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Information Bulletin

Americas: Hurricane Irma

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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| Information Bulletin N° 2 | Date of issue: 6 September 2017 |
| Date of disaster: 6 September 2017 | Point of contact: Felipe Del Cid, Disaster and Crisis Department Continental Operations Coordinator, email: Felipe.delcid@ifrc.org |
| Red Cross Movement actors currently involved in the operation: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the French Red Cross-PIRAC (Regional Intervention Platform for the Americas and the Caribbean), Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross, British Red Cross overseas branches, Dominica Red Cross Society, Haiti Red Cross Society, Netherlands Red Cross overseas branches, Saint Kitts and Nevis Red Cross Society; Partner National Societies (PNSs) such as American Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross Society, German Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross and Swiss Red Cross | |
| N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation: Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), United Nation system (Pan American Health Organization [PAHO], the United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF], United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [UN-OCHA], among others) | |

This bulletin is being issued for information only; it reflects the current situation and details available at this time.

The Situation

According to the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s National Hurricane Centre (NHC), Hurricane Irma's centre was located near latitude 18.8 North, longitude 65.4 west at 5 PM Atlantic Standard Time (AST) (2100 Coordinated Universal Time [UTC]); Irma is moving toward the west-northwest at around 16 mph (26 km/h), and this general motion is expected to continue for the next couple of days. On the forecast track, Irma's extremely dangerous core pass near or just north of Puerto Rico tonight, 6 September 2017, pass near or just north of the coast of the Hispaniola Thursday, 7 September 2017, and be near the Turks and Caicos and south-eastern Bahamas by Thursday evening. Maximum sustained winds are around 185 mph (295 km/h), with higher gusts; Irma is a category 5 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. While some fluctuations in intensity are likely over the next day or two, Irma is forecast to remain a powerful category 4 or 5 hurricane over the next couple of



Predicted trajectory of Hurricane Irma as of 5 PM AST, 6 September 2017. Source: NOAA

days. Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 50 miles (85 km) from the centre, and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 185 miles (295 km); a wind gust to 62 mph (100 km/h) was recently reported at San Juan, Puerto Rico. The estimated minimum central pressure is 914 mb (26.99 inches).

Watches and Warnings

The government of France has discontinued the Hurricane Warning for Saint Martin and Saint Barthelemy.

A Hurricane Warning is in effect for:

- * British Virgin Islands
- * U.S. Virgin Islands
- * Puerto Rico, Vieques, and Culebra
- * Dominican Republic from Cabo Engano to the northern border with Haiti
- * Haiti from the northern border with the Dominican Republic to Le Mole St. Nicholas
- * South-eastern Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands
- * Central Bahamas

A Hurricane Watch is in effect for:

- * Cuba from Matanzas province eastward to Guantanamo province
- * North-western Bahamas

A Tropical Storm Warning is in effect for:

- * Dominican Republic from south of Cabo Engano westward to the southern border with Haiti
- * Haiti from south of Le Mole St. Nicholas to Port-Au-Prince
- * Cuban provinces of Guantanamo, Holguin and Las Tunas

| Country | Assessment | Actions taken by the Red Cross |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| Antigua and Barbuda | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media reports have already indicated the loss of roofs in some communities, and the fire department extinguished 2 major fires • Hurricane shifted north, which meant that Antigua was subjected to only storm-force rather than hurricane-force winds • Some damage to roofs in Antigua • No loss of life reported in Antigua • National emergency operations centre (NEOC) has been activated • Not able to do many damage assessments for safety reasons • Power and water have been shut off, and some cell service providers have also gone offline. • No communication from Barbuda • Early reports indicated that 90 percent of buildings suffered damage on Barbuda before communication was lost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing relief items in the collective centres • Keeping the country's prime minister informed about the developing situation • Activated Airbus foundation agreement to make 1 helicopter available for assessments and team deployment • 1 General Regional Intervention Team (RIT) will arrive in the country on 9 September 2017 • Activated response teams • IFRC approved a DREF for 61,418 Swiss francs (CHF) |
| Anguilla | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major damage reported on the island • Local Red Cross building severely damaged, and the Red Cross lost all material response capacities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General RIT on standby for possible deployment to Anguilla to support British Red Cross if requested |
| Montserrat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No major damage reported | |
| Saba | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information available yet | |
| Sint Maarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major damage reported on the island; the extent of the damage will be revealed in subsequent assessments | |
| Statia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No information available yet | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major damaged reported | |

