

Mexican aid for Hurricane Harvey victims expected early this week

*Written by
Dianne Solis, Senior writer*

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Mexican crews could reach Texas on Monday or Tuesday to help with hurricane recovery efforts, an official says.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott accepted Mexico's offer of assistance last week. The aid is expected to be transported across the border through Laredo.

"There are a huge amount of people in trouble, and we have the crews to help," Carlos Sada, Mexico's Foreign Relations Ministry undersecretary to North America, said Sunday. "The consequences from the storm are brutal."

The aid includes all-terrain vehicles, satellite telephones, generators, mobile kitchens, water treatment supplies and pumps, he said.

Mexico also helped after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but relations with the U.S. have been strained by President Donald Trump's stern rhetoric on immigration, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and a proposed border wall.

Trump is expected to announce a decision Tuesday on whether to end deportation reprieves that have been granted through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which has helped about 800,000 young immigrants.

The Mexican crews have received Customs and Border Protection permission to enter the U.S. and are coordinating with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Sada said.



After the convoy of Mexican vehicles pictured above came to help Hurricane Katrina evacuees in San Antonio in 2005, military personnel set up a compound at a former U.S. Air Force base. The convoy was the first Mexican military unit to operate on U.S. soil since 1846.

(Reuters/Jeff Mitchell)

Mexican consulates in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and Austin have set up mobile units at shelters for hurricane evacuees to offer medical help, document services and cash assistance.

There were about 575,000 unauthorized immigrants in the Houston area, according to a 2014 estimate by the Pew Research Center. Hispanics make up 36 percent of the Houston-area population and nearly 50 percent of the population under the age of 18, the Pew center estimates.

Asked about the possibility Mexican immigrants could help rebuild in Texas as they did after Katrina in New Orleans, Sada said, "People have skills and the will to help. ... First, the water has to be cleared for carpenters, electricians and plumbers to get in."