



*Because of widespread damage throughout Grand Bahama island, International Medical Corps' assessment team has to be fully self-sufficient.*

## SITUATION UPDATE

International Medical Corps continues to provide vital healthcare services for populations impacted by Hurricane Dorian, as staff and volunteers coordinate two distinct response operations while demobilizing a third response.

Dorian initially hit Puerto Rico, where many residents are still reeling from the devastation of 2017's Hurricane Maria, with winds of 75 mph and heavy localized rainfall. It then developed into a dangerous Category 5 storm before slamming into the northwestern Bahamas, where it caused significant damage. When it made contact, with sustained wind speeds of 185 mph and gusts of up to 220 mph, it was the strongest hurricane in modern records for the Bahamas, where the death toll has risen to 45—a number that is expected to rise as more aid teams reach affected areas.

Across the Bahamas, many people are still missing and thousands have been left homeless. Some of the islands suffered serious devastation, and are left without running water, food, functioning clinics or medicine. As of September 8, nearly the entire islands of both Grand Bahama and Abaco are still mostly without power.

Many people have started moving off those islands to other locations, creating a need to support internally displaced persons and set up shelters. Critical needs include food, safe drinking water, mental health services and care for hospice patients. Additionally, with hurricane season still in full swing, emergency preparedness remains vital.

After hitting the Bahamas, the slow-moving hurricane tracked up the east coast of the United States, into the Canadian Maritimes before heading out into the North Atlantic. In preparation for the storm, the governors of Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia declared states of emergency, and are still dealing with the effects of the storm, including damage caused by high winds, dangerous storm surges, flash flooding and widespread loss of electric power.

## FAST FACTS

- Category 5 Hurricane Dorian is the strongest hurricane in modern records for the northwestern Bahamas.
- 43 deaths are confirmed in the Bahamas so far, with authorities warning that the real number may rise precipitously as search-and-rescue efforts continue.
- More than 70,000 people on Abaco and Grand Bahama need lifesaving assistance, according to the UN.
- Hurricane Dorian made landfall in Cape Hatteras, NC, as a Category 1 Hurricane on Friday, with maximum sustained winds of 90 mph.
- Dorian has finally moved away from the east coast of North America and heading into the North Atlantic



During [a recent interview](#) with Judy Woodruff on *PBS Newshour* about the situation in the Bahamas, our Team Lead, Susan Mangicaro, noted that, “The islands have been dramatically impacted. Most healthcare systems are non-functioning, with minimal support.” However, she added, “We deal with disasters all the time, so we have the flexibility to be totally independent, running a clinic that’s self-standing, or have mobile teams that go out and treat patients where they happen to be.”

## INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

The focus of International Medical Corps’ response operations is now on the Bahamas, where our assessment team has been on the ground for several days, liaising with the government and international NGO partners to ensure a coordinated effort. Crucially, the team also has been active in conducting damage assessments for areas for which it has been able to gain access.

On Friday, International Medical Corps was formally requested by the Bahamian Ministry of Health (MoH) to deploy a 25-person mobile Emergency Medical Team (EMT) to provide outpatient care on Grand Bahama island, where several hard-to-reach communities do not have functioning clinics and have not yet received aid services. We have been requested by the MoH to conduct a needs assessment throughout the island, and provide medical services in the central and eastern areas, which were most devastated by the storm. On Sunday, in coordination with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the local authorities, we sent an assessment team to Grand Bahama to meet with local health administration and hospital staff.

Additional volunteer medical professionals, including specialists in obstetrics and oncology, are being deployed to Grand Bahama, along with specialized International Medical Corps staff. We will maintain two medical teams—one mobile and one static- based in and around the main hospital in Freeport.

Our doctors, nurses, mental health, and water, sanitation and hygiene specialists will work with the people and Government of Bahamas to provide medical services