SITUATION UPDATE

From late in the evening on December 10 through the morning of December 11, a series of severe tornadoes tore through the midwestern United States. The storm ravaged a path of more than 250 miles, devastating counties in Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. The hardest-hit area has been Mayfield, Kentucky, where the collapse of a large candle factory and the resulting deaths marked the most devastating tornado event in the state's history. Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear declared a state of emergency on December 10 and deployed the National Guard to help with the response. President Joe Biden approved an emergency declaration for the state of Kentucky the following day, bringing federal resources to bear in assistance efforts. State officials have warned that the casualty count is likely to increase in the coming days, as search-and-rescue efforts continue.

One of the other locations severely impacted by the tornadoes was the Amazon warehouse in Madison County, Illinois. At least six deaths were confirmed, along with two people taken by helicopter to hospitals in St. Louis, and 30 people escorted to a nearby police station for evaluation. Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker has stated there were no additional injuries or deaths in the state aside from the Amazon facility.

International Medical Corps Response

Following the tornadoes, International Medical Corps immediately mobilized an emergency response team to assess damage and determine needs in the hardest-hit communities in Kentucky. The team currently is working closely with local, state and federal emergency management officials and local organizations to understand the full scope of needs in affected communities. Jackson Purchase Medical Center, the main hospital servicing Mayfield, is overwhelmed and in need of immediate support.

International Medical Corps is prepared to deploy nursing strike teams, medical task forces and emergency medical field units and supplies, including cots, generators and HVAC systems. The team is working to identify local organizations to provide hygiene kits and other household items for families that have been displaced, as well as other supplies and support to help reinstate essential health and social services that have been interrupted. In addition, with many people forced into close proximity in shelters, transmission of COVID remains a risk. International Medical Corps will be focusing on providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection prevention and control (IPC) training and supplies.

As with the aftermath of any disaster, International Medical Corps expects there to be significant mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) needs among affected communities. International Medical Corps has extensive experience addressing MHPSS needs in the aftermath of natural disasters and will work closely with local authorities and the health system to address needs as they arise.

Debris has been cleared from the roads of a neighborhood in Graves County, the hardest-hit county in Kentucky.

FAST FACTS

- On December 10, a series of tornadoes struck the Midwestern United States.
- Six states, including Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee were affected.
- Over 90 deaths have been reported, along with more than 100 persons missing and many more injured as a result of the storms.
- More than 70 deaths and 100 missing persons were reported in Kentucky alone.