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Information Bulletin

Americas: Hurricane Irma



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Red Cross Movement actors currently involved in the operation: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), American Red Cross, Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross, British Red Cross overseas branches, Bahamas Red Cross Society, Canadian Red Cross Society, Cuban Red Cross, Dominican Red Cross Society, French Red Cross-PIRAC (Regional Intervention Platform for the Americas and the Caribbean), Haiti Red Cross Society, Italian Red Cross, Netherlands Red Cross overseas branches, Norwegian Red Cross, Saint Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society, Spanish Red Cross, Swiss Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).	
N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), United Nations system agencies (the United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], World Food Programme [WFP], Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UN-OCHA], International Organization for Migration [IOM]), Directorate General (DG)- European Community Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), Pan American Health Organization [PAHO], government of affected countries, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/ Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), among others.	

This bulletin is being issued for information only; it reflects the current situation and details available at this time. Information bulletins no.1, 2, 3 and 4 are available [here](#). This will be the last information update specifically related to Hurricane Irma.

The Situation

Irma, the 9th named hurricane of the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season, became a category 5 hurricane in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean on Tuesday, 5 September 2017. With maximum sustained winds near 297 kilometres per hour (k/h), Irma impacted the Caribbean Disaster Management Agency (CDEMA) Participating States of Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Virgin Islands (UK), Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis and Montserrat from Tuesday night into Wednesday evening, 6 September 06, 2017. Irma continued its destructive path and impacted Turks and Caicos Islands and the northern border of Haiti. On Friday, 7 September 2017, the south-eastern Islands of the Bahamas were impacted¹. According to UN-OCHA, Hurricane Irma affected an estimated 265,000 people, leaving 25 death and exposed 75,000 buildings to 252k/h winds in the Caribbean alone². Furthermore, Irma caused at least 31 deaths in US states of Florida, Georgia and South Carolina including 24 in Florida alone³ and an estimated USD\$50 billion in damages⁴.



Photo 1: Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross volunteers register affected individuals using their cellular phones at collective centres. Source: Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross.

¹ CDEMA Hurricane Irma- Situation Report #6, 9 pm AST, 13 September 2017

² UN-OCHA Hurricane Irma: Regional Response Plan for the Caribbean Region (September to December 2017)

Overall IFRC response to date to Hurricane Irma

2 Emergency Appeals⁵



9,500 families (47,500 people) to be assisted

2 DREF operations⁶



15 surge staff deployed

5 countries directly supported through IFRC operations

10 Red Cross Societies⁷ actively supporting the affected population in their territories

10 Red Cross Societies⁸ supporting affected sister National Societies with technical personnel



Antigua and Barbuda

The **Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross (ABRC)** has supported in the last few days with the registration of people in collective centres and affected by the hurricane, and damage and needs assessments. In addition, the IFRC team (7 members) are working jointly with the ABRC. Red Cross specialists were deployed to support detailed assessments and the market analysis for cash transfer programming planned under the operation.

The priority needs identified in Barbuda, which has been severely affected, include general items (e.g. generators, disposable wipes, water purifiers, water treatment tablets, water pumps, buckets, containers for storage, First Aid kits, painkillers, batteries, torches), food, basic household items (e.g. sleeping cots, mattresses, pillows, bed linen, towels and kitchen utensils), items for children and new-borns, toiletries and basic hygiene items for women and men, as well as construction materials



Saint Kitts and Nevis

The **Saint Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society** and the IFRC teams (3 members including a Field Assessment Coordination Team [FACT] shelter delegate and 2 RITs deployed) are in the field today conducting assessments, which will provide a detailed picture in relation to housing damages. (i.e. level of damage and associated repair cost estimation). Information remains as a challenge; however, the Red Cross has maintained coordination meetings with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to exchange information and coordinate relief efforts. NEMA will keep doing assessments in the affected area.

Commerce may increase as merchandise is being sent directly to the affected island. It is estimated that around 75 per cent of the population earn minimum wage; however, based on preliminary information gathered, it is enough to cover their needs. It is forecasted that farm/agriculture sector will require to import some goods to meet the demand of the population; the Government is already working on to address this sector. In addition, the authorities are launching a health campaign to prevent the spread of vector-borne diseases. Natives from St. Kitts & Nevis that were living in other islands are returning to the country.



British Overseas Territories

The British Red Cross has conducted the following actions:

- Surge Information Management Support (SIMS) remote support activated, base maps created for all islands.

³ Osborne, Mark and Emily Shapiro. "Irma death toll rises to 31 across 3 states". *ABC News*. 14 September 2017. <http://abcnews.go.com/US/irma-death-toll-rises-30-states/story?id=49814367>

⁴ Sullivan, Brian K. "A \$150 Billion Misfire: How Disaster Models Got Irma Wrong". *Bloomberg news*. 12 September 2017.

