



**Statement by ICBS on the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the cultural heritage of Louisiana,  
Mississippi and Alabama  
Paris, September 12<sup>th</sup> 2005**

The International Committee of the Blue Shield (ICBS) expresses its sorrow and solidarity with the American people and in particular with the population of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama for the loss of lives and for the terrible disruption of their livelihood caused by hurricane Katrina and the ensuing floods.

Although the highest priorities must be accorded to minimising the loss of life and to the humanitarian activities intended to re-establish decent living conditions for the hundreds of thousands of people whose homes and means of subsistence have been wrecked by this natural disaster, the International Committee of the Blue Shield must express its profound concern for the fate of the cultural heritage in the affected states.

ICBS wishes to emphasise that the cultural heritage of a community reflects its way of life, its history and identity, provides the link between its past, present and future, and contributes substantially to its economic sustainability and welfare. A community cannot function effectively in the larger societal context if deprived of its identity through the loss of its cultural heritage.

ICBS, therefore, calls on the Federal Government of the United States of America, and on the Governments of the States of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama to swiftly draw up and implement plans to ensure the survival and restoration of historic buildings and sites, museums collections, books in libraries, and documents in archives.

ICBS also calls on the international community to give the fullest possible support to the efforts, official and voluntary, now being made by United States citizens and agencies to rescue the rich and unique heritage of New Orleans and other cities and towns in the region.