

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

15 September 2005

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS, SHELTERS, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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. 11/2005) is being issued for information only. It 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, a tracing link, 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

Click here to view a detailed map of the location of international delegates

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

In the United States: American Red Cross National Headquarters, Stacy Ragan, Operations Lead; email ragans@usa.redcross.org; phone 1-202-303-5089; fax 1-202-303-0059; Media and Public Affairs; phone 1-202-303-5551; Nadia Mitchem, Fundraising; email mitchemn@usa.redcross.org; phone 1-202-303-4826

In Geneva for all enquiries from National Societies:

- *Linda Stops, Operations Coordinator, Operations Support Department, Geneva; email linda.stops@ifrc.org, phone 41-22-730-4300, fax 41-22-733-0395 or Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, Geneva; email luis.luna@ifrc.org, phone 41- 22-730-4274, fax 41-22-733-0395*
- *In Geneva, contact the Media and Public Relations Unit, phone 41-22-730-4357, fax 41-22-740-0275*

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>

Background

Hurricane Katrina, one of the most destructive hurricanes in recent U.S. history, has resulted in about 500 fatalities, primarily in Mississippi and Louisiana, but also in Florida, Alabama, and Georgia, tens of thousands of

displaced people, and in 90,000 square miles of land having been declared a disaster. The damage to highways and bridges is estimated at about US \$3 billion.

Search and rescue operations have started to wind down, and flood waters have begun to recede. Recovery efforts are underway. While there have been no reports of widespread illnesses, there have been reports of injuries.

Efforts continue to clear debris and pump water out of New Orleans, Louisiana, on Tuesday, 13 September, 2005, and the first post-Katrina commercial flight arrived at the newly re-opened Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. The flight reportedly carried about two dozen people, most of whom were emergency workers. The Port of New Orleans was also expected to make its first post-Katrina shipment on Tuesday.

The American public and disaster responders are being cautioned to limit contact with contaminated flood waters and to be wary of dirty, sharp, or heavy debris material that may pose serious health threats to survivors.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The first priority of the American Red Cross before, during, and after any disaster is to provide safe shelter, food and safe drinking water, as well as emotional support. This is standard across the more than 70,000 disasters the Red Cross responds to each year.

Volunteers

Domestic volunteers: Numerous American Red Cross disaster volunteers and staff – some of whom lost their own homes – are devoting themselves to this around-the-clock disaster response effort. To date, the American Red Cross has involved a total of about **80,000** relief workers from all **50** states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands in this disaster response. These volunteers are sparing no effort to meet this unprecedented need. Meanwhile, the American Red Cross has trained an additional **63,000** people in specialized disaster relief skills.

On Monday, 12 September 2005, the American Red Cross launched the single largest volunteer recruitment effort in the national society's history. In the days to come, American Red Cross chapters across the U.S. will recruit and train 40,000 new American Red Cross volunteers to help bring safe shelter, food, and comfort to those touched by Katrina, and help respond to needs in their own communities. Because volunteers will be active at a local level in providing assistance that may stretch over months and possibly even years to come, this recruitment effort will draw on the American Red Cross Disaster Services Human Resources Volunteer system. It will also seek new volunteers through the almost 900 local American Red Cross chapters across the country. As needs may arise, the American Red Cross may ask national societies for volunteers. Requests will be coordinated through the Federation's Secretariat. The American Red Cross and the Federation Secretariat have been receiving phone calls from individuals in different countries offering to volunteer as a result of recent publicity regarding the American Red Cross volunteer recruitment effort. It is important that national societies inform their public of the American Red Cross domestic recruitment process.

International volunteers: The American Red Cross has received much-appreciated support—and offers of support—from many national societies. Approximately **150** international delegates—requested and coordinated by the American Red Cross—from over a dozen International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Pan American Disaster Response Unit, and several national Red Cross societies have been provided. Nearly half of the delegates are providing logistics support. Others are assisting with client-, community-, staff-, and material support services. Still others are providing tracing and media support. American Red Cross coordinators deployed to Texas, Louisiana, and Alabama to receive international delegates and assist in integrating the delegates into the existing American Red Cross domestic disaster response system. As indicated on the map accompanying this bulletin, delegates are located in Louisiana (98), Mississippi (11), Alabama (15), Texas (24), and at American Red Cross National Headquarters in Washington, D.C. (6), where they are actively supporting response efforts targeted at providing food and shelter to tens of thousands of people affected by the disaster as well as meeting information needs. Nearly three weeks since Katrina struck, it is anticipated that over the course of the next few weeks some international deployments will conclude.