⁵ [Antigua & Barbuda, and St Kitts & Nevis EA \(MDR49009\)](#); [Cuba EA \(MDRCU004\)](#)

⁶ [Dominican Republic – DREF \(MDRDO010\)](#); [Haiti – DREF \(MDRHT014\)](#)

⁷ Red Cross Societies of Antigua & Barbuda, the Bahamas, British overseas branches, Cuba, Dominican Republic, French Overseas Branches, Haiti, Netherlands Overseas branches, St Kitts and Nevis, the United States of America.

⁸ Red Cross Societies of Canada, Costa Rica, the Bahamas, Denmark, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America.

- The French Red Cross (PIRAC) will move stock for 200 families to St. Martin on behalf of the British Red Cross; 30 per cent of the IFRC's Regional Logistics Unit (RLU) committed to overseas branches and a request from Turks and Caicos for non-food items (NFIs) for 500 families is in progress.
- Coordination and communication continues with the IFRC offices in Panama and Port of Spain as well as with the French and Netherlands Red Cross Societies.

Anguilla

- 15,000 people affected as estimated by the Government. 80 per cent of buildings have been damaged. The Affected population is without power and safe water as the desalination plant is damaged.
- Hospital damaged and no functioning operating theatres. Medical supplies are running low for some vulnerable individuals.
- Airport control tower and runway has been damaged and terminal destroyed, repairs are ongoing to be operational; airport likely to be reopened soon for relief and aid workers' flights.
- United Kingdom (UK) Ministry of Defence ship supported with emergency funds, relief items, search and rescue, repairing main hospital roof. The ship has now gone on to the British Virgin Islands.
- 5 Red Cross volunteers are working to assist the government with conducting the damage and needs assessment (DANA) across the island starting with West End and the Valley.

British Virgin Islands (BVI)

- Shelter is currently the biggest need identified as there is severe damage to houses. 50 per cent of residents across BVI are currently not in their own homes, many of whom are lodging with friends/relatives/in emergency centres.
- Security situation has improved and 500 British troops have now arrived to provide support and a curfew has been established.
- Urgent needs identified include food, drinking water, blankets and tarpaulins.
- An 1,800-tonne capacity barge carrying much needed food and emergency supplies from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines arrived in Tortola
- Red Cross volunteers conducted light search and rescue, and provided first aid. In addition, volunteers have supported shelter management and are assessing the main needs of the people in the collective centres.

Turks and Caicos

- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)/ Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) analysis identified 400 potentially damaged structures on Cockburn Island (51% of the total number of structures on the island)
- The main damage is on the island of Grand Turk and South Caicos with small populations and limited damage on Providenciales.
- Worst affected areas include: South Caicos, Salt Cay that is completely under water, and in Grand Turks, some areas in Provo such as Five Keys.
- The Red Cross branch received stock mobilized by the Canadian Red Cross Society (relief items for 500 families); 30 volunteers mobilized in total. The Red Cross team has supported with shelter management; and volunteers are now also supporting damage and needs assessment and relief distributions.



Cuba

The **Cuban Red Cross** is conducting damage and needs assessments, cleaning and sanitation activities in coordination with authorities. The Cuban Red Cross has maintained communication and coordination with Ministries working in the response, the Spanish Embassy, the European Union, AECID, Colombian Embassy, UN agencies. IFRC, Spanish Red Cross and Norwegian Red Cross delegates remain in Cuba supporting the CRC actions. The IFRC launched an emergency appeal to support 5,000 families for 7 million Swiss francs. Stock for 500 families provided by the Canadian Red Cross Society arrived to the island.

The country continues the recovery efforts following Hurricane Irma, with an emphasis on affected people protection, restoration of water supply and electricity services, and sanitation actions for public places. Based on information from United National, and coordination meetings between the Cuban Red Cross and the European Union shelter is among the most affected sectors. Damage assessments continue and **preliminary results point to 215,000 houses with total or partial damage**. Alone, in the provinces of Villa Clara and Ciego de Avila there are approx. 50,000 damaged homes. The United Nations estimate 5,7 million people affected by Hurricane Irma.

Basic services have not been re-established in central Cuba; stepping up the supply of water through water trucks and processed food supply has been established. Health infrastructure was also damaged. But, authorities maintain active epidemiological surveillance, and outbreaks of transmissible diseases have not been registered. Also, members of public institutions and the armed forces continue to collect solid waste and to clean obstructed streets, restore electrical services and prevent the appearance of infectious diseases. In addition, some 2,186 schools were affected.