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| Saint Barthelemy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessments ongoing | |
| Guadeloupe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No major damage reported | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 surge capacity team members deployed from Paris, France; arrived yesterday, 5 September 2017 15 surge capacity team members deployed from Paris, France; will arrive tonight, 6 September 2017 Guadeloupe and Martinique branches mobilizing volunteers for assistance to Saint Martin |
| Saint Martin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major damage reported Assessments ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information technology (IT) team deployed to map the Sint Maarten and conduct assessments |
| Saint Kitts and Nevis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water is turned off About 80 per cent of the country's electrical supply is still in power Telephones (both landline and cell phones) are still operational (50 per cent) Affected people have started to access the collective centres on the western side of the island Still feeling the impact of sustained winds and heavy rain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Society is conducting damage assessments Emergency operations centre (EOC) activated, pre-positioned supplies in 5 areas around the island for National Society volunteers to access after the passage of Hurricane Irma IFRC approved a DREF for CHF 64,301 |

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement actions

- Damage assessment in affected countries are ongoing

American Red Cross

- American Red Cross (ARC) Haiti Team is pre-positioned in northern Haiti and prepared to conduct rapid damage assessments and early-relief operations; \$USD600,000-worth of non-food item (NFI) stock is in country and available for distribution; all staff are on alert and working to support Haiti Red Cross Society, and all activities in Haiti are planned in close coordination with Red Cross Red Crescent Movement.
- Staff and volunteers are ready to be deploy as needed from US, Panama, Colombia, El Salvador and Honduras with a range of technical and language skills; additional human resources are being identified by national headquarters
- Ongoing coordination and information sharing with the Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)
- Telecommunications Regional Response Unit (RRU) in Panama is ready to deploy and provide a range of support, including high frequency (HF), very high frequency (VHF), and satellite communications
- ARC Domestic: United States Virgin Islands, Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina and Puerto Rico are being prepared for significant mass care operations (feeding and sheltering); all chapters are preparing for major impact.
- National headquarters working to prepare Very Small Aperture Terminal) satellite communications system (VSAT) capability for deployment to the field
- National headquarters geographic information system (GIS) team is providing Surge Information Management Support (SIMS) Remote Coordination for the IFRC
- Close coordination and information sharing with IFRC in Panama through ARC's Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Regional delegation
- LAC Regional Delegation is supporting the IFRC EOC through information management support

Canadian Red Cross Society

- Deployed a RIT and operations manager

- Launched an appeal for donations in Canada
- Staff member in the Dominican Republic assisting with the National Society with evaluations
- Updated Emergency response unit (ERU) and Field Assessment Coordination Team (FACT) capacity for Geneva
- Making stock and human resources in Canada and Panama available for the operation
- Delegation in Haiti, which is coordinating with the IFRC
- Issuing alerts on the situation

Cuban Red Cross

- Volunteers already initiated the prevention and evacuation actions according to the response plan; these actions are being conducted in coordination with Cuban authorities

Dominican Red Cross

- Meetings with the national authorities are constant and systematic at the provincial and municipal level through the Prevention, Mitigation and Response Committees
- Mandatory evacuations conducted by the Civil Defence are being closely supported by the National Society
- Sensitization actions are being undertaken in temporary collective centres in support of the Civil Defence.
- The National Society EOC is in permanent contact with the branches and deploying staff to the most vulnerable provinces, information from branches, and a monitoring protocol has been established to gather data on damages, affected population, needs and the actions undertaken in the country.
- Key health messages have already been developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Health
- Specialized health teams from the National Society (National Intervention Team [NIT], Epidemic Control for Volunteers [ECV] and water, sanitation and hygiene promotion [WASH]) are being mobilized to the affected areas
- 8 Dominican Red Cross ambulances were deployed to support the affected areas.
- Developing a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA)