Shelters

The American Red Cross is determined to provide safe, temporary shelter for everyone who needs it. Since Hurricane Katrina first slammed ashore in Florida, the American Red Cross has housed more than **207,000** survivors providing about **2 million** overnight stays—in over **890** shelters across **24** states and the District of Columbia. Today, about **62,000** people are finding safety, food, water and comfort in over **340** shelters. The number and location of American Red Cross shelters fluctuates daily as they close, reopen, or move, depending on the need.

Amongst the assistance that Hurricane Katrina evacuees are finding in these shelters are warm meals, clothing, and personal comfort items, including deodorant, soap, toothbrush, personal products, and diapers. Mental and emotional care is provided, as is medical assessment, first aid, and medical care.

The American Red Cross protects the privacy of shelter residents. When any individual comes to the American Red Cross and seeks shelter or assistance, they are asked only enough basic information to identify them, meet any special dietary needs, and notify loved ones if needed and when possible.

Unaccompanied minors who arrive at American Red Cross shelters are assigned an American Red Cross disaster worker to stay with that youngster and see that his or her physical as well as emotional needs are met until the proper authorities are contacted. The child welfare agency of the community where the child is found is responsible for the child's custody and ultimate destination. This includes finding appropriate interim accommodations and locating – if possible – the child's parent or legal guardian. Rarely does an unaccompanied minor remain in a public shelter for very long, but while they are there, American Red Cross workers make the comfort and support of that child a high priority.

While some people who evacuated early found hotel accommodations, many are now discovering they cannot return home and are exhausting their financial resources. In a ramped-up version of a pre-existing American Red Cross emergency lodging program, the American Red Cross is covering the hotel costs for these individuals and families. As of 12 September, the American Red Cross is making it possible for **115,000** people who are running out of personal resources to remain in hotels in about **40** states. The national society is working through its network of local chapters in several states to integrate Hurricane Katrina survivors in new communities with all the benefits of long-time residents, as quickly as possible.

Financial Assistance

The American Red Cross is providing Hurricane Katrina survivors with emergency financial assistance, based on family size, in order for those who lived in the areas hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina to meet urgent needs until state and federal aid is available.

Please note that everyone affected by Hurricane Katrina is eligible for the same financial assistance, including foreign nationals. However, embassies and consulates have been reaching out to their citizens to offer many services, including repatriation and mental health services. The American Red Cross will continue to address issues specific to foreign nationals and service delivery, including those related to financial assistance.

Financial assistance may include client assistance cards, vouchers, checks and/or cash. Assistance is based on the cost of necessities such as food, toiletries and other essentials and is consistent with standard amounts that the American Red Cross uses for every disaster. The American Red Cross is expanding efforts to provide financial assistance to upwards of three quarters of a million survivors dispersed across the nation. The American Red Cross has already distributed financial assistance totaling more than US **\$100 million**.

Katrina Family Linking: The American Red Cross is carrying out Katrina Family Linking with the ICRC Central Tracing Agency through the ICRC Family Links Web site (www.familylinks.icrc.org). To date, over **190,000** people have registered online. People can also call the Katrina Family Linking Call Center at 1-877-LOVED-1S (1-877-568-3317). So far, about **120,000** people have called this hotline. Please note that this

information is available worldwide and not confidential. Tracing specialists from the ICRC and the British and Netherlands Red Cross national societies are supporting family linking in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Food: The American Red Cross, in coordination with the Southern Baptist Convention, has served more than **7.6 million** hot meals and more than **6.6 million** snacks to hurricane survivors. Meals are being provided at a rate of about 500,000 to 600,000 per day.

Health: Several hundred American Red Cross health service workers are in affected areas providing assistance, and American Red Cross disaster mental health services workers have provided assistance to more than **91,000** people, to date. More than 20 Mexican Red Crossers (trained paramedics) with Emergency Medical Technician training are supporting response activities in Houston, Texas.

Fundraising: Support for this response has poured in to the American Red Cross from generous financial gifts and pledges that, to date, are estimated to total over US **\$653.5 million**, including contributions sent or pledged by International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners. National Societies interested in supporting American Red Cross disaster response efforts on behalf of the Movement, their public, or their government are encouraged to contact the appropriate individual as listed on the first page of this bulletin. Please note that currently the American Red Cross does not require additional in-kind donations.

