

Lawsuit Filed Against Florida Police Department That Vowed to Arrest Fugitives During Hurricane Irma

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On Saturday, Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said they arrested two men involved in a burglary leading up to Hurricane Irma. Photo courtesy of Orlando Sentinel. [/caption]

Summary: A pro bono legal organization sued Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd for tweeting that his department would arrest fugitives who wanted shelter from Hurricane Irma.

Leading up to Hurricane Irma's arrival in Florida, one county sheriff decided to use the catastrophe to uphold the law. Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd tweeted that anyone with an outstanding warrant that showed up to a storm shelter would be promptly arrested, and his authoritarian stance has him facing a new lawsuit.

Nexus Caridades Attorneys, Inc. filed a lawsuit against Sheriff Judd last week. According to *ABC News*, the organization is one of the largest providers of pro bono legal services in the U.S., and their mission is to stand up for victims of abuse from government officials and agencies.

Nexus sued Sheriff Judd after he tweeted from the Polk County Sheriff Department's account, "If you go to a shelter for #Irma and you have a warrant, we'll gladly escort you to the safe and secure shelter called the Polk County Jail." Nexus said that Judd and Polk County were engaging in a dangerous practice of discouraging people from seeking shelter by threatening them. The law firm said that Polk County police were also violating the Constitution by conducting pedestrian warrant checks on people in crisis.

"Sheriff Grady Judd knew that people would be afraid because of his statements earlier this week. That fear is causing them to not seek shelter, and that as a result people... Men, women, and children, may die. This storm is deadly, and how many people will die or be injured because of Judd's reckless tweets? The Sheriff has sworn an oath to protect people, not endanger them. His actions are reckless and unconstitutional, and he needs to be held accountable for his actions," Mike Donovan, CEO of Nexus Services Inc. told *ABC News*.

Nexus said that Sheriff Judd's tweet violates the fourth amendment, which prohibits unreasonable search and seizure. Nexus's press release stated that the tweet inspired the law firm to launch efforts to assist individuals who needed evacuation help but were afraid to seek help because of Judd's threat.

ABC News reported that this morning, Hurricane Irma, which has been downgraded to a tropical storm, moved into Georgia cities, where flooding and 60 mph winds are expected. Brunswick and Savannah were affected and Atlanta is predicted to see flooding.

In Florida, a tornado watch has been issued from Daytona Beach to Jacksonville, where a record storm surge was reported. Jacksonville was also issued a flash-flood warning as water is expected to overflow from the St. Johns River.

According to *ABC News*, Tallahassee has escaped major damage. Hurricane Irma first hit the Florida Keys on Sunday morning, and while the city's citizens were told to evacuate, some chose to stay, even in homes that were not flood-ready.

"The wind may have stopped blowing, but for most of the Florida Keys, there is no fuel, electricity, running water, or cell service. For many people, supplies are running low and anxiety is running high," Monroe County officials said in a statement.

After Irma hit the Florida Keys, it moved north. Naples recorded winds up to 142 mph and Miami experienced winds of 99 mph. So far, officials have documented six fatalities in Florida in the counties of Monroe, Hardee, Orange, and Miami-Dade County. Thirty-seven people died in the Caribbean because of Hurricane Irma.

- [Hurricane Irma Named Most Powerful Storm in Atlantic Ocean Ever](#)
- [Three Lawsuits Filed After Reservoirs Destroy Homes After Hurricane Harvey](#)
- [Houston Lawyers Mobilize To Help Hurricane Harvey Victims](#)
- [Lawyers Urge Hurricane Harvey Victims To File Insurance Claims Before September 1](#)

Source: *ABC News*

What do you think of the Polk County Sheriff Department's tweet? Let us know in the comments below.

