

# ***EASTERN CARIBBEAN: HURRICANE LENNY***

*19 November 1999*

## ***Information Bulletin N° 02***

### ***The Situation***

After reaching almost category 5 strength on Wednesday, Hurricane Lenny has now weakened to category 2. However, its width (yesterday 180 km with hurricane force & 295 km with tropical storm force, and today 90 km & 230 km respectively) and the fact it has remained almost stationary the last three days means it may have caused extensive damage and that it is still a severe threat to the Eastern Caribbean, particularly the Leeward Islands.

At 5 a.m.( A.S.T.) today, the centre of the hurricane was located near latitude 18.1 north, longitude 62.8 west, or just north of the island of St Barthélemy and just east of the island of St Martin. A hurricane warning remains in effect for St Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda, Monserrat, St Martin, St Barthélemy and Anguila for much of today. A tropical storm warning remains for other neighbouring islands.

The hurricane winds have now decreased to 185 kph with higher gusts over unprotected south and west facing terrain. Tropical storm force winds extend outward up to 280 km from the centre and stronger wind fluctuations could occur. The islands of St. Martin (particularly the southern, Dutch side), Anguila, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Barthélémy, are experiencing hurricane force winds as they are located in the centre of the advancing hurricane.

The phenomenon is expected to continue to move slowly north eastward today, hopefully out of the Caribbean.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

St. Kitts and Nevis Red Cross reported on Thursday 18 that the major impact of the hurricane was flooding, both fresh water and salt water. The entire coastal area was evacuated, and in Nevis, the Red Cross is housing 14 people. In St. Kitts, 12 shelters have reportedly been opened, two of which are being serviced by the Red Cross. The National Society is also participating in evacuation efforts, bringing injured persons to hospital and transporting medication to those in need.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines report heavy coastal damage and the cruiser pier dockyard, fishing jetty and fisherman coop building all suffered extensive damage. In addition, 15 houses were reported as seriously damaged. Several families were evacuated from risk areas the previous night, and the Red Cross started food and clothing distributions at 1 p.m. on Thursday. At 5 p.m., the Red Cross reported that heavy rains started again across the island.

Grenada Red Cross reported yesterday that the society is already conducting damage assessments; early indications are that the damage is likely to be more severe than was first reported on Wednesday 17. Several houses, restaurants and other business premises in St. George's, St. John's, St. Mark's and west of Carriacou and Petite Martinique have been destroyed. The western main road leading from St. George's in the South to St. Patrick in the north was severely damaged in five places. Sea defences on the western side of Grenada have suffered seriously. There is no electricity and water in St. John's and the fishing facility which the government just started building with assistance from the Japanese government was destroyed as well as the New Fish Market in St. John's. Fishermen lost several boats particularly in St. John's and St. Mark's. All schools on the west of the island, from St. Mark's to Point Saline including all schools in St. George's were closed yesterday. The damage assessment team of the National Emergency Relief Organisation met to discuss the damage and plan operations. Reports so far suggest that the Parish of St. John's has suffered the most as a result of the storm surges, with several families displaced.

Dominica Red Cross reported 50 houses destroyed. All the hotels along the western coast report severe damage with a number of communities cut off. According to the Society's Director General, the country has suffered more severely from hurricane Lenny than from hurricane Luis in 1995.

Reports from US Virgin Island indicate that apart from St. Croix they suffered minimal damage, mainly along the coastal areas.

The Regional Delegation has not yet succeeded in communicating with Antigua & Barbuda, but reports from neighbouring islands suggest that the country may have suffered severe damage.

One Federation Regional Disaster Preparedness Delegate is currently in Miami preparing for a support mission to St. Kitts and Nevis, and a Federation Regional Disaster Relief & Preparedness Co-ordinator is travelling today to the Eastern Caribbean to support the National Societies in the affected countries, especially the Leeward islands.

The American Red Cross is preparing to assist the regional delegation with both supplies and personnel in response to the hurricane.

The National Societies affected by Hurricane Lenny have started to carry out needs assessments in conjunction with national authorities. Needs will be reported as soon as the storm exits the Leeward islands. However, in the light of the hurricane's strength and the Red Cross experience during the last strong hurricanes season in the Caribbean (Georges) and Central America (Mitch), needs will most probably include plastic sheeting, water purification tablets, drinking water, medicines, clothing and emergency food.

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