



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE  
HOTLINE**

Church World Service Hotline update for the week of September 1, 2008 – available in Spanish (linea de noticias) and in [podcasts](#) in English and Spanish--at [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)

- **Hurricane Gustav** hits U.S. Gulf Coast after striking Caribbean
- Families displaced by conflict in **Republic of Georgia** continue to need assistance
- Families in **Florida** begin recovery from Tropical Storm Fay

**Hurricane Gustav**--Hurricane Gustav came ashore along the U.S. Gulf Coast southwest of New Orleans at about 10 a.m. on Monday, Sept. 1, bringing with it winds as high as 110 mph. Though Gustav brought less damage than was earlier feared, danger may still remain from heavy rains, tornadoes, and storm surge, according to Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal.

Lower parts of Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas were evacuated in advance of the storm. As of Sept. 2 a.m., about a million homes and businesses in Louisiana are without power. Gov. Jindal says his state is planning for a tiered return to the evacuated areas.

CWS had its "contingency plans in place..." says CWS Emergency Response Director Donna Derr. "We have some material resources already in place... that can be immediately dispatched, if needed."

Derr reports that, while members of long-term recovery groups in Louisiana with whom CWS has been working since Katrina have evacuated, "given our experience with them after Katrina, we'll have some pretty clear starting points for possible relief/recovery support we might offer when they are back in place."

Gustav hit **Haiti** and the **Dominican Republic** on August 26, killing at least 94 people and displacing thousands. In parts of Haiti, Gustav's torrential rains destroyed livestock, crops and homes. The damage there may well be catastrophic, as some 2.3 million people are already struggling with severe food insecurity. On August 31, Gustav hit western **Cuba**, reportedly damaging or destroying more than 90,000 homes but resulting in no deaths.

CWS is in contact with partners in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, who are already working on a response to Gustav. CWS has strong partnerships with local, non-governmental organizations in all three countries, and based on assessments, CWS will respond with material aid and support for long-term recovery of the most vulnerable storm-affected communities.

Since Hurricane Katrina, CWS has organized more than 30 long-term recovery groups to respond to the needs of vulnerable people coping with Katrina, and to prepare for future emergencies.

CWS Emergency Response Specialists are in contact with recovery groups and emergency officials to assess needs,



**Georgian refugee children from South Ossetia in a tent camp in Tbilisi, Georgia.** REUTERS/David Mdzinarishvili, courtesy [www.alertnet.org](http://www.alertnet.org)

provide training, material resources and project development support.

Contributions of funds for emergency response and recovery, as well as donations of CWS Hygiene, Baby, and School Kits and Emergency Clean-up Buckets are needed for response to Gustav and future emergencies.

At this writing, Tropical Storm Hanna is hitting the Bahamas and projected to come ashore along the U.S. southern Atlantic Coast--perhaps the Georgia/South Carolina border--by the end of the week. Tropical Storm Ike formed on Monday in the Atlantic and is likely to threaten the Caribbean and possibly the U.S. The hurricane season's 10<sup>th</sup> tropical depression--to be called Josephine when it becomes a tropical storm--has formed south of the Cape Verde Islands, off the west coast of Africa, and is moving west.

**Republic of Georgia**--Since the opening of hostilities on or about August 8, tens of thousands of people have been displaced from South Ossetia into Russia and other parts of the Republic of Georgia. UN estimates place the number of displaced people in Georgia at more than 120,000.

In recent days, large numbers of refugees have begun traveling from North Ossetia, in Russia, back to South Ossetia. Church World Service partner the Russian Orthodox Church, which is working with refugees in North Ossetia, is providing relief items for people at a transit station in North Ossetia, before they return to South Ossetia.

CWS is helping partner the Russian Orthodox Church to provide shelter; relief packages for children; personal hygiene kits, bedding and clothing, and food ration kits for men and women.

In addition, CWS is providing a 40-foot shipping container of CWS Blankets, Hygiene and Baby Kits to International Orthodox Christian Charities. CWS is also supporting the relief efforts of local partners Tbilisi Youth House Foundation, which is working to assist 500 Georgian internally displaced persons, and Association Atinati, working to provide living essentials for 25-30 families.

**Florida**--Tropical Storm Fay left behind more than 25 inches of rain across parts of central and southern Florida, flooding more than 1,000 homes and killing at least 13. The storm struck the heart of Florida's farm worker communities, where several areas of farm worker housing were evacuated.

Church World Service has worked extensively in Florida, partnering with local agencies to ensure communities were organized and trained for long-term recovery. To support long-term recovery, CWS will be offering training, material resources, and project development opportunities in Fay's wake.

Thank you for your prayers and support for the life-sustaining work of Church World Service. Contributions may be sent through your church or directly to Church World Service, P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515. Credit card contributions may be made by calling 1-800-297-1516 or at [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org). To SUBSCRIBE or UNSUBSCRIBE to the e-mail version of the Church World Service Hotline, reply to this message, or write to [jearlson@churchworldservice.org](mailto:jearlson@churchworldservice.org).