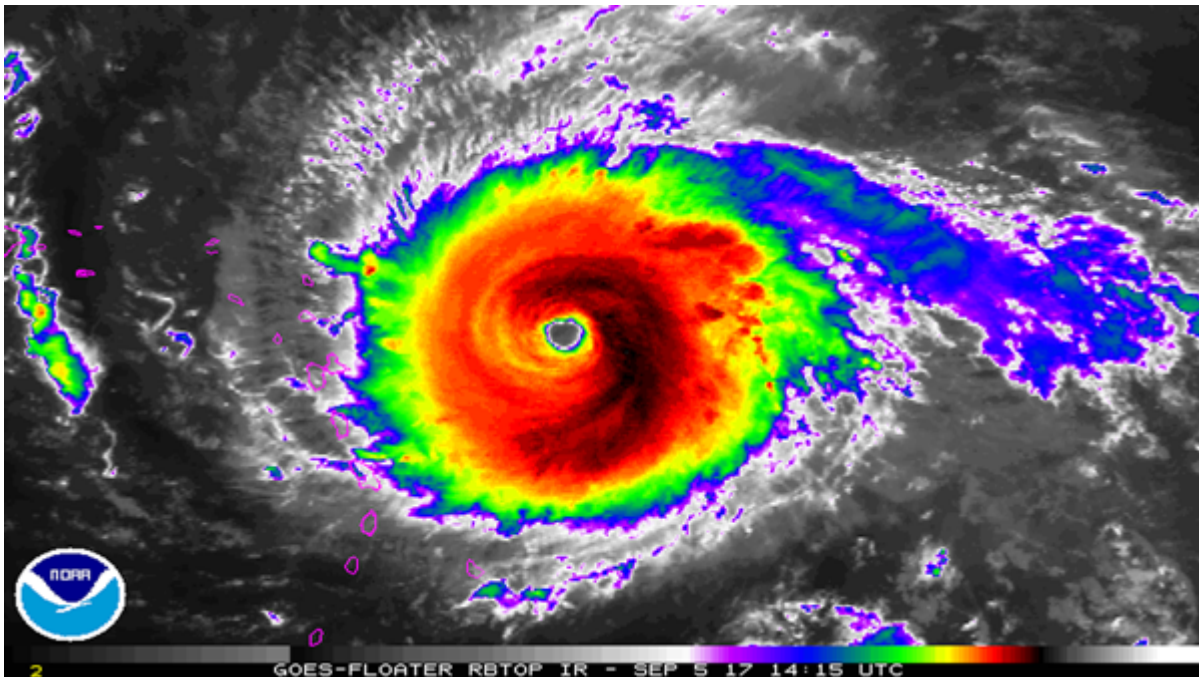


Reasonable shelter denied to registrants facing horrific storms

written by Sandy | September 6, 2017



By Sandy . . . With hurricane season upon us, and some especially dangerous ones already sweeping through Texas, Louisiana, and now Florida, we are beginning to hear of bad situations and civil rights violations.

From Texas, the reports are fairly consistent that registrant evacuees on parole or probation were required to report to police or sheriff headquarters and be sheltered in jails.

Derek Logue, in his ["Riders of the Storm" essay](#) wrote that, in Texas, " KXAN of Austin, TX reported a screening process was in place to weed out registered persons, adding they would be placed in 'appropriate shelters' without elaborating further."

This report, edited some for length, was received just today by the director of Texas Voices and was forwarded to NARSOL.

[This is] to inform you what the TDCJ parole division did to

some of us in the (City name redacted) area. On Friday, Aug 25 at 1:30 a.m. I received a call that I was required to report to the parole office at 8:00 a.m. to board a bus to be evacuated. I informed them I would have to leave my 90-year-old mother alone to do that. They told me if I didn't report a blue warrant would be issued for my arrest. With less than 24 hours before the storm hit they put us on a bus to the Ben Reed Transition center in Houston. The local parole officers could offer no explanations or reasons for the decision to evacuate us from our city to a place that was predicted to be in the direct path of the storm and receive record-breaking rainfall...the facility began to flood Friday night and Saturday night. By Sunday night we had to evacuate the building and wade through knee deep, diesel oil and sewage polluted water to another building at 3am. By 9 am that building we moved to was flooding and we moved to an upstairs hallway where we spent 2 days sitting in a hallway with no place to lie down or sleep, no staff supervision, and no food...Finally after several calls to Austin TDC (both the parole and institutional division) some TDCJ personnel showed up Tuesday afternoon. We were served a half of an egg sandwich and told we were going to be moved to 2 different TDCJ prison units. That included the 38 of us evacuated from our city area as well as the 500 residents of Ben Reed.

...[W]e boarded a bus which left Houston at midnight. By 8:30 am we were checked into the Holiday unit and given a mat on the gym floor. We were lied to every step of the way by everyone involved. We were told that we would stay in our street clothes and get to take our hygiene items into Holiday, but that turned out to be incorrect. We were stripped out, dressed in prison whites, and our property was taken as we were re-incarcerated without the right of due process.

The 38 of us were finally sent back to our city on Thursday afternoon. I [want] to make sure that TDCJ looks at where

they fell short in this situation...

I am mostly curious as to what right TDCJ parole division had to put us back in prison without due process!

This is just a brief overview of what went on, and I know that we were more fortunate than a vast number of people who suffered catastrophic losses due to the storm. I in no way mean to diminish their loss.

In "Riders of the Storm," Derek Logue also writes, "[KSLA reported shelters open in Louisiana were also going to screen for 'sex offenders.'](#) "

Other sources in Louisiana have sent this:

[Louisiana Law: RS 29.726 E \(14\) 9c \(i\)](#) requires that registered sex offenders that seek public sheltering must be housed separate and apart from the general population. The state's plan is to have a "unique population" shelter at a state prison in northern Louisiana, with capacity for 120—in a state with over 12,000 registrants!

That means separation of families. Single parents will be directed to give custody to other family members, or the state will take custody. "This includes ... ensuring that sheltering needs are met for special needs persons (... children separated from single parents designated as registered sex offenders, etc). [[LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES ESF-6 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS PLAN](#)]

Apparently, registrants who have special medical needs will not be allowed in the medical shelters. None of the plans address this possibility.

It is a huge issue that registered citizens are expected to abandon their family (most significantly, their children) just to go to these "special" shelters.

In Florida, a posting on the [Polk County Sheriff's Twitter page](#) says, "If you go to a shelter for [#Irma](#), be advised: sworn LEOs will be at every shelter, checking IDs. Sex offenders/predators will not be allowed."

To the credit of many of the respondents to the Tweet, criticism about [Sheriff Grady Judd's](#) posting was heavy.

The Florida Action Committee posted [advice and suggestions](#) for registrant evacuees on their website. One bit of helpful advice is that if a registrant is not on parole or probation, he can spend the night anywhere away from his registered address for up to four nights without being in violation.

Those on the registry are the most vulnerable of all citizens in regard to their personal safety. Disasters that threaten lives capriciously, such as hurricanes and their accompanying flooding, increase the risk manifold. As much as is in the power of all registrants, work out a safe plan of evacuation and sheltering if it becomes necessary. Be strong and stay safe. And God be with us all.