

The following text may be printed, copy/pasted, or downloaded and emailed.

Kuwaiti Aid for Katrina Victims Underscores Depth of Alliance

Kuwaiti News Agency
September 6, 2005

Kuwaiti aid for Katrina victims underscores depth of alliance -- LeBaron

KUWAIT, Sept 6 (KUNA) -- Kuwaiti government's generous offer of assistance for the victims of Hurricane Katrina is probably the largest offer from any friends of the US and gives real meaning to the sense of mutual obligation that is the essence of relationships with close allies, said US Ambassador Richard LeBaron.

Speaking to reporters following a meeting with acting National Assembly Speaker Abdul-Wahab Al-Haroun on Tuesday, he thanked the acting speaker, members of the assembly and the many other Kuwaitis "who have expressed solidarity and sympathy with the victims of the hurricane." He added that the Kuwaiti offer of assistance "reflects the close bonds between our two countries... and I hope that we can continue to be supportive to the many victims of this hurricane." LeBaron explained that the two sides were currently working on the modalities for delivering the assistance, adding that "some assistance will move quickly and other assistance will require assembly approval, so it will be a little later but it will continue to be necessary." The ambassador went on to say that the most efficient way to assist hurricane victims right now was through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society as it had "offered its services to channel donations very quickly," thanking it for its services in this regard.

"The vast majority of Kuwaitis have been very supportive and sympathetic and have demonstrated deep bonds of friendship between the two societies," LeBaron said.

In response to a question on US-Gulf relations following the September 11 attacks, he said, "I think that what 9/11 allows us to do is to reflect on the fact that terrorism strikes in many different places in many different ways and has many victims around the world." "We cannot dwell on victims in only one place, and I think that the 9/11 commemoration will be designed to honor the memory of victims of terrorism around the world and not just in the US," he added.

As for the issue of Kuwaiti detainees in Guantanamo, LeBaron said, "This is an issue under discussion between the two (US and Kuwaiti) governments and we just have to see how that comes out." The Cabinet had allocated in its session on Sunday 500 million US dollars to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina which hit the US states of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama early last week, claiming the lives of thousands and leaving many homeless.

Energy Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah had said in a statement that the aid would include oil derivatives and humanitarian assistance needed by the victims in the three US states stricken by the hurricane. (end) mab.ms.bs.