

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

3 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. 05/2005) is being issued for information only, and is based on updates from the American Red Cross (ARC), reflecting 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 on the evolving situation, the relief response to Hurricane Katrina, as well as information on donating to the National Disaster Relief Fund. To access information in Spanish please refer to the ARC Spanish webpage www.cruzrojaamericana.org

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

The day after President Bush visited the area affected by Hurricane Katrina, media reports indicate that rescue and relief efforts are progressing amid two large fires that burned along the water front. The fires, and over 50 smaller blazes in the area, are unchecked because firefighting resources are thin on the ground and fire hydrants are dry. Most of the downtown area of the city of New Orleans remains under water. It is estimated that a million people have been left homeless across the Gulf coast.

Some 7,000 additional troops are reportedly being deployed to reinforce security in New Orleans and



to support the assistance effort, and the anticipated relief assistance to desperate people is now arriving. Rescue, relief, and assistance efforts continue to be geared up to attempt to deal with the enormity of the destruction and the critical needs.

Accurate estimates of the dead, injured, and missing still remain unavailable, but the latest unofficial reports from authorities project the death toll to be in the thousands. The health risks associated with this disaster continue to be very high. Acknowledging that anytime there is standing water mixed with sewage, corpses, and other contaminants, the risk for infection and disease skyrockets, and given the combined effects of heat, dehydration and injuries sustained by dirty, sharp and heavy debris materials, the danger is particularly acute in this situation. Authorities, including the American Red Cross (ARC), are responding to this situation by focusing on providing first aid in shelters and working with the emergency medical authorities to provide care for the more seriously injured.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The following summarizes the American Red Cross Mass Care activities over the last 2 days (2-3 September, 2005):

- Shelters – 284 American Red Cross shelters are open in 9 states: Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, Florida, Missouri and Georgia, with many more on standby.
- Evacuees – More than 94,300 evacuees are being sheltered.
- Emergency Vehicles – Nearly 240 Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) are now in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, with additional ERVs en route to the affected area. The Red Cross is working to engage additional vehicles for food distribution to survivors.
- Relief Workers – Thousands of Red Cross staff and volunteers across the country and from every part of the organization are working around the clock to serve the public need. More than 3,300 Red Crossers have left their families to serve in affected areas already, and the Red Cross is moving more than 600 additional workers into affected areas every day.
- Feeding – The Red Cross is working closely with several partners, including the Southern Baptist Convention, the Adventists and Second Harvest to provide emergency food to survivors and responders. In coordination with the Southern Baptists, preparations are underway to serve nearly 500,000 hot meals each day. More than 309,000 meals have been served in the last 24 hours.
- Houston Astrodome Shelter – The Red Cross is supporting government officials in the relocation and sheltering of more than 23,000 hurricane survivors travelling over 300 miles from New Orleans to Houston. In Dallas-Ft. Worth and San Antonio, the Red Cross and local partners are working to find dozens of facilities in which thousands of evacuees will find a safe, clean and comfortable environment.
- Health & Preventative Care – The Red Cross is working with government and health services partners to develop health strategies and preventative measures to help the public and relief workers cope with the serious public health emergency.

The American Red Cross has launched a website to help assist family members who are seeking news about relatives who lived in the path of Hurricane Katrina. Visit the “Family Links Registry” via www.redcross.org to register one, a missing relative or view the existing list of registrants. Due to the extent of the damage and the number of people displaced, concerned friends and family members are encouraged to visit the site daily to consult the list as it will be updated continuously.

The Red Cross has been meeting the needs of thousands of New Orleans residents in nearly 300 shelters throughout nine states since before Hurricane Katrina made landfall. In Dallas-Ft. Worth and San Antonio, the Red Cross and local partners are working closely together to find dozens of facilities in which thousands of evacuees will find a safe, clean and comfortable environment. The Red Cross, working with county health authorities and other community partners, is coordinating with medical professionals to open appropriate sites where health and emotional support services can be quickly provided to evacuating families. Accurate information is vital to evacuees and the Red Cross is in the process of training teams of public relations specialists to help meet the communication needs of evacuees and their loved ones.

In the face of such enormous destruction, the spirit and dedication of Red Cross volunteers is much evident in the public domain. Every day, more than 600 additional volunteers arrive to help distribute over 300,000 meals in over 280 shelters – a relief effort that eclipses all past relief efforts mounted by the Red Cross.



