The states sending DMAT teams are Massachusetts, Washington, North Carolina, Nevada, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. DMAT teams play a critical role in the medical response to a disaster by assisting communities whose local resources may be overwhelmed," said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. Nearly 936,000 Entergy customers in Louisiana remain without power. Mississippi Power reports, after assessing three-fourths of the company's 8,000 miles of transmission and distribution lines, that approximately 70 percent will need to be rebuilt or repaired. They estimate it may be as long as four weeks to restore service in the worst hit areas to all customers who can receive it. Alabama Power reports as of 10 AM, Wednesday, 320,089 customers were without power throughout the company's service territory. Outages by division are as follows: Birmingham (79,313), Tuscaloosa (62,289), Mobile (173,632) and Anniston (4,855).

The International Federation continues to provide support to the American Red Cross, as needs require. Dialogue continues related to the need for any possible assistance from participating national societies, from the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), located in Panama City, Panama, or through the Federation's international disaster response mechanisms.

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