

# New storm hits US Northeast as misery from Sandy deepens

A WSWWS reporting team  
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With tens of thousands homeless and hundreds of thousands still without power from Hurricane Sandy, the Northeast of the United States was hit by another storm Wednesday night.

The new storm, a Northeaster striking the coastal areas of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, threatens to deepen the misery still facing large numbers of people nine days after Sandy pummeled the region with a record storm surge, high winds and rain, killing at least 113 people in the US, disrupting power for millions and flooding the New York City subway system.

The second storm in less than a week and a half will bring recovery efforts to a temporary halt and may lead to more downed trees and power lines, causing further blackouts.

Without power or heat, residents of New York City neighborhoods such as the Rockaways in Queens, Coney Island and Red Hook in Brooklyn and large parts of Staten Island have already had to endure temperatures that have dipped down to near-freezing at night this week.

Anger is continuing to build among some 20,000 residents of public housing in the city who have still not had lights, heat or water turned back on after a week and a half. Homeowners and renters in the affected neighborhoods have also charged that the administration of New York's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Red Cross have been woefully slow in getting aid to those who need it, while unlimited resources were lavished on restoring the Wall Street stock exchange to full operations.

As the storm approached, Bloomberg ordered the evacuation of four health care facilities on the Rockaways—three nursing homes and one adult care

center—and sent police cars into low-lying coastal neighborhoods to broadcast appeals to residents to leave the areas and go to a city shelter.

Even as this appeal was being made, however, reports were emerging of miserable conditions faced by those who went to the shelters to escape from Hurricane Sandy. Some 3,800 people were still reported staying in city storm shelters on Tuesday, including 800 with significant medical problems. These numbers were expected to surge with the new storm.

Tuesday, the city was forced to close down three high schools in Brooklyn that had been used as shelters after at least 13 people were sickened by a norovirus outbreak. The people staying there were moved out and the facilities are being cleaned before students are allowed back in.

Also being cleaned was the Graphic Arts High School in West Manhattan, which had also been used as a shelter. There were reports that those staying there had been forced to use the floor as a toilet. Among them were disabled and elderly people who were confined to a space in which there was only one men's bathroom, with a single toilet, three flights up.

Meanwhile, neither city nor state officials have put forward a plan for how an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people who have been made homeless by the hurricane will be accommodated over the long term.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to Janette Campbell, her son Isaiah and their neighbors Melissa Ramirez and her sister Morgan Castro, who live in the Lillian Wald Houses, a public housing complex on Houston and D Street in Manhattan. The development's nearly 5,000 residents living in 16 high-rise buildings are going into the new storm having been left without heat and hot water since Sandy and with lights and electricity that flicker on and off.

Janette and her neighbors explained how badly things had gone at the shelter where they went to escape the devastation of Sandy. They left their home last Sunday night after police and New York Housing Authority employees had gone through the building telling people to evacuate and warning that their elevators would be shut down within hours. They had previously been told that they would be alright in the housing and to stock up on food. Without power or refrigeration, the food they bought spoiled.

“The shelter at Seward High School was like ‘Nightmare on Elm Street,’” said Janette, describing a situation in which she and her two children were not fed and there was little security for the large number of women and children who had gone to the school, where homeless men and alcoholics roamed the building.

Morgan said, “There was a woman with two broken legs at the shelter. I tried to help her, but we couldn’t get any help until I threatened to call 911 and the news media.”

“The only water I ever got there is a bottle a doctor had,” Janette continued. “My lips were very dry, but I gave the water to my kids. One woman said she saw a FEMA truck loaded with supplies for us. Water and other things we needed. We never got any water or supplies. The officials just kept it for themselves.”

“I would ask Bloomberg,” Janette concluded, “whether people are people and deserve help or only the people with money count.”

Samual Mangual lives and works at the senior services center in the senior building of Baruch Houses, the largest public housing project area-wise in the city, covering the equivalent of 15 city blocks in downtown Manhattan. It is home to 5,000 residents, including 1,500 senior citizens. Samual, who has lived and worked here for eight years, told the WSWS: “We didn’t have any heat or light or water or food until yesterday. Today we don’t have any hot water. This building has 23 floors with nine apartments on each, and our residents are 63 years old and older. They are old people by themselves, and we have had to go to them apartment by apartment to give them what they need with no lights, heat, water or food until today.

“People came down to the services center here because they were suffering and they were afraid. We

have four people who need oxygen tents. They haven’t had them, and their home care people, most of them could not come in to care for them. There are also 100 homebound seniors in apartments scattered throughout the Baruch Houses. We had to go to each of them individually.

“Other than the police we haven’t seen anybody to help us. We were never notified we had to go anywhere, and the water reached about a half a block from here. They haven’t told us when we will get our hot water back. We also haven’t seen the news at all for a week. We have been completely shut off.

“There are a lot of tensions because lights were on on Wall Street, but not here. There is a class division across the city. Some people I know have lights, but the elevators here only started yesterday. This society is only set up to help some people. We are all human beings, but the government doesn’t treat us that way when we are poor people.”



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