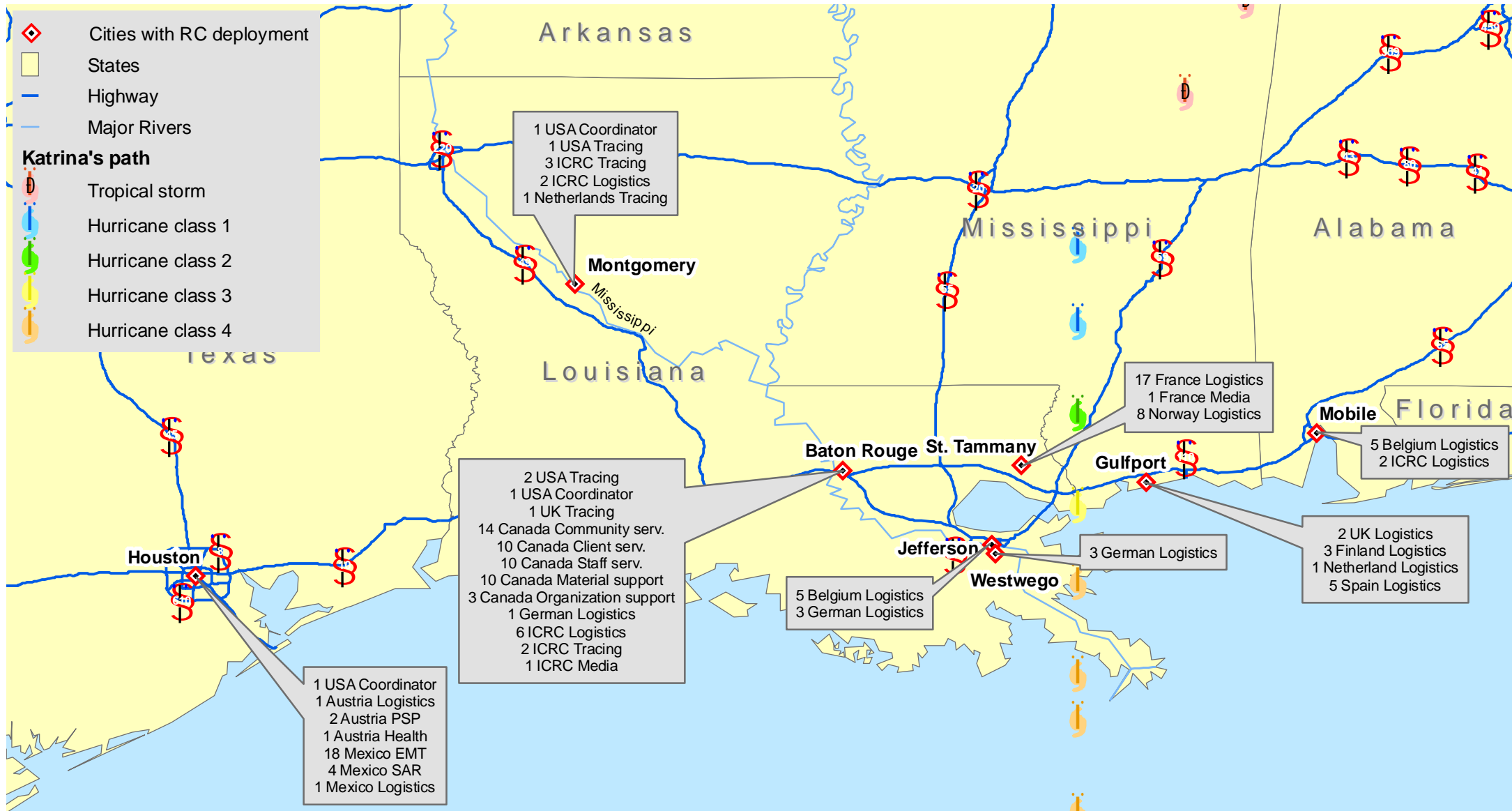
To assist in fundraising for the American Red Cross relief effort, all major U.S. broadcast media outlets have scheduled telethons in the coming days. These networks will reach a global audience, therefore Movement partners should please be advised that they may be impacted by these telethons. During the broadcasts, www.redcross.org will be the most heavily promoted vehicle through which to contribute to relief efforts due to giving difficulties.

The American Red Cross extends its gratitude to national societies that have activated fundraising campaigns, have activated their family link services, or have sent money or requested personnel to support this massive relief operation.

[Click here to return to the title page or contact information.](#)



International Delegates



The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.