



Canadian Red Cross  
Croix-Rouge canadienne

Red Cross ... Anywhere. Anytime.

## Devastation in Haiti: helping the victims of hurricanes

September 24, 2004

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### The situation

Tropical Storm Jeanne caused more than 550 deaths in Haiti when it brought flooding and landslides to the impoverished country. Another 11 people were killed in the Dominican Republic. Tropical Storm Jeanne was the tenth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, and became the sixth hurricane when it strengthened to a category one after passing over Puerto Rico on September 16. Hurricane Jeanne hit the east coast of the Dominican Republic and weakened slightly to become a powerful tropical storm as it moved across the island of Hispaniola.



In **Haiti**, Tropical Storm Jeanne caused flooding and death in the northern half of the country after heavy downpours of rain drenched the area on September 17 and 18. At least 250 people have been confirmed dead in Gonaïves alone, and many more have been left homeless. The country's interim Prime Minister has declared three days of national mourning. According to United Nations representatives in Haiti, there were 250 bodies in the Gonaïves hospital morgue, and unconfirmed reports of another 150 dead elsewhere in the city. Approximately 80 percent of Gonaïves' urban population of 100,000 people have been affected by the floods. Houses in the city were damaged and hundreds of residents were forced to take refuge on rooftops to escape the rising flood waters. Crops and livestock have also been washed away. An additional 47 deaths were confirmed in Port de Paix, as well as eight more in other parts of the country. Almost 400 wounded have been treated by Médecins Sans Frontières and Argentine peacekeepers working in the country as part of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The most urgent needs are food, shelter, clean drinking water and medical assistance.

On September 18, Tropical Storm Jeanne also affected south eastern **Bahamas** and **Turks and Caicos**, but no major damage was reported. Jeanne later regained hurricane strength as it moved out into the open ocean, but there is no immediate threat to land.

It takes a hurricane only hours to destroy homes and ruin lives. It will take years for the hardest hit areas to recover.

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### How the Red Cross is helping

The Red Cross has been actively assisting the thousands of families left in desperate need by hurricanes this year. Local Red Cross Societies have aided emergency efforts as much as possible. For example the Jamaican Red Cross has deployed emergency assistance teams, including Mental Health Teams to help victims deal with the psychological impact of disaster. The Cuban Red Cross assisted with the massive emergency evacuation as Ivan approached. The International Red Cross currently has 17 staff (locally recruited and expatriate) in Haiti working in close conjunction with the Haitian National Red Cross Society to come to the aid of the victims. However, the extent of the damage has greatly outstripped the capacity of local Red Cross Societies to meet the needs.

Noting that emergency assistance is needed urgently, the International Red Cross has launched an appeal for \$6 million (CN). The funds will be used to provide desperately needed tents, tarpaulins and other shelter materials, as well as food, blankets, hygiene articles and jerry cans to support tens of thousands of families for the next six months.

The Canadian Red Cross Society (CRC) deployed an air shipment of goods to Haiti on a Department of National Defence flight. Urgently needed blankets and plastic sheeting were sent. Two CRC delegates went as part of a team from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies whose mandate is to assess the situation and coordinate the distribution of relief supplies. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) covered the cost of the goods in the shipment.

The CRC has also deployed an air shipment to Jamaica on an Air Canada flight, CIDA covered the cost of the goods in the shipment.. The airline generously donated the cargo space for the shipment of water bladders, heavy plastic sheeting, water containers, generators and other urgently needed relief items.

The Canadian Red Cross has already provided \$50,000 to help with relief efforts, and in partnership with the CIDA, has sent an air shipment of urgently needed relief materials—plastic sheeting, a tent warehouse, diesel generators, water purification sachets, water pumps, jugs, tools and an emergencies officer—to Grenada. Canadian emergency delegates have been deployed to Jamaica, Grenada and the United States. Family reunification services are being activated in areas where communication has been restored. This will help family members to reconnect with loved ones who have been displaced.

**Corporate and public support enables the Red Cross to meet the urgent relief needs quickly and effectively, so the Red Cross is appealing to caring Canadians to help.**

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## **How you can help**

Canadian Red Cross is urging Canadians to give generously as the needs are great. Because the Red Cross is already mobilized and assisting in the hurricane-ravaged areas, a donation to the Canadian Red Cross can be turned into meaningful help quickly. Donations to the Canadian Red Cross 2004 Hurricane Relief Fund will be used to provide relief and recovery for the most vulnerable people affected by hurricanes this season.

Donations of food, clothing and other items are well-intentioned, but unfortunately are not the best way to help those in need and therefore are NOT accepted. There are tremendous processing and transportation costs involved in shipping these items. Local purchases of food and clothing are more appropriate and cost-effective.

### **Make your donation to 2004 Hurricane Relief:**

- [online](#)
- toll-free at 1-800-418-1111
- in person at any Red Cross office
- at Canadian banks and financial institutions
- by mailing a cheque or money order (no cash in the mail, please) to Canadian Red Cross, 170 Metcalfe Street, Suite 300, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 2P2. Earmark your donation “2004 Hurricane Relief.”

Donors to the Canadian Red Cross will receive a charitable tax receipt.

### **Want to help in other ways? Contact your local Red Cross office to learn about:**

- Organizing an event to raise funds in your community.
- Setting up an employee giving campaign at your workplace.

**Please give generously to those whose lives have been devastated.  
Help can't wait.**