Haiti Red Cross Society

- The Haiti Red Cross Society (HRCS) is mobilizing its resources towards the preparation and response to Hurricane Irma, with the support of the other Movement partners, including the IFRC, the American Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross Society, the German Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross and the French Red Cross
- Yesterday, 5 September 2017, the initial meeting to prepare the activation of the emergency operation centre was held at the National Society's headquarters under the leadership of the President of the HRCS and with the active participation of heads of delegation of the in-country PNSs.
- The HRCS' executive director, accompanied by the director of communication, joined the Departmental Emergency Operations Centre (COUD for its acronym in French) on Tuesday afternoon, 5 September 2017 to discuss the Department of the Civil Protection's contingency plan, the latest government decisions and provide Movement support to the national system for managing risks and disasters.
- The departments' Regional Committees most likely to be affected by the hurricane will be reinforced by the presence of managers and technicians from the central office, in coordination with Red Cross Movement partners.
- Eight teams of volunteers from the Haiti Red Cross Society (North, North-East, North-West, Upper and Lower Artibonite, Upper and Lower Central Plateau, West) have been deployed in support of the authorities to sensitize communities on the contingency plan and to make the population aware of the measures to be taken, including the voluntary evacuation of populations at risk.

- Equipment and kits to facilitate the first interventions will be pre-positioned in the Far North.

Pre-positioning in Haiti

- Nord Est – 76 Hygiene kits; 67 shelter repair kits; 1,000 jerry cans (German Red Cross)
- Nord – 33 hygiene kits; 33 repair kits (German Red Cross); 500 jerry cans (French Red Cross)
- Nord Ouest – (American Red Cross) 300 blankets; 300 kitchen sets; 300 cholera kits; 300 shelter tool kits; 300 hygiene kits; 300 tarpaulins; 20 cleaning kits
- 4 vehicles available in Nord Ouest
- 3 vehicles available in Nord
- 2 vehicles (including 1 ambulance) available in Nord Est

Italian Red Cross

- 3 staff members prepared to conduct damage assessments in the West; they are on alert and working to support the Haitian National Society

Spanish Red Cross

Stock in Haiti:

- 100 hygiene kits
- 4 delegates and 35 national personnel with experience in WASH, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and field evaluations
- 7 vehicles
- Capacity to provide technical support to WASH response teams (production and distribution of water, sanitation and hygiene promotion)

Regional level capacity:

- 1 humanitarian relief and livelihoods delegate in Panama

In Spain:

- NFI stock has been updated
- ERU roster alerted

Norwegian Red Cross

- Deployment of a delegate to Cuba
- Pre-positioned stock in Panama

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) actions

- The ICRC will deploy personnel for Movement Coordination under the Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC)
- Participating in Movement coordination meetings

IFRC actions

Surge actions:

- ✓ 1 RIT member will be deployed to Antigua and Barbuda
- ✓ 1 RIT will be deployed to Saint Kitts and Nevis
- IFRC staff roster is ready
- Partner National Societies (PNSs) staff roster will be developed soon
- Informational message sent to the National Societies in the Americas
- Staffing plan developed for Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba

- IFRC participation in Latin American and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds (REDLAC for its acronym in Spanish) coordination meetings
- Shelter: Inform the Global Shelter Cluster in Geneva about the situation
- Americas Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER): held a regional coordination meeting to determine PMER coverage for a possible regional emergency
- Holding daily Joint Task Force meetings with headquarters in Geneva
- Activated its EOC
- Issued an Orange Alert
- Coordinating with the British, French and Netherlands Red Cross Societies
- Relief supplies are on standby in Panama and the Dominican Republic to ensure an immediate response.
- All regional emergency teams are on high alert and ready to deploy.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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.

Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace