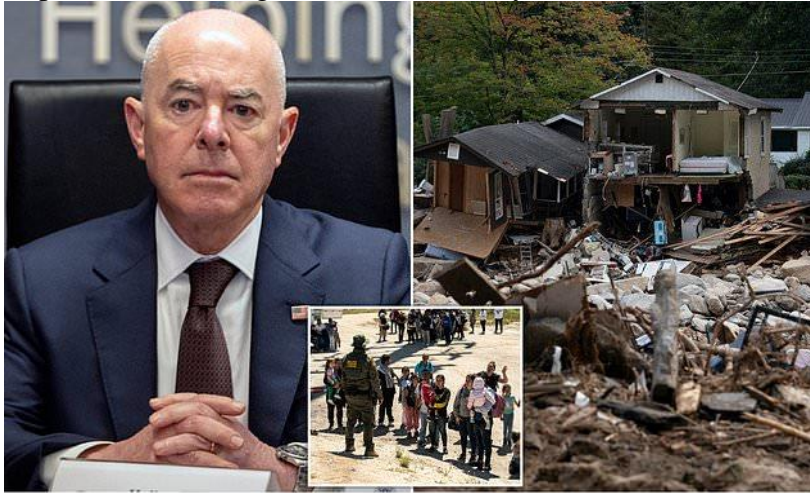


FEMA whistleblower details 'waste' of taxpayer funds and staff waiting in hotels during Hurricane Helene

10:52 EDT 04 Oct 2024, updated 11:56 EDT 04 Oct 2024 By Jon Michael Raasch, Political Reporter In Washington, D.C., For Dailymail.Com



- **Whistleblowers said that FEMA responders have been without orders and 'idle'**

The federal government's disaster response agency has been painfully slow to deploy first responders to help Hurricane Helene victims and making things worse of the ground, multiple whistleblowers have alleged.

The bombshell allegations of mismanagement at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) come just days after the agency took a beating for its boss [Alejandro Mayorkas](#) admitting it [will not be able to foot the bill](#) for this historic hurricane season.

A letter from a whistleblower to Rep. [Matt Gaetz](#), R-Fla. details how the department has wasted and misappropriated funds in the wake of Helene and is now 'exacerbating the emergency.'

The letter also alleges 'hundreds if not thousands' of first responders and service members have been 'without deployment orders' with some waiting around in hotels while others 'have sat idle' as Americans throughout the southeast are in dire need.



An aerial view of flood damage wrought by Hurricane Helene along the Swannanoa River on October 3, 2024 in Asheville, North Carolina. FEMA and other emergency-management whistleblowers allege the agency wasted funds, withheld pre-disaster aid and was slow to deploy first responders and service members to help with recovery efforts

'This news comes after FEMA has spent hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on migrants due to Border Czar [Kamala Harris](#)' open border instead of prioritizing funding for Americans impacted by disasters,' Gaetz wrote in a scathing letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Sec. Mayorkas on Friday.

'My office has been in contact with whistleblowers in numerous emergency-management functions at the federal, state, and local levels, and they all point to the same critical mismanagement issues.'

'FEMA has wasted taxpayer funds misappropriated funds, and left other federal, state, and local responders without deployment orders on the ground,' Gaetz, a close ally of ex-President Donald Trump, wrote.

With over 200 Americans dead and the agency strapped for cash, FEMA's massive budget for illegal immigrants has come under scrutiny as a possible way to provide support to devastated U.S. citizens.

Over the last two years, FEMA has handed out more than \$1 billion taxpayer dollars to specifically support illegal migrants with housing.



Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., sent a letter to DHS Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas (above) Friday outlining allegations of mismanagement at FEMA by agency whistleblowers





But now there's no money to help out the 150,000 American citizens who have reached out for federal assistance after their homes were damaged by Hurricane Helene.

'FEMA does not have the funds to make it through the season,' Department of Homeland Security Secretary [Alejandro Mayorkas](#) admitted on Wednesday.

