

Brazil Sets Mission to Assist Brazilian Victims of Katrina

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Brazil's Ambassador Carlos Alberto Pimentel was named by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations to head a diplomatic mission assigned the task of providing consular assistance to Brazilians living in the region affected by hurricane Katrina, in the United States.

According to Pimentel, the situation at the moment, mainly in New Orleans, where the problem is most serious, is stable. There are no official reports of Brazilian fatalities.

The creation of the mission occurred less than a week after the hurricane wreaked havoc in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, in the southern US. The hurricane struck the region last Monday, August 29.

The Ministry of Foreign Relations informed that the mission is transporting food, medicine, and clothing to help the Brazilians and is expected to accompany the emergency operations effectuated by US teams.

According to the Brazilian diplomat in Dallas, Texas, the consulate took care of six Brazilians, who are doing fine.

"We asked the local authorities to inform us about other Brazilians who eventually turn up here," he affirmed, adding that he visited the shelters and that, apparently, there are no other Brazilians in the region that was affected.

Ambassador Pimentel assured that other Brazilians who were in hotels in New Orleans "were also located and have already left New Orleans to return to Brazil or continue their trip around the United States."

In a message sent to the US government, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva made an offer of humanitarian aid to the southern United States, as soon as this is requested.

The Brazilian mission to the US can be reached from Brazil by telephone at (214) 619-8700. Pimentel also informed the telephone numbers for contacting the Brazilian Consulate in Houston.

The round-the-clock number at the Consulate is (713) 961-1169, the private phone at the Consul-General's residence is (713) 965-0104, and his cell phone is (713) 822-0229.

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