New Orleans Residents Desperately Try to Flee as Superdome and Other Shelter Becomes Unlivable

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Description

As the flooding in New Orleans levels off after Hurricane Katrina, thousands of people are still trying to figure out how to leave. Residents roam the streets in a mass migration, looking for food, water, help, or just a way out.

Keywords

New Orleans, Evacuation, Hurricane Katrina, Flood, Migration, Superdome, President George W. Bush, Ray Nagin, Houston, Astrodome, Texas, Looting, Filthy Water, Cholera, Typhoid, Disease, Coast Guard

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APA

CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE
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Transcript
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MARTIN SAVIDGE reporting:
It was a frightening statement that came from the mayor of New Orleans today. When he was pressed on how many may have died, he said a minimum hundreds, possibly thousands. But today in this city they were focused simply on surviving.
The flooding in this city is leveling off, but 80 percent of New Orleans is still under water. And while the mayor wants everyone to get out of the city, people here are still trying to figure out how to leave.
Already, thousands of people roam the streets in a mass migration, looking for food, water, help, or just a way out.
Mr. DERRICK WASHINGTON: They told us go to the Superdome. If you want to be rescued, go to the Superdome. All of a sudden, now they're telling us go to the bridge. We have very few resources.
Unidentified Man #1: They don't care about us.
Mr. WASHINGTON: What are we supposed to do?
SAVIDGE: Among those in the confused crowd are thousands of tourists, far from home, far from help.
Ms. LISA SMITH: I feel like they forgot about the 100 people that were staying in the Dauphine Orleans, and we have nowhere to go. Nope, we haven't seen any cops. We haven't seen any national guard. We haven't heard anything.
SAVIDGE: The Superdome, which was the shelter of last resort, has become the last place anybody wants to be.
Unidentified Woman: Get us out of here! We want out of here!
SAVIDGE: The air has gone bad, the toilets are overflowing, tensions are rising among rival gang members inside. Things are so bad, state officials are now evacuating the evacuees.
Four hundred seventy-five buses loading up to take these people, with so little left, to another way station,
the Houston Astrodome, 350 miles away. Looting continued throughout the downtown area today. It isn't a game for many of these people. It's a matter of survival.

You know you're not supposed to do that.

Unidentified Woman: I know we don't, but if we barefooted when we're walking in the water, our feets are going to get cut.

SAVIDGE: But it's still dangerous. As police search this office supply store, elsewhere residents plunder at will. The filthy water shifts constantly, creating a hot zone for diseases.

Secretary MICHAEL LEAVITT (Health and Human Services Secretary): We are gravely concerned about the potential for cholera, typhoid, and dehydrating diseases that could come as a result of the stagnant water and the conditions.

SAVIDGE: And cutting off access, leaving residents to hold up desperate messages for whoever might be watching from above. One of those flying overhead is President Bush, surveying the scene from Air Force One. But the people on the ground are more interested in the Coast Guard helicopters who've come to give them a chance to live. This man finally arrives at a safe location, one more survivor in a city where so many are still waiting for a helping hand. Meanwhile, the Army Corps of Engineers says it will take weeks to pump all the water that's in New Orleans out, that's once they get the pumps going.