

BAHAMAS: HURRICANE FLOYD

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The Disaster

Hurricane Floyd is rated as a category 5 force, raging over an area 950 kms wide with winds of more than 250 kms per hour, and forming a storm surge of flooding 6 meters above normal tide levels. Floyd passed over the Bahamas yesterday and early this morning, causing widespread destruction. It is expected that heavy rains and severe winds will continue through the surrounding area. Damage assessments are underway, but there is currently little information about the impact on the population of 260,000 persons in the Bahamas.

The hurricane is currently heading on a course towards Florida and the southeastern coast of the United States at a rate of 21 kms per hour. Two million people living in the coast have been evacuated from the area.

Red Cross / Red Crescent action

The Federation's Regional Delegation in Santo Domingo and the Bahamas Red Cross as well as other Red Cross Societies in the Caribbean, have been on the alert and following the track of Hurricane Floyd. The Regional Delegation is in contact with the Bahamas Red Cross to follow-up on damage assessments.

An alert message was issued yesterday to all Caribbean Red Cross Societies and to the media in the region informing them of the current situation. The American Red Cross office in Puerto Rico has been on standby to assist in relief operations. The St Marten Chapter of the Netherlands Red Cross has indicated that it is prepared to assist by providing relief supplies from existing stocks.

The Regional Delegation in Santo Domingo has assigned a delegate to assist the Bahamas Red Cross in radio communications.

On Monday, 13 September, the Bahamas Red Cross volunteer teams and staff opened hurricane shelters on New Providence Island (where Nassau, the capital, is located) to provide shelter and assistance to displaced persons, the elderly and other vulnerable groups or people in need. Sufficient food and water supplies for the first several days have been made available in the hurricane shelters. The Bahamas Red Cross is anticipating reports from the other islands in the archipelago.

Up until Monday evening, the Bahamas Red Cross indicated that they were managing the situation, but the telecommunication system was out of commission yesterday and further news is very difficult to obtain.

The American Red Cross is on full alert.

Needs

Updated information related to the damage caused and the results of the needs assessment will be communicated as soon as possible, and appropriate assistance measures will be formulated based on this information.

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