



Homes damaged in the wake of the EF-3 tornado that struck Little Rock, AR.  
Photo courtesy of ARcare.

## FAST FACTS

- On March 31, a violent storm system swept through the central US, bringing with it powerful tornadoes
- More than 50 preliminary tornado reports were recorded on Friday in at least seven states
- 26 fatalities have been reported across seven states
- Severe weather is forecast for the central US on Tuesday, April 4, which will place affected states under the threat of thunderstorms, heavy rain, damaging winds and tornadoes

On the afternoon and evening of Friday, March 31, a deadly storm system tore through the central United States, bringing with it torrential rain, large hail and powerful tornadoes in Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Mississippi, Tennessee and Wisconsin, leaving at least 26 people dead, injuring dozens and leaving about 900,000 homes without power on Saturday.<sup>1</sup> More than 50 preliminary tornado reports were recorded on Friday, in at least seven states, including Arkansas, where a “catastrophic” EF-3 tornado with winds up to 165 miles per hour tore through Little Rock, killing one person, hospitalizing dozens and damaging close to 2,600 buildings, while a separate twister 100 miles to the east nearly razed the city of Wynne, killing four people and leveling entire blocks of buildings, including a high school, and bringing the state’s death toll to five people.<sup>2 3</sup> The town’s mayor reported that Wynne had been “cut in half by damage from east to west” in the wake of the twister and added that, as of Friday evening, city officials were “still in triage mode” as crews were still working to assess the extent of the storm damage.<sup>4</sup> On the morning of April 2, President Biden approved a major disaster declaration for Arkansas, making federal funding available for Cross, Lonoke and Pulaski counties, which include Little Rock and Wynne.<sup>5</sup>

The tornado that struck Wynne prompted a tornado emergency in Covington, Tennessee, located 40 miles northeast of Memphis, where storm damage made the city “impassable,” according to the police department. In Memphis, the deaths of two children and one adult have been linked to the storms, after police responded to reports that trees had fallen on houses.<sup>6</sup> Approximately 75 miles southeast, nine people died in rural McNairy County, where the majority of damage from possible tornadoes and powerful winds was inflicted on homes and residential areas, according to local officials.<sup>7</sup> In the city of Belvidere, Illinois, the roof of a concert venue collapsed due to the severe weather during a show, leaving at least one person dead and 40 injured.<sup>8</sup> Three other people died in the western part of the state. In Indiana, where more than 76,000 households lost power, the state police confirmed that three people were killed in Sullivan County after a tornado touched down.<sup>9</sup>

Another round of severe weather is forecast to strike the Mississippi and Ohio valleys on Tuesday afternoon and evening, which will again place major cities—including Chicago, Kansas City, Little Rock, Memphis and St. Louis—at risk of dangerous conditions, including frequent lightning strikes, heavy downpours, damaging winds and strong tornadoes.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/mar/31/arkansas-tornado-little-rock>

<sup>2</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/US/tornadoes-numbers-dozens-reported-7-states/story?id=98290319>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.foxweather.com/weather-news/tornado-sweeps-through-little-rock-arkansas-tornado-emergency>

<sup>4</sup> <https://abc7ny.com/tornado-watch-damage-little-rock-indiana/13070191/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/02/president-joseph-r-biden-jr-approves-arkansas-disaster-declaration-2/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2023/04/02/tornadoes-storms-update-death-toll/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/tornado-arkansas-storm-concert-79fe2da8a6b8bd92970032530b760d20>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2023/04/02/tornadoes-storms-update-death-toll/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/tornado-arkansas-storm-concert-79fe2da8a6b8bd92970032530b760d20>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.accuweather.com/en/severe-weather/severe-weather-tornado-threat-already-brewing-for-first-week-of-april-in-central-us/1506171>

## International Medical Corps Response

Following the tornadoes, International Medical Corps immediately mobilized an emergency response team to Little Rock, Arkansas, to assess the damage and determine the needs in the hard-hit areas of eastern Arkansas and western Tennessee. The team is currently working closely with local officials, including the government of Pulaski County, which includes Little Rock. We also are in contact with local first responders and organizations, including representatives from ARCare, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) network with dozens of clinics across Arkansas, Kentucky and Mississippi, and Winrock International, an organization focused on economic development with local partners across Arkansas. ARCare has deployed a mobile medical unit (MMU) to Wynne and is providing healthcare to residents.

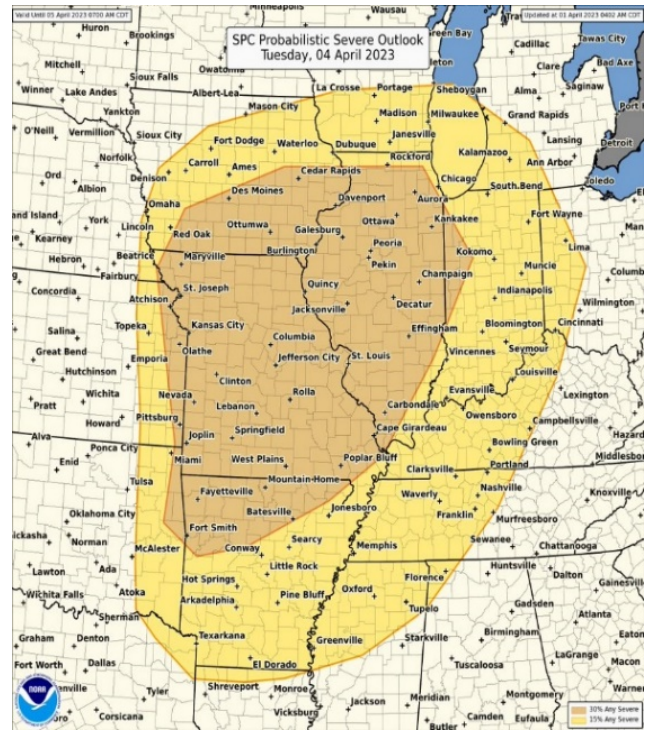
International Medical Corps is prepared to provide prepositioned supplies, including hygiene kits and wound-care kits to families that have been displaced, along with generators and other equipment and supplies, to ensure that local health facilities and organizations can keep their doors open and provide uninterrupted medical and social services to the community.

### International Medical Corps in the Central US

When a series of severe tornadoes tore through the central United States in December 2021, marking the most devastating tornado event in Kentucky's history, International Medical Corps immediately deployed an emergency response team to devastated communities in the far western part of the state to assess the damage and assist with immediate disaster-related needs. We partnered with ARCare and its subsidiary KentuckyCare, a community-based health provider, to provide support that helped KentuckyCare keep the doors of its clinics open and continue to provide comprehensive primary care, urgent care, vaccination and mental health services to the tornado-impacted communities.

With the support of International Medical Corps, KentuckyCare was able to adequately staff its clinics and deliver a wide range of medical services to affected communities, purchase essential supplies and equipment (medical and non-medical) to ensure that clinics could remain operational and support preparedness efforts for future disasters and procure a wheelchair-accessible patient transportation van to transport patients living in more remote locations or that lacked access to reliable transportation to and from their appointments. Thanks to International Medical Corps' support throughout 2022, KentuckyCare has been able to increase its capacity to meet the continuing and evolving needs of patients affected by the storm.

International Medical Corps also has partnered with Winrock International to implement a new USDA-funded project focused on integrating emergency preparedness and health education into community-based economic development programming targeting top employers in two counties in Arkansas.



NOAA's National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center forecast for risk of severe weather on April 4. Source: <https://www.spc.noaa.gov/>