

## 3 million southeast residents sought shelter inland

by Linda Kleindienst  
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. - When Liz Gallagher left her St. Augustine home to escape the oncoming fury of Hurricane Floyd, she had no idea where she would end up. "We just said, 'Go north and west,'" she said on Wednesday from a Tallahassee-area shelter where she found refuge. Millions of other coastal dwellers from South Florida to North Carolina's Outer Banks had the same idea.

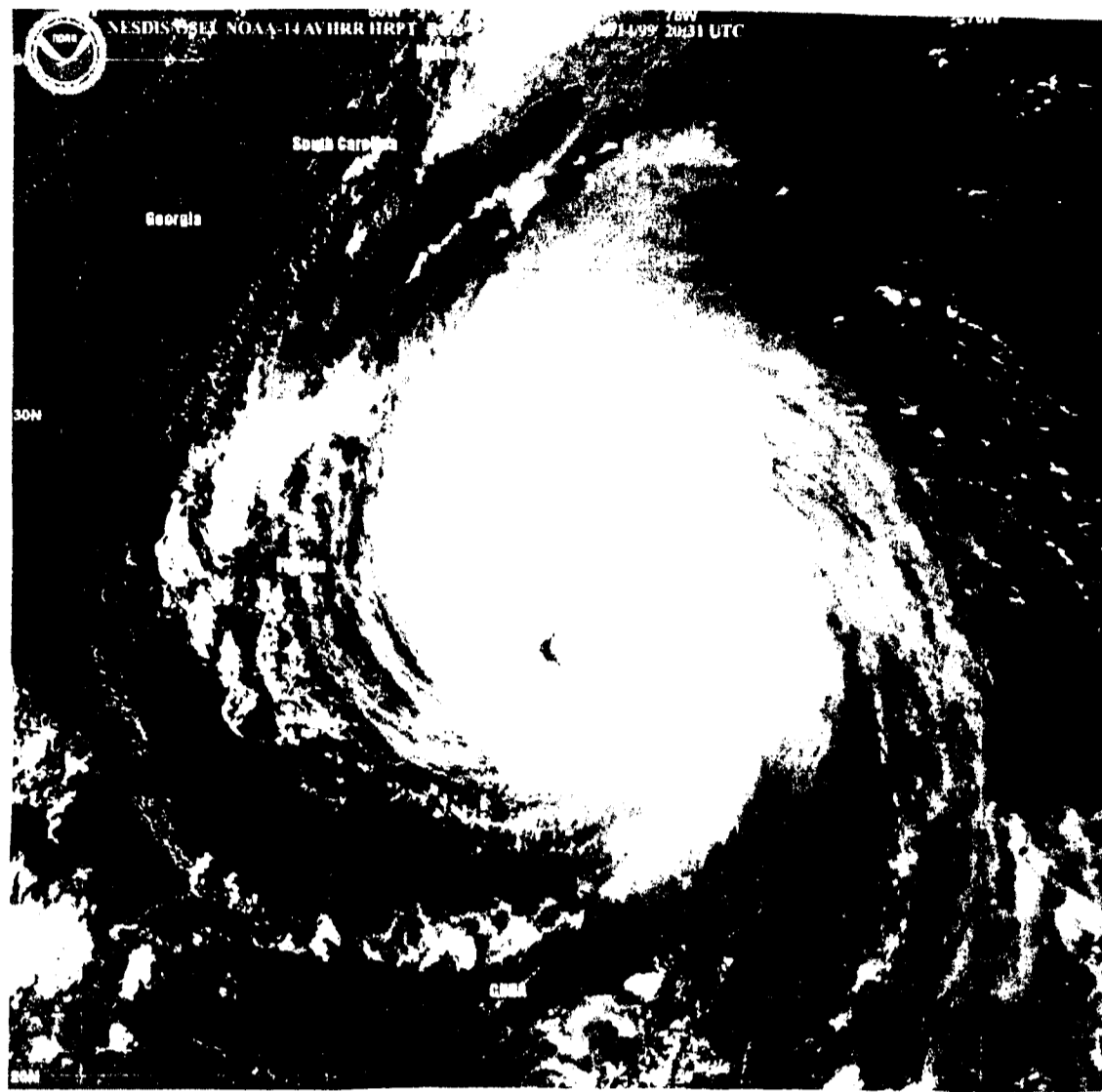
As a result, the largest evacuation in U.S. history, according to federal emergency managers, turned into the nation's biggest traffic jam. More than 3 million evacuees fled homes, condominiums and resort hotels, heading for the closest highways to move away from a raging storm the size of Texas. Instead of a quick escape, however, many found gridlock.