Multidisciplinary groups of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (CITMA) started the assessment of the environmental impact of the hurricane and the strategic actions to face climate change (Tarea Vida). Damages to the agricultural sector are affecting the availability of food items. Due to this situation combined with the loss of crops and damages to livelihoods, it is estimated some 561,000 families will need basic food security support.



Dominican Republic

The Dominican Red Cross, jointly with a United Nations team, continued to conduct assessments of the areas affected by Hurricane Irma, which impacted more than 6,830 people in the provinces of Santiago, Valverde, Monesterri, Dajabón, Puerto Palata, Espaillat, Samana and Maria Trinidad Sanchez. Main areas of focus for the National Society are water and sanitation, shelter, health and livelihoods

- Three teams composed of technical experts from both the United Nations team and the Dominican Red Cross were deployed. Censuses were conducted in most affected communities to begin distributions.
- The Dominican Red Cross mobilized a Restoring Family Links team with the objective of determining the status of affected families and migrant population.
- A videographer /photographer will document the National Society's activities this week; the photographer produce audio-visual content for the National Society / IFRC channels.



French Overseas Territories

Information on the main needs and affection provided by the French Red Cross (FRC). In addition, FRC actions include:

Saint Martin:

- Initial evaluation for water supply, hygiene promotion and relief operation. First distributions ongoing, and water distribution material is on site.
- Assessment of the state of the territory's 9 evacuation centres
- Reception of PIRAC humanitarian stocks (shelter kits, cleaning kits, blankets, long-lasting insecticide treated [mosquito] nets, etc.) and additional containers with bottled water and equipment.
- Support and orientation to evacuees at Saint Martin airport
- In terms of damages, nearly 90 per cent of the main city's buildings destroyed or damaged, 69 per cent of which are housing; 25 per cent are completely destroyed. The desalination plants are out of service. Thus, water supply is covered through the distribution of bottled water, existing tanks, water trucking and private wells. The water distribution network is very affected and will require months to be fully functional.

St. Barthélemy:

- Water and food distribution carried out by the branch, as well as individual visits to isolated elderly persons.
- 70 per cent of the main city's buildings are affected, 72 per cent of which is housing.

Guadeloupe

- 130 m³ of humanitarian material and 80 staff and volunteers arrived to the island. To date, around 150 FRC volunteers and staff are on the affected islands.
- 1 evacuee reception centre at the airport (between 300 and 1,000 people per day)
- A RFL team activated: 355 missing registrations from 311 enquirers, 86 missing registrations closed as the person making who initiated the request restored contact



Haiti

The Haiti Red Cross Society continues to hold coordination meetings at the national level in Port-au-Prince with the Movement partners and the Humanitarian Country Team. At the department level, the Haiti Red Cross Society continues to coordinate with the Directorate of Civil Protection (DPC).

Assessments indicate that a total of 3,838 families have been affected in the northern departments. Preliminary assessments also indicate damage to several health facilities at all levels and destruction of equipment, and medical supplies, and access to health services and medical care delivery capacity has been significantly hampered in all the affected areas. There is a significant risk of increases in waterborne and vector-borne disease transmission following the hurricane, due to the deteriorated sanitary conditions and the lack of access to safe water in the affected communities. Mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue, chikungunya and Zika and the rodent borne Leptospirosis are of particular concern.

Red Cross distributions of pre-positioned non-food items to affected families began on 9 September: 425 Hygiene kits, 854 long-lasting insecticide treated [mosquito] nets, 352 jerry cans, 300 cholera kits, 203 kitchen sets and 45 shelter kits have been distributed to date.

Netherlands Overseas Territories

The **Netherlands Red Cross** (NLRC), with Red Cross of St Maarten and Curacao and Aruba, is providing relief goods to the most vulnerable people on the island and tarps for people that lost their roofs. The **local team now consists of almost 50 members**: 1 operations leader, 1 assessment leader, 1 information manager (IM) focal point, 1 shelter delegate, 3 RFL delegates, 4 Swiss RC members from the Logistics Emergency Response Unit (ERU), 2 volunteer teams with 13 volunteers each, 10 Red Cross St. Maarten volunteers, St. Maarten RC manager, 4 relief support delegates. Further deployments include 1 shelter, 1 finance delegates as well as 6 other members to Curacao, 1 WASH delegate and assessment leader.

The NLRC has focused on relief distributions and preparedness measures for the next hurricane, as well as sectorial assessments. The Netherlands Red Cross activated their own *Safe and Well site* (www.ikbenveilig.nl) for people in the affected areas to register themselves as safe and well. In addition, RFL is ongoing with 30 cases for active tracing, while further cases under follow-up and verification. Furthermore, a national aid campaign in the Netherlands raised over 13 million euros for Netherlands Red Cross relief to the affected islands.