But only last week [Congress](#) passed a funding bill for an additional \$20 billion for the anticipated hurricane season.

And the whistleblowers allege the department, despite receiving the recent funding, has been slow and ineffective in its response to Hurricane Helene.

'As reported and further confirmed by my office, hundreds, if not thousands of service members were deployed by the Department of Defense to North Carolina and have sat idle, waiting for FEMA,' Gaetz writes.

'We have confirmed FEMA employees deployed, on the clock, awaiting orders in hotels. FEMA pre-disaster aid was withheld, exacerbating the emergency.'

The Republican is demanding to know how much money DHS and FEMA are spending on non-citizens vs. American citizens.



© AFP via Getty Images
Migrants seeking asylum in the United States wait on the border of Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua state, Mexico on March 19, 2024



At least 200 people were killed in six states in the wake of the powerful hurricane which made landfall as a Category 4

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<http://gaetz.house.gov>

October 4, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

Yesterday, you stated that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which is a part of your department, “does not have enough funds to make it through the [hurricane] season.” This news comes after FEMA has spent hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on migrants due to Border Czar Kamala Harris’ open border instead of prioritizing funding for Americans impacted by disasters.¹

My office has been in contact with whistleblowers in numerous emergency-management functions at the federal, state, and local levels, and they all point to the same critical mismanagement issues. FEMA has wasted taxpayer funds, misappropriated funds, and left other federal, state, and local responders without deployment orders on the ground. As reported and further confirmed by my office, hundreds, if not thousands of service members were deployed by the Department of Defense to North Carolina and have sat idle, waiting for FEMA.² We have confirmed FEMA employees deployed, on the clock, awaiting orders in hotels. FEMA pre-disaster aid was withheld, exacerbating the emergency. It is also public that NGOs have purchased airline tickets for migrants through the use of FEMA funds.³

The aftermath of Hurricane Helene is a major disaster, and your waste and unpreparedness are leaving Americans in distress—unable to access food, water, or medicine—and expecting help, with none coming.

Please provide answers to the following questions to my office by October 11, 2024:

- (1) What policies and regulations of the Department of Homeland Security and FEMA prevent emergency funds from being wasted on illegal immigrants, including what conditions are placed on grantees of the agency?; and
- (2) Of FEMA’s total budget for FY 2024, what portion of funds can be guaranteed to have been spent solely on American citizens, and what portion of funds was or may have been spent on noncitizens?; and
- (3) In FY 2024, what portion of funds in the Disaster Relief Fund have been spent on non-disaster-relief programs, such as providing services to illegal aliens or providing routine training to FEMA employees authorized out of general appropriations?

Sincerely,



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress

// cc’d by electronic mail to dhssecretary@hq.dhs.gov
// cc FEMA

¹ [Feds say there's no money left for hurricanes after FEMA spent \\$640M on migrants \(nypost.com\)](https://www.nypost.com/news/political-funding/fema-no-money-left-hurricanes)

² <https://x.com/seanmdav/status/1841836736608944155>

³ [Matt Gaetz Demands Answers From Delta Air Lines Regarding Illegal Immigrant Transports | National Review](https://www.nationalreview.com/article/matt-gaetz-demands-answers-from-delta-air-lines-regarding-illegal-immigrant-transports)



This aerial picture taken on September 27, 2024 shows a flooded street after Hurricane Helene made landfall in Steinatchee, Florida



Immigrants wait to be processed at a US Border Patrol transit center after they crossed the border from Mexico in Eagle Pass, Texas on December 20, 2023

'Of FEMA's total budget for FY 2024, what portion of funds can be guaranteed to have been spent solely on American citizens, and what portion of funds was or may have been spent on noncitizens?' Gaetz asks.

'In FY 2024, what portion of funds in the Disaster Relief Fund have been spent on non-disaster-relief programs, such as providing services to illegal aliens or providing routine training to FEMA employees authorized out of general appropriations?'

He demanded answers from Mayorkas by October 11.