Individual Client Services *(photo care of the American Red Cross)*

The following is in place or underway:

- guidance has been developed and finalized regarding chapters providing emergency assistance.
- guidance has been developed regarding special transient accommodations to be posted on CrossNet as soon as possible.
- seven medical doctors and one nurse have been deployed through the PEER Disaster Services Human Resources (DSHR) System (program and Harvard/Johns Hopkins

partnership.

- a vendor agreement regarding reimbursement to vendors for supplies and transportation is being developed.
- Guidance scripts and training plans for a response call center are being developed.

Community Services

Feeding

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) sites are averaging 20,000 meals/day capacity, as follows:

- Mississippi: 13 SBC; 1 Pentecostal; and Henry’s Kitchens are operational and providing meals.
- Alabama: 2 SBC; 1 Woodsman of the World; and the Tallahassee, Florida chapter kitchens are operational and providing meals.
- Louisiana: 11 SBC; Spirit; and Pine Bluff kitchens are operational and providing meals, The Sysco kitchen is onsite in Lafayette and will be operational tomorrow (4 September).

Material Support Services

Logistics *(photo care of the American Red Cross)*

The following is in place or underway:

- coordination for the use of ten loaned refrigerator units in Louisiana.
- coordination the shipping of bulk distribution items.
- working with local vendors in Baton Rouge on trailer storage.
- distribution arrangements for 5,000 cots, 2,500 airbeds, 5,000 towels, and a variety of bulk distribution items.
- work with the Southern Baptists to purchasing food for kitchen sites.



Response Technology

The following is in place or underway:

- coordinating with American Amateur Radio League (AARL) to recruit 750 radio operators to volunteer and be deployed to kitchens, shelters, etc.
- set up seven station phone bank for shelter support.
- working with DIRECTV to accept donation of TVs in shelters.
- sending the Montgomery radio communications vehicle to Gulfport.
- accepting an offer from the AOL company for two communications vehicles (scheduled to arrive on Monday, 5 September).

Safety and Security

The following is in place or underway:

- arranging security personnel for the Disaster Response Operations (DRO's).
- working with chapter support representatives (CSR) on calls from chapters to address the security issues.
- dealing with emergency calls relating to immediate life safety.
- for non- immediate life safety or security issues, tasking information and addressing issues with the chapter leadership.

Organizational Support

Public Affairs

The following is in place or underway:

- sending out three press releases each day.
- supporting the communications effort for the 16 states receiving evacuees.
- seeking partnerships with public affairs professionals who can work in the field.
- numerous writers and photographers for redcross.org have been deployed along the Gulf Coast.
- fielding hundreds of calls each day with the number growing and international interest continues.

Fundraising

The following is in place or underway:

- conference calls with service area development directors.
- preparing for telethons.
- assessing numerous in-kind requests.
- taking requests for corporate coded links.

Response Center (total calls):

- 819 in Florida.
- 2,904 in Louisiana.
- 1,169 in Alabama.
- 2,513 in Mississippi.

Partner Services

Government/Emergency Management Liaison: the Mississippi Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is experiencing technical difficulties with their communications systems and has no consistent email or telephone connections. Requests, offers and information flow are affected.

Non-Government: fuel is the biggest constraint facing voluntary agency responders distributing resources. Voluntary agencies are receiving offers from *ad hoc* groups for housing assistance of all types including individual homes, apartment buildings and hotels.

Community Relations Liaison staff has undertaken the following:

- the Louisiana community liaison identified and provided immediate support for a non-Red Cross shelter of 200 Vietnamese evacuees through community resources.

- provided over 1,200 red cell, 35 aphaeresis and 56 fresh frozen plasma units into the affected areas (through Thursday) in support of the relief effort.
- Is waiting to hear from the Department of Defense on what support will be needed in the hospitals being established by the military throughout the gulf area.

International Services: the American Red Cross, with the support of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, has launched a web site to help assist family members seeking news about loved ones living in the path of Hurricane Katrina. Volunteers are being recruited through the International Federation (Secretariat) from foreign countries including Australia, Finland, Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Germany, Canada and Norway. Mexico is sending six EMTs to work in a shelter support role.

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