Based on assessments, drinking water is still in short supply, water from unprotected wells and pipes are used for drinking water as well. The water quality is yet to be verified, but there are no reported cases of waterborne diseases.

St. Maarten is still in emergency response mode only; however, the situation is slowly improving, including the security situation as well as fuel availability. However, water and food continue to be scarce. The **Netherlands Red Cross estimates 90 per cent of the buildings in St Maarten have been damaged**. The NLRC distributed 250 tarpaulins in Cay Bay, and additional tarpaulin in Dutch Quarter. On 18 September, goods sent to St Maarten include 3,000 tarpaulins, 2,000 food parcels, 2,000 kitchen sets, 3 Pick-up trucks, 4 pallets Bottled water, as well as supplies and gear for local field team. Also, 500 food parcels were delivered to Saba to be pre-positioned and Statia was able to set up a food supply line from Saint Kitts for now.



United States of America and its territories

Irma ravaged much of Florida's 65,755 square miles. More than 670,000 are still without power and several rivers remain above flood stage. In the Florida Keys, officials estimate that 25 percent of the homes are destroyed and 90 percent damaged

The **American Red Cross** is providing food, shelter, health services and emotional support. Red Cross vehicles are fanning out in affected neighbourhoods, delivering meals and relief supplies to people cleaning up their homes. Also, Red Cross caseworkers are meeting with people still in collective centres to help get some normalcy back in their lives by identifying their needs and connecting them to services and resources to help begin their recover. **More than 88,000 relief items** like diapers, bug spray, cleaning supplies, coolers, and comfort kits containing deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste and other hygiene items **have been distributed by the American Red Cross across six states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands**.

To date, evacuation centres have provided more than half a million (541,000) overnight stays to people needing a safe place to go:

- In Florida, more than 3,200 people are in 47 evacuation centres.
- In Georgia, 24 people are in 1 centre.
- On the U.S. Virgin Islands, 162 people in 4 evacuation centres

With its partners, the **American Red Cross** has served more than 747,000 meals and snacks across six states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Mental health and health services professionals have provided more than 16,000 contacts to provide support and care to those affected across six states and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Nearly 3,000 Red Cross workers are responding to Irma now, with more than 300 more volunteers on the way. More than 120 emergency response vehicles have been activated to help.

The Danish Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross and Spanish Red Cross are deploying members to Florida and the Virgin Islands to help with the relief effort.

The American Red Cross committed USD\$100,000 to help meet the immediate needs of those affected in the Caribbean by Hurricane Irma.

IFRC actions

The IFRC has a communications delegate on the ground in Antigua and Barbuda, who is working to develop human interest stories, documenting the National Society's activities and engaging with the international media present in Antigua; this delegate will travel to Saint Kitts and Nevis this week if the weather conditions allow for it. In addition, the IFRC's communication team has developed an exclusive website (<http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/disaster-and-crisis-management/hurricane-irma/>) to disseminate information on the Hurricane Irma response.

The IFRC global surge system has offered to deploy communications, health, and planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER) team members to Antigua to assist with the response operation; these surge teams will also travel to the neighbouring island nations affected by Irma to assist with their response operations.

Red Cross Movement deployed staff

Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members

American RC	IFRC Surge	Cash Transfer Programme RIT	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Bahamas RC	IFRC Surge	General RIT	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Canadian RC	IFRC Surge	Health RIT	Antigua and Barbuda
Swiss RC	IFRC Surge	Shelter FACT	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Costa Rican RC	IFRC Surge	Communications RIT	Panama
Netherlands RC	IFRC Surge	Psychosocial support FACT	Antigua and Barbuda

IFRC personnel

IFRC	IFRC Surge	Finances	Antigua and Barbuda
IFRC	IFRC Surge	Senior Officer, Social Media	Antigua and Barbuda
IFRC	IFRC Surge	General RIT	Antigua and Barbuda
IFRC	IFRC Surge	Disaster management	Cuba
IFRC	IFRC Surge	Operations Manager	Antigua and Barbuda

Deployments through bilateral agreements:

Spanish RC	National Society Surge	CTP Specialist	Antigua and Barbuda
Norwegian RC	National Society Surge	Deputy Director Norwegian RC	Cuba
Canadian RC	National Society Surge	Regional Representative	Cuba
Spanish RC	National Society Surge	Coordination	Cuba

Contact information

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by *Strategy 2020* which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace

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