

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي جمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CARIBBEAN: HURRICANE JEANNE

19 September 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 02/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 100,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The Federation does not anticipate further needs. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the DREF update.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In the Dominican Republic: Dominican Red Cross, Ligia Leroux, President; email cruz.roja@codetel.net.do, phone (1 809) 682-3793, fax (1 809) 688-8044
- In the United States: American Red Cross, Jacki Flowers, Communications Department; email flowersj@usa.redcross.org, phone (1 202) 303-4463
- In Panama: Nelson Castaño, Head of Pan American Disaster Response Unit, Panama; email ifrcpa07@ifrc.org, phone (507) 316-1001, fax (507) 316-1082
- In Geneva: Luis Luna, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, Geneva; email luis.luna@ifrc.org, phone 41-22-730-4274, fax 41-22-733-0395

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Tropical Storm Jeanne strengthened into a category one hurricane on Thursday after striking Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands on Wednesday, becoming the sixth hurricane of what has been a busy Atlantic hurricane season. Several countries in the Caribbean, as well as the southern United States, are still recovering from the destruction caused by three other hurricanes: Charley, Frances and Ivan, which have passed through the region in just over a month.

Jeanne was a powerful tropical storm when it passed over Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, bringing heavy rains and winds of 130 kilometres per hour. On St. Croix, about 50,000 people lost power, but power was mostly restored by later that day. Airports in both Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands were closed and businesses were boarded up.

The storm killed two people in Puerto Rico as it dumped more than 40 centimetres of rain on the island and sent many rivers to flood levels. More than 3,500 people were evacuated from low-lying areas and moved to shelters on Wednesday, 15 September, as the heavy rains blocked roads, downed power lines and flooded homes. The

heavy winds knocked out power in many parts of the island, leaving more than four million residents without electricity. In addition, some 600,000 people were without running water. Agriculture officials said that crops of plantain, banana and coffee were likely to be seriously damaged. Although the storm continued west towards the Dominican Republic later on Wednesday, heavy rains in Puerto Rico were on-going until Friday. Officials in Puerto Rico announced that government offices would remain closed on Friday and people were urged to stay home from work to participate in the cleanup effort. On Saturday, 18 September, the US President designated Puerto Rico a disaster zone, allocating emergency funds to assist the island in its recovery work.

After hitting Puerto Rico, Jeanne strengthened into a category 1 hurricane as it headed for the eastern tip of the Dominican Republic. The storm weakened again to a tropical storm after making landfall in the Dominican Republic, and a tropical storm warning was put into effect for most of the island of Hispaniola. Forecasters were predicting that the Dominican Republic could receive up to 30 centimetres of rain and warned of flooding as the river levels began to rise.

Tropical Storm Jeanne moved slowly northwest across the Dominican Republic Thursday and Friday, losing strength but causing extensive damage. In the town of San Pedro de Macorís, on the south coast of the country, thousands of people were stranded on the rooftops of their submerged homes after the River Soco, which links the Provinces of San Pedro de Macorís and La Romana, burst its banks. On Thursday night, the storm stalled for some ten hours over the town of Samaná on the north coast of the country, dumping heavy rains and destroying homes. Heavy flooding was also reported in the provinces of Duarte and Sanchez Ramirez in the north of the country, two provinces that were hit hard by the floods that occurred in Hispaniola in May.

According to the Dominican Red Cross, a total of 8,184 people have been evacuated from their homes and 13,216 people have been affected by the floods to date. Reports state that, thus far, four people have been killed, nine wounded and three have disappeared in the Dominican Republic. Given that communication to some areas is cut off, officials fear that number could rise.

The National Emergency Operations centre (EOC) reports that there are currently 165 shelters which have been established throughout the country which are housing approximately 4,000 people. Additionally, it is estimated that 10,753 people nationwide have taken shelter with family and friends. In the Bajo Yuna region, water levels are rising and strong winds have downed electricity poles and damage is also being incurred to crops. A tropical storm warning was still in effect on Saturday, 18 September from the east in Cabo Engano to Montecristi on the north coast. On late Saturday, 18 September, flood levels in the north of the Dominican Republic remained high and rains continued. In El Seibo and Samaná Provinces, 40 per cent of the electricity services were reported to have been damaged. In Higüey (La Altagracia) and in Samaná, roads have been affected by floods and landslides and in Samaná, telephone communications are not functioning. The EOC predicted that rain would continue to fall for the coming 24 to 36 hours.

In Haiti Tropical Storm Jeanne has caused flooding and death in the northern half of the country after heavy downpours of rain drenched the area on Friday and Saturday, 17 and 18 September. At least 55 people are reported dead and many more made homeless. The Departments affected include l'Artibonite, Plateau Central, Sud and the Nord-Ouest.

Hardest has been the town of Gonaïves in l'Artibonite where initial reports estimate 47 dead, 26 houses damaged, and at least 500 in need of shelter. According to the UNDP, 80% of Gonaïves has been affected. Security in the area remains precarious. An additional 8 people were reported dead in Port de Paix with four people still missing. Road links are being re-established by heavy machinery dispatched from Saint. Marc. The urgent needs are food, shelter, potable water and medical assistance. Meteorologists predict more rain during the next 48 hours.

