

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Belize: Tropical Storm Arthur

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This bulletin is being published for information only. Torrential rainfall produced by tropical storm Arthur has affected all districts of Belize. Approximately 10,000 people are affected and seven people are reported dead. The Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS) is assessing the damages and needs at this time.

The BRCS and the International Federation have determined that after further evaluations are made, a DREF fund will most likely be allocated in order to support the National Society.

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Flooding in Belize.
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belize.

The Situation

Heavy rain across Belize caused rivers in southern and northern Belize to overflow. Tropical Storm Arthur formed on Saturday 31 May 2008 and made landfall in northern Belize on the Yucatan Peninsula before



Damaged roads in Belize.
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belize.

becoming the first named storm of the Atlantic Hurricane Season. The rains from Tropical Storm Arthur compounded the effects of Tropical Storm Alma which had developed in the Eastern Pacific on 27 May. Together, Alma and Arthur brought approximately 10 inches of rain across Belize within 36 hours, causing flash floods in low lying areas. This affected the infrastructure of the country: at least one bridge and part of a highway were damaged. Several other major bridges are reported to be under water including one between Belize City and Belmopan. There is flooding reported in northern Belize but also in other areas. One village has already been evacuated and shelters have been opened in both Corozal and Orange Walk. The electrical supply is being turned off in rural areas for safety reasons due to flooding

and submersion of the electricity meters. Belize River Valley communities are being flooded and face possible isolation as roads become impassable. The Belize Hydrological Department warns that forecasts are indicating continued rain and severe weather for the next 24-48 hours. Approximately 10,000 people are affected and seven people are reported dead.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The BRCS disaster management committee has been activated and met at 10:00am Monday, 2 June. All branches are activating their emergency plans and are conducting assessments. The Dangriga branch has offered to shelter 40 persons in its centre for four days. The Belmopan Chairperson is liaising with the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO). The Belmopan branch is preparing to assist with the provision of food to people who are currently being sheltered in the city. The Orange Walk Branch is preparing meals for persons in shelters and is delivering food packages to people who are staying with family members or friends. A Damage and Needs Assessment (DANA) team will travel to the Belize River Valley communities, to assess the situation in those communities. In addition, National Intervention Teams (NIT) from Stann Creek Branch were activated to carry out assessments of the situation in that area, including the living conditions and needs in shelters. BRCS is contacting other organizations in order to coordinate the response activities and avoid duplication of efforts. The Norwegian Red Cross is supporting activities with BRCS as part of the DIPECHO program in the Caribbean and will also be supporting the relief operation if necessary.



Floods in southern Belize are gravely affecting the area. Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belize

Upon request from BRCS, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) has deployed a Disaster Management delegate and a Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member specialized in logistics to support its operation and assist with the development of its plan of action in favour of those affected by the disaster.

How we work

All International Federation 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 is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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