

# Storms kill 19 in Florida; emergency declared

## Official says it could take days to determine exact number of dead



AP PHOTO

Workers move debris from homes damaged in a storm in DeLand, Fla., on Friday. A storm blew through central Florida, killing 19. Florida Gov. Charlie Crist declared a state of emergency in four counties.

By JIM ELLIS  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### LADY LAKE, Fla.

Disaster crews with dogs went from one pile of debris to another in a search for bodies Friday after powerful storms, including at least one tornado, smashed hundreds of homes across central Florida and killed 19 people or more.

It was the deadliest combination of thunderstorms and tornados to hit Florida in nearly a decade, cutting a 40-mile swath of destruction across four counties just before daybreak, terrorizing residents of one of the nation's biggest retirement communities, and leaving trees and fields littered with clothes, furniture and splintered lumber.

Residents helped pull the dead from the ruins.

"It was scary, really scary," said Patrick Smith, who lives in the Paisley area, where at least 13 deaths were

reported. He said he saw a weather alert on television, grabbed his wife and "went straight to the floor." After the storm passed, he pulled the bodies of a man and his 9- or 10-year-old son from a neighboring house.

Florida's emergency management chief, Craig Fugate, said it could take several days to determine the exact number of dead, and the main priority was finding survivors who may be trapped.

Gov. Charlie Crist declared a state of emergency in four counties, but the worst damage was reported where the twister touched down in northern Lake County and eastern Volusia County. In typical tornado fashion, the storm hopped across the landscape, demolishing some homes and leaving others virtually untouched.

"Our priority today is search and rescue," said Crist, who toured the damaged area in his first natural disaster

since taking office last month. "Everything's being done to get them the aid and assistance that they need."

Lake County spokesman Christopher Patton said there were 19 confirmed deaths, all in Lake County, about 50 miles northwest of Orlando. The dead included at least two high school students, authorities said. Numerous injuries were reported, but officials could not immediately estimate how many.

Authorities said hundreds of houses, mobile homes and other buildings were damaged or destroyed.

The storm left yards strewn with chairs, beds and clothes, knocked tractor-trailers onto their sides as if they were toys, and tore away roofs.

Debris hung from trees, and some homes were thrown off their foundations.

Bernadette Fields, 67, said two of her neighbors in mobile homes were blown

through a bedroom wall into Lake Mack. Their bodies were found by their own dog, she said.

Dozens of rescue workers — many hardened by experience with Florida's multiple hurricanes — went from house to house, spray-painting big red X's to mark the husks of buildings that they had checked. Often they found people who awoke to the storm's roar and watched their homes disintegrate around them.

Lee Shaver, 54, said he and his wife, Irene, and their dog had "about 10 seconds" to take shelter in a closet before their roof was torn off.

"Every muscle and bone in my body shook," said Lee Shaver outside his damaged home in The Villages, one of the nation's largest retirement communities.

"It was terrifying. You're not thinking consciously. You're just trying to save your life," added his 55-year-old wife.

# Scientists hoping for government action

## Officials say river rising may be inevitable

By SETH BORENSTEIN  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### PARIS

Global warming is happening now and it will continue for centuries no matter what we do. It could be devastating. But don't give up hope.

Got that? That's the complex message that scientists are trying to get across after Friday's release of a landmark climate report by the world's leading experts and government officials.

"This is just not something you can stop. We're just going to have to live with it."

Kevin Trenberth  
Climate analyst on how global warming will always be a problem

### What's the worst?

Maybe more than 1 million dead and hundreds of billions of dollars in costs by 2100, in a world adapting to more extreme weather such as droughts, hurricanes, and wildfires, said Kevin Trenberth. He's one of the many co-authors of the report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

And if nothing is done soon to curb greenhouse gas emissions, experts say, by 2100 the melting of Greenland's ice sheet would

become inevitable. Over the following centuries, the world's seas would rise by more than 20 feet.

But can the worst be headed off?

"It's not too late" if greenhouse gas emissions are curbed quickly, said Australian scientist Nathaniel Bindoff, another co-author.

The report was the first of four to be released this year by the panel, which was created by the United Nations in 1988. It found:

- Global warming is "very likely" caused by man, meaning more than 90 percent certain. That's the strongest expression of certainty to date from the panel.

- If nothing is done to change current emissions patterns of greenhouse gases, global temperature could increase as much as 11 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100.

- But if the world does get greenhouse gas emissions under

control — something scientists say they hope can be done — the best estimate is about 3 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Sea levels are projected to rise 7 to 23 inches by the end of the century. Add another 4 to 8 inches if recent, surprising melting of polar ice sheets continues.

The report said no matter how much civilization slows or reduces its greenhouse gas emissions, global warming and sea level rise will continue on for centuries.

"This is just not something you can stop. We're just going to have to live with it," said Trenberth, director of climate analysis for the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo. "We're creating a different planet. If you were to come up back in 100 years time, we'll have a different climate."

# U.S. agencies: Iraq situation dire

By KATHERINE SHRADER  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### WASHINGTON

The United States acknowledged Friday that Iraq is spiraling downward, with sectarian animosity growing and new Iraqi troops being added too slowly in a precarious mix that could draw the country's neighbors into the violence if American troops leave.

The sobering assessment from the National Intelligence Council was seen by congressional Democrats, and some Republicans, as new evidence that President Bush's Iraq policy is failing.

"I do not see anything so far in the report that suggests the president's new plan is a winning strategy that protects America's national interest," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nevada.

Yet top Bush administration officials said the intelligence assessment reinforced their view that the United States cannot leave Iraq. At a news conference, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he knew no one on Capitol Hill who believed that leaving the country in chaos "would have anything other than very serious and negative consequences for the United States and for the region."

Gates said the extra troops that Iraq promised to send into Baghdad as part of a new U.S.-Iraqi military buildup are arriv-

## American helicopter crashes, killing 2

By BASSEM MROUE  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

### BAGHDAD, Iraq

A U.S. Army helicopter crashed Friday in a hail of gunfire north of Baghdad, police and witnesses said. The U.S. command said two crew members were killed.

An al-Qaida-affiliated group claimed responsibility.

A brief U.S. military statement gave no reason for the crash and did not identify the type of aircraft. A Pentagon official said it was an Apache attack helicopter, which carries two crew members.

The official spoke on condition

of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information.

Iraqi police and witnesses said the latest crash occurred about 7:30 a.m. as two Apaches were flying along an air route near Taji, a major U.S. base about 12 miles north of Baghdad.

One helicopter was struck by heavy machine gunfire but continued flying, the witnesses said. The other helicopter banked sharply and flew back toward the source of fire.

But that helicopter was also struck by ground fire, exploded in a ball of fire and crashed, the witnesses said. The other helicopter flew away, they said.

ing in insufficient numbers.

His outgoing commander in Baghdad, Gen. George Casey, has said the arriving Iraqi units have only 55 percent to 65 percent of their intended troops.

The problems facing Iraqi security forces are as basic as ensuring that troops can feed their families. The Iraqi government pays troops' salaries in cash, forcing them to return home to deposit their earnings. That, Gates said, increases absentee levels.

The intelligence assessment painted a picture of a country hanging in the balance.

Top U.S. intelligence analysts found that even if violence diminishes, Iraqi leaders will find major difficulties in reconciling differences among various sects.

Bush's national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, agreed with the pessimistic outlook of the report and its characterization of the civil strife. But Hadley continued the White House's practice of refusing to adopt the term "civil war."

"We need to get across the complexities of the situation we face in Iraq and what is our strategy to deal with that," he said, "and simple labels don't do that."

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