On Saturday 18 September, Tropical Storm Jeanne affected the south eastern Bahamas. Early in the morning its position was just north of Haiti or about 130 km southeast of Great Inagua Island. The system continued to approach Great Inagua Island, reaching its eastern tip and coming very close to the island. Jeanne then gradually turned north and the mid afternoon saw it nearing the Caicos Islands. On Saturday, it was last reported between Mayaguana Island and the Caicos Islands. A total rainfall of 23-33 centimetres and storm surge flooding of 31-90 centimetres above normal tidal levels were predicted for the south eastern Bahamas. Forecasters are expecting that Jeanne will strengthen again into a hurricane as it moves back into open water. Jeanne is then expected to pass the

700-island Bahamas chain, which was recently battered by Hurricane Frances. A hurricane warning has been declared for the southeastern Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos and a hurricane watch has been declared for the central Bahamas.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, the local chapter of the American Red Cross set up an operations centre from where the relief effort was coordinated. Red Cross shelters on the island were opened to house residents whose homes were flooded or damaged. Red Cross volunteers were travelling throughout communities to meet with affected persons and assess their needs. The Puerto Rican chapter of the American Red Cross also set up an operations centre, and Red Cross volunteers are working with communities to determine their needs.

In the Dominican Republic, the Dominican Red Cross (DRC) has been meeting regularly with the National Emergency Operations Centre to assess the situation and formulate a response. During a meeting with the EOC held earlier, the DRC offered 2,000 kitchen sets to be used to support the affected population staying in shelters. The Red Cross is also working with the EOC at the provincial level to coordinate activities and gather information.

The DRC headquarters is maintaining contact with the Red Cross branches in the affected zones. Branches in the northern, central and southern provinces of the Dominican Republic have been activated and are working based on the National Society's contingency plan. DRC volunteers have been deployed to San Pedro de Macorís to assess needs in that area. Given the maximum alert status, 15,000 DRC volunteers are on standby, of whom 2,000 are already in the field in the Provinces of Nagua, San Pedro de Macorís, La Romana, Higüey, El Seibo and Hato Mayor. Red Cross National Intervention Teams (NITs) have been activated and are working in the affected regions. In addition, a total of 147 DRC emergency posts have been mobilized throughout the country. Red Cross psychosocial support teams made up of 25 volunteers have already been deployed to shelters and are distributing food parcels.

On 17 September, the DRC activated six damage and needs assessment teams each made up of five people; the teams were deployed to La Romana, El Seibo, La Altagracia, María Trinidad Sánchez, Sánchez Ramirez, San Pedro de Macorís and Duarte in the south east and north of the country. Representatives of the Dominican Red Cross, the American Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross, together with the Federation, are taking part in these assessments. The assessment team based in the Province of San Pedro de Macorís reported that 12 shelters have been set up which are accommodating 3,000 people. A water plant has been set up with the assistance of the Spanish Red Cross, together with a communal kitchen. A further three brigades are assessing damage and needs in Ramón Santana in San Pedro de Macorís Province, where approximately 7,000 people have been evacuated and flooding has reached above the first floors of houses, and also in Bavaro in La Altagracia.

A helicopter flight to conduct an aerial survey of the damage is scheduled for today, 19 September.

The DRC is liaising with the American, German, Netherlands and Spanish Red Cross Societies that are working in the country to examine the resources available. The Spanish Red Cross has donated USD 5,000 to support the DRC's initial relief activities. The Federation has made available cellular phones to facilitate communication between personnel working in the field and personnel working in the National Society's headquarters in Santo Domingo. The Federation is also maintaining close contact with the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) in Santo Domingo, together with the United Nations agencies and OXFAM. The National Society is also liaising closely with the NGO, Movimundo, which is working in the Province of Salcedo, and forms part of a contingency plan developed in the event of flooding.

The Federation, through its office in Cap Haitien, is coordinating with OXFAM in northern Haiti. Since 16 September, the ICRC, OXFAM and the Haitian National Red Cross Society regional branch have been implementing an awareness campaign amongst those living along the coast, urging them to move inland. A contingency plan has been developed by the regional branch in the North Department; 150 volunteers were mobilized and 8 temporary shelters were identified with an overall capacity of 480 persons. Stocks of relief goods are available including food rations. The regional Red Cross branches in the North West, North East and Artibonite Departments implemented contingency plans and reviewed resources available in the event of a disaster. As of Saturday, 18 September, heavy rains were reported in Gonaïves in the Department of Artibonite

which have resulted in serious flooding. An aerial survey of Gonaïves and Cap Haïtien took place on Saturday, 19 September with the participation of the Haitian National Red Cross Society, OCHA, OXFAM and the French Red Cross. The Federation has made available to the Haitian Red Cross the following stocks of relief items stored in Port au Prince: 2,550 hygiene kits, 137 family tents, 355 (4x6m) sheets of plastic sheeting, 455 body bags. Trucks have been loaded at the Haitian Red Cross warehouse and dispatched to Gonaïves. The body bags were sent to the airport to be airlifted by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has released CHF 100,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to assist those affected by Tropical Storm Jeanne in the Dominican Republic and Haiti

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

[Click here to return to the title page or contact information.](#)