

EASTERN CARIBBEAN: Hurricane Lenny

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The Situation

Lenny is now downgraded to a tropical depression, and is moving away from the Eastern Caribbean. Its centre is presently located in the Atlantic Ocean, more than 600 km east-northeast of the Leeward islands.

On its way through the northern parts of the Eastern Caribbean on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 November the hurricane caused considerable damage on the island of St. Martin, where currently electricity, water and telephone lines have been cut, and more than 200 houses destroyed. No reports have been received from the other island in the path of the hurricane's centre: Anguila, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Barthélemy. In addition no report is as yet available from Montserrat, further south.

Preliminary damage assessments in St. Kitts & Nevis indicate that the wind damage was less than initially thought, but that the damage from waves up to 20 feet high is considerable, particularly on roads, (the main Western road around the island of St. Kitts was washed away), on infrastructure and on houses on the western and southern parts of the island. Of more than 300 households seriously affected, around 60 suffered serious damage and more than 20 were destroyed. Families seriously affected are being taken care of by families and friends.

Antigua & Barbuda also suffered extensively from waves, particularly along the southern and western beaches. Several hotels and private homes were washed away, and battering waves destroyed many roads and caused salt water flooding - aggravated by continuous heavy rains. 450 persons were housed in shelters for four days.

The Government of Grenada has declared the following villages as disaster areas: Grand Anse, parish of St. John's, parish of St. Mark's, Western Carriacou Petit Martinique, and part of the capital, St. George's.

In Dominica, a complete damage assessment is not yet over. However, preliminary reports indicate extensive damage to coastal facilities and residences and roads have been badly damaged.

Reports from St. Vincent indicate approximately 50 persons were made homeless by the storm. The main damage resulted from surge rivers and coastal flooding. In Bequia, two families were left homeless by the hurricane.

In St. Lucia, the village of Soufriere was reported to be badly damaged by coastal flooding.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Caribbean National Red Cross Societies affected by Hurricane Lenny have all reported that they are conducting damage and needs assessments.

In St. Vincent and St. Lucia, the Red Cross is carrying out limited feeding programmes for persons in shelters. St. Kitts & Nevis Red Cross volunteers have twice distributed full food rations to 230 persons, as well as family packages consisting of blankets, bed sheets, pillows, kitchen utensils, and soap to more than 20 homeless families.

Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross volunteers have twice visited shelters and distributed dry foods, powdered milk, canned juices, sleeping cots and blankets.

The Regional Disaster Preparedness delegate arrived in Basseterre, St. Kitts & Nevis, on Saturday 20 November with telecom equipment to re-establish National Society radio-communications within the country as well as abroad. Two representatives from the American Red Cross arrived on the same plane, and the team started on Sunday to assist the National Society with the damage and needs assessment. Two other American Red Cross delegates are on their way to St. John's, Antigua & Barbuda, to assist the National Society with the initial assessments. The American Red Cross delegates will also provide support to other seriously affected National Societies if needed, and eventually also to Anguilla and Montserrat.

The Federation's Regional Relief Co-ordinator for Central America and the Caribbean, who is based in the Regional Delegation in Guatemala City, has also arrived in Santo Domingo, and is on stand-by to provide support for emergency and rehabilitation planning, particularly in case affected Societies call for an international appeal.

Needs

Preliminary requests have been received for tents, plastic sheeting, comfort kits, food, clothing and building material. It is expected that this list will be expanded once the assessments are completed. However, the general impression so far is that there is relatively little wind damage but that serious damage has been caused by waves and heavy rains to infrastructure along the southern and western shore of the Eastern Caribbean islands. The exception is the Netherlands, British and French territories mentioned above, where there is damage from both hurricane force four winds and huge waves. Detailed damage and needs assessments are expected from all Caribbean National Societies and local branches later today.

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