In Florida alone, about 1.3 million residents were ordered out of the path of possible storm surges, high winds and drenching rain on Monday and Tuesday - almost nine times as many people as the D-Day invasion force that stormed ashore at Normandy. In reviewing how Florida handled the largest evacuation in its history - and the first of an entire coastline - Gov. Jeb Bush said he found only one major glitch: traffic flow. "We normally have a lot of traffic in this state," Bush said. "But we have serious infrastructure needs in general, and that plays out in a dramatic way during an emergency."

But Bush said the evacuation order accomplished its purpose by getting people out of Floyd's way with time to spare. "We gave people enough advance notice and their lives were not in jeopardy," he said. "That's the most important thing. They evacuated."

In Georgia, about 500,000 residents fled the state's coastal regions on Tuesday, clogging highways leading north into the North Carolina mountains. In Georgia, eastbound lanes were converted to westbound to speed the exodus of cars.

By Wednesday, an estimated 850,000 South Carolina residents also were on the move, some spending up to 17 hours in traffic. Gov. Jim Hodges was criticized for waiting too long to turn Interstate 26 into a one-way highway inland. Pat Wylie said it took his brother-in-law 10 3/4 hours to get from Charleston to Greenville - a trip that



Satellite view of Hurricane Floyd as it approached the Carolina coast.

usually takes 3 3/4 hours. "I don't think the politicians had a clue," he said. "They evacuated everybody, and they had no plan for the numbers." Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. was more blunt. "What you're doing is running the risk of killing my people," he said in an uncharacteristic attack on Hodges, a fellow Democrat.

At least 400,000 North Carolina residents clogged roads around Wilmington, many ordered to evacuate the Outer Banks for the second time this month. In Florida, residents fleeing the Jacksonville area found bumper-to-bumper traffic on all major escape routes on Tuesday, including Interstate 10, the only major east-west highway in North Florida. At one point, state officials asked Central Florida residents to help relieve some of the congestion by avoiding northbound Interstate 95 and using Florida's Turnpike.

For some, the trip from Jacksonville Beach to Tallahassee, normally a three-hour drive, took as long as 12 hours. Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney asked the Florida Highway Patrol to turn one of I-10's eastbound lanes into a westbound route, but patrol officials said police agencies didn't have the personnel to guarantee that drivers would be heading in the right direction.

By late Tuesday, however, the state rolled out tankers to help refuel westbound motorists who had run out of gas. "When you undertake the largest evacuation in the state's history, there will be lessons learned," Bush said. "I've called every emergency management officer to get information from them and a sense of how we're doing. We'll be looking at evacuation routes and how we time and go about evacuations."

Bush met on Wednesday with some of the 500 evacuees who spent the night in a Tallahassee shelter. Most had left

their homes in the wee hours of Tuesday. Russell and Lynda Kessler left their home in Edgewater, near Orlando, at 4 a.m. and needed six hours to reach Tallahassee. Along the way, Kessler said, "We stopped at every rest area to see if we could find a motel and, of course, we couldn't." Part of the problem, he said, was a lack of signs along the road to help them decide where to go.

On Wednesday evening, Bush took an aerial tour of I-10 and the connecting roads between Jacksonville and Tallahassee to get a firsthand look at the evacuation process in reverse - as residents of northeast Florida returned to their homes. "I think we have the best emergency system in the country," Bush said. "We have the most experienced, sadly. And because of that, we have a very good system. But there's always more that we can do. We'll learn from this and make it better."

## Evidence points to systemic killings in Timor

by Doug Struck  
and Keith B. Richburg  
The Washington Post

KUPANG, Indonesia - Jani thought he was safe on the ferry. After three days of terror in East Timor, the boat would take him and two college friends to refuge, he thought.

Then the militiamen boarded. No young men may leave East Timor, they announced as the boat prepared to depart. Jani, 27, tried to hide; the militiamen caught his friends. "Are there any others?" the militia demanded. Jani recalls. "No, no other young men," replied his friends in a last gift of kindness.

They marched Armando Gomez, 29, and Armando DiSilva, 30, to the front of the boat and killed them before 200 refugees. Gomez's body was dumped in the sea; DiSilva's on the ground by the dock.

Jani raced through the boat. "Please help me," he whispered to the other refugees. A mother motioned to him to hide between her and her children. The searching militiamen walked by.

The account of Jani, now a fearful refugee in western Timor, adds to the mounting evidence that victims of the murderous rampage in East Timor, following the territory's overwhelming vote for independence from Indonesia, were systematically culled from the others.

Young men, political opponents, Roman Catholic clergy and anyone else suspected of favoring the independence opposed by the militias were targeted, in a chilling echo of the techniques of systematic killing seen in Kosovo.

In the capital, Jakarta, on Monday, the top U.N. official for human rights said she had gathered consistent and credible evidence that members of the Indonesian armed forces and police engaged in a "well-planned and systematic policy of killings, displacement, destruction of property and intimidation" that could lead to prosecutions before an international tribunal.

Mary Robinson, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said President B.J. Habibie agreed in a Monday meeting on the need for an international commission of inquiry, the first step toward establishing a full-fledged criminal tribunal, similar to the war crimes panels set up after the genocide in Rwanda and the massacres in the former Yugoslavia.

She said it's urgent for an international peacekeeping force to be deployed quickly to begin amassing evidence because "there has been some burning of bodies and dumping of bodies into the sea" as the perpetrators of East Timor's massacres attempted to "cover up tracks."

But she said the scale of the abuses was so massive, and the witnesses so numerous, in Darwin, Australia, and in the refugee camps of western Timor, that a committee of experts should easily find enough evidence for prosecutions, and members of the armed forces, or TNI as it is called here, likely would be implicated.

"I don't know how far up the scale that can be traced," Robinson said, "but certainly there will be accountability on a significant number wearing army uniforms or in a position of local authority."

Besides the killing and the forced expulsion from East Timor's cities, Robinson said relief agencies told her of, "very worrying allegations of rapes of women," in refugee camps in western Timor. She said those accounts must be verified.

The move to begin an international inquiry into the Indonesian military's conduct in East Timor is a delicate one for Habibie, given his precarious relationship with the armed forces and his need to secure military backing if he is to have any chance of being re-elected next month when the People's Consultative Assembly, one of two Indonesian parliaments, convenes to choose the country's next president.

No member of the armed forces attended Habibie's meeting Monday with Robinson at Merdeka, the presidential palace.

Marzuki Darusman, chairman of Indonesia's National Human Rights Commission, attended the session, and said the initial inquiry commission will

likely involve Indonesian investigators but also have international experts; the panel, he said, could be given "a certain status or recognition by the U.N."

Here in Kupang, the militias "had names of all of the (pro-independence) party members, and they were killing them one by one," a refugee said.

"The militias had names, pictures, addresses. They had lists," Jani said. "They went to the houses and to the port and to the police headquarters, and they took people who were pro-independence."

"At night, the militias would come to the houses," in Dili, the capital of East Timor, a third refugee said. "They were looking for young men. The mi-

*"Do you want to live or die?"*

-Indonesian militiaman

litas knew that most of the young people there were for independence. If they found us, they would kill us."

All of the refugees spoke in secret with a reporter, and all pleaded that their full names not be used. The militias that terrorized them in East Timor reign over the refugee camps here in western Timor, and move freely in the town. Accounts from the camps say the militias are searching for opponents; the refugees fear the killing lists still exist.

The fear is pervasive, even though western Timor was supposed to be a place of safety. Refugees here shun foreigners, and several refugees stopped in mid-interview because they said they were scared. Foreigners and local journalists aren't allowed inside the camps. Foreign aid workers do not enter. Indonesian officials who make tours of the refugee camps insist that no foreign reporters accompany them.

But in clandestine conversations, refugees described the campaign of terror that followed the announcement of East Timor's vote for independence.

With a turnout of more than 98 percent, independence was approved by 78.5 percent of the voters.

The fires that soon engulfed so many homes in Dili were not set randomly, but were used to drive people from their homes, said a 23-year-old student.

"They threatened us with guns and machetes, and we heard all the men were going to be killed and the houses burned. They came at night to our house, but I ran out and hid in an empty Red Cross house," he said. The next night, his home was burned. His family fled, and he doesn't know where they are.

The refugees also said Indonesian soldiers encouraged and sometimes participated in the violence. Jani said he heard soldiers at the port order the militiamen onto the boat before it left. "The military told the militias to go ahead and get the pro-independence people on the boat. They said, 'If you don't do it, we will,'" he said.

The accounts also include acts of bravery. A 24-year-old seminarian named Mario fled to a church in Dili after his house was torched and his family scattered. In the days after the referendum results, the militiamen prowled past the church and used any pretense for violence, Mario said. "I saw them kill a man with hedge clippers," he said. "They put the blades around his neck and squeezed them together."

More than 100 refugees were gathered at the church when a militiaman aimed his weapon at them. Mario said he stepped in front of the gunman.

"The gunman grabbed my collar, yanked me toward him and held a pistol to my head," said Mario, 24. The militiaman asked, "Do you want to live or die?"

"I told him, 'As you wish.' I think he was surprised by my answer, and he let me go. He said, 'Someday you will be a priest.' I told him, 'Then we can live in peace.'"

## Puerto Rico grandly welcomes freed prisoners

by Hector Tobar  
Los Angeles Times

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - Vilified in the United States as unrepentant terrorists, but revered by many in this Caribbean island as patriots, a group of Puerto Rican nationalists freed from prison by President Clinton were welcomed here Saturday as heroes.

Local officials lionized them as saviors of Puerto Rican honor. Airport security guards posed for pictures with four of the activists, who just hours earlier had been locked up in federal penitentiaries. Children presented them with kisses and bouquets of flowers.

But the activists themselves, part of a group of 16 offered clemency last month, seemed subdued. Most did not promise to continue the militant struggle for Puerto Rican independence that landed them in prison nearly two decades ago, when they were linked to more than 100 bombings on U.S. soil.

Instead, as a throng gathered at the airport chanted "Freedom, freedom for the patriots now!" and other slogans, the freed inmates hinted that they were being silenced by the strict conditions of release placed on them by the Clinton administration.

"My jail has now become a cell with invisible bars," said Adolfo Matos, 48. "And the words I speak will be like those of a caged bird."

Under the conditional clemency offer by President Clinton last month, the activists may not associ-

ate with other felons, a requirement that may prevent them from speaking to one another. The freed prisoners must also report by Tuesday to the U.S. Probation Office in San Juan.

Nine of the 12 prisoners released Friday from a variety of U.S. jails said they would resettle in Puerto Rico and many arrived here on overnight flights.

"We are going to take some time to see all that we've missed these years being absent," said Carmen Valentin, 53, who served much of her 19 years in prison in Dublin, Calif.

Valentin and the others left behind a political climate that had become overwhelmingly hostile to their cause. Their fate became tied up with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's presumptive bid for U.S. Senate in New York as Republicans charged that the president's amnesty offer was a sly attempt to improve her standing with the state's Puerto Rican voters.

There was little if any mention of Mrs. Clinton on Saturday as the former prisoners' arrival was covered live on local television and radio. Some reporters were dispatched to remote, provincial villages to cover the emotional scenes as the released prisoners were reunited with family members they hadn't seen in a generation.

Matos, reprieved from a 70-year-sentence, traveled to his native town of Lajas, on the southern end of the island.

Lajas Mayor Marcos Irizarry told a local paper that Matos was "a hero who never killed anyone or stole any-

thing. What he did was defend his country." The mayor's welcome was not unusual: even the pro-statehood daily *El Mundo* greeted the news of the first activist's arrival Friday night with the headline: "He's Home!"

The warm reception for the convicted terrorists may seem, on the surface, paradoxical: only a small fraction of voters on the island has supported independence in recent referendums. But Puerto Rico has a long tradition of embracing its most radical militants as symbols of national honor even while rejecting their stated goal.

Residents of the island have been American citizens since 1917, but can't vote in presidential elections and have no voting representative in Congress. Even many political moderates believe that the U.S. Congress has extraordinary power over the island's local affairs.

The sense of victimization has been heightened by the ongoing controversy over the U.S. military presence at Vieques Island, which the navy uses as a bombing range. The prisoners themselves, given sentences of up to 88 years for what some consider a purely intellectual crime, "seditious conspiracy," have become national martyrs to many.

"There's a tremendous groundswell for these people because they're seen as defending the culture," said Roland Fernandez, a sociologist and author of *The Disenchanted Island*. "It's all about dignity and respect."

Such sentiments helped fuel a long-running campaign on the prisoners'

behalf here and elsewhere. This year, their supporters submitted 75,000 signatures to the White House demanding their freedom.

After Clinton offered conditional clemency last month, more than 100,000 people marched in San Juan to call for their unconditional release.

At the same time, sentiment in American political circles could not have been more different. Although prosecutors never linked the prisoners to any deaths or injuries, the clemency offer was seen as a surrender to terrorism.

Last week, the U.S. House voted, 311-41, to condemn Clinton's action. The Senate will vote on a similar resolution Monday. A draft text condemns the President for making a "deplorable concession to terrorists."

Elizabeth Escobar, freed from a 68-year-sentence he was serving in Oklahoma, was one former prisoner to express the defiant tone that made the inmates famous during their trials in the early 1980s, when many declared themselves "prisoners of war" and refused to participate in any legal proceedings.

Escobar promised to comply with the conditions of clemency, but also said he would "do everything possible to behave in a way that is worthy of Puerto Rican history. We will try to open new trenches in the struggle."