

Caribbean: Hurricane Lenny

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The Disaster

Hurricane Lenny has disrupted the lives of thousands of Eastern Caribbean residents since its arrival in the region on Sunday 14 November. The worst affected countries are Antigua & Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, St. Lucia, Grenada and St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and the island of St. Martin. For some other islands, like Anguilla and Montserrat, the consequences were less severe.

Preliminary damages assessments by the affected national Red Cross Societies indicated that infrastructural damage to ports, sea defences and road networks is important, and slowing down the speed with which it has been possible to carry out assessments. The national authorities have begun to repair roads and are organising the clean up of debris. Public utilities, particularly water, electricity and telephone lines, are being restored, and many shelters have been closed. The homeless are mostly located with families and friends, and some governments are looking at permanently relocating coastline residents away from the affected areas.

In **St. Kitts**, the assessment in the agricultural and fisheries sectors are not yet completed. Altogether, 216 family houses were severely affected by flooding, wave action and high winds.

In **Anguilla**, 30 families are reported seriously affected by flooding. The tourist sector is in the process of assessing damage to hotels, and preliminary estimates are around EC\$ 135,000. The Government has set up a committee on the rehabilitation of housing.

In **Antigua**, the authorities conducted a preliminary aerial reconnaissance of the island. Several hotels are flooded, and there is severe beach erosion and mud slides in the Crab Hill, Orange Valley and Boggy Peak areas. The National Damage Assessment teams which includes regional agencies such as PAHO, OFDA, CDERA and private engineers, conducted the preliminary damage and needs assessment, and reported that the road surfaces of primary and secondary roads were washed away, and one major bridge had collapsed, cutting road communication with the southern part of the island. The main pipelines of the water system were broken, water pumping stations damaged, and an estimated 20,000 persons are without safe drinking water. Stagnant water is also leading to mosquito proliferation.

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.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

St. Kitts & Nevis Red Cross.

Red Cross volunteers have twice distributed full food rations to 230 persons, as well as family packages consisting of blankets, pillows, kitchen utensils and soap to more than 20 homeless families. The National Society borrowed from its inventory of food items used for its regular (non-disaster) feeding programmes. From a stock of 45 family packages, 20 were distributed

A total of 36 Red Cross volunteers have been providing support and assistance during the first 72 hours after the hurricane. Regular contacts have been maintained with the National Emergency Management Agency. The National Society will continue to be represented in the newly-formed Relief Co-ordination Committee comprised of public agencies. Currently the committee is assessing the needs of the affected communities and preparing a request for assistance.

St. Vincent & the Grenadines Red Cross.

On 18 November, Red Cross volunteers distributed food and clothing supplies. On Friday 19 November, the National Society started the needs and damage assessment in the communities most affected by high seas: Buccament, Layou, Chateaubelair and Bequia.

In Buccament, people living in low-lying areas were flooded both by sea water and the Vermont valley river which passes through this village. The village of Layou received a battering from the sea. Fishing boats and equipment were washed away, and 15 persons are homeless. In Chateaubelair, in a small village 23 persons were left homeless. In Bequia, over 320 feet of public roads were damaged.

The National Society is carrying out a limited feeding programme for people in shelters

Grenada Red Cross

The National Society is conducting a damage and needs assessment in co-ordination with the National Emergency Relief Organisation. Earlier indications were that 20 houses were totally destroyed and another 20 damaged. Depending on negotiations with the government, the National Society is preparing to develop a rehabilitation programme to rebuild some family houses, specially in the gulf of St. John's.

Dominica Red Cross

All the hotels on the western coast reported severe damage with a number of communities cut off. Six hotels have been damaged, and 35% of the banana production lost. 40% of coastal roads have been damaged or washed away, and piers and ports damaged. In addition, 239 houses were affected: 63 homes were totally destroyed; 46 homes suffered major damage; and 130 houses minor damage.

The National Society is finalising its plan of action and estimating the cost.

St. Lucia Red Cross

The National Society reported little damage after the hurricane, but has been conducting a limited feeding programme for people in shelters.

Antigua & Barbuda Red Cross

On Monday 22 November, the Red Cross volunteers twice visited the shelters, distributing dry foods, powdered milk and other relief supplies. There are as many as 963 persons living in shelters opened by the government. The Red Cross is assisting the shelter residents with food and first aid.

The damage assessment showed a total of 18 houses destroyed, 50 houses with major damage and 80 houses with minor damage. The National Society will finalise the needs and damage assessment today after door to door checks by three teams of three volunteers in the affected areas to verify the details of the initial assessment.

Montserrat Red Cross branch

The local branch of the British Red Cross reported that there were no significant infrastructural damage. Several landslides occurred as a result of the heavy rains.

Anguilla Red Cross branch

The branch reported on Monday that heavy rains left the main roads flooded. Electricity and phone lines have been restored in some areas. Although the island was one of the worst affected, right in the path of the hurricane's eye, it would appear to need very little outside assistance.

The Federation

The Regional Disaster preparedness delegate arrived in Basseterre, St. Kitts & Nevis, on Saturday with telecom equipment to re-establish National Society radio-communications within the country as well as abroad. Four American Red Cross delegates have assisted the National Societies of St. Kitts & Nevis, Antigua & Barbuda and Dominica, as well as the island of Anguilla with the damage and initial needs assessment.

The Federation's Regional Relief Co-ordinator for Central America and the Caribbean, who is based in the Regional Delegation in Guatemala City, is now in Santo Domingo on stand-by to provide support for emergency and rehabilitation planning, which is particularly important given the likelihood that the most affected Societies will call for international assistance.

Needs

Preliminary requests have been received for tents, plastic sheeting, comfort kits, food, clothing and building materials. It is expected that requirements will increase by the end of the week when the often difficult assessments will have been completed. However, it seems likely already that all the National Societies identified above will request international assistance for their present and future activities, covering the whole spectrum of relief, from short term emergency distributions of food and other relief items to medium term reconstruction of homes and of fishing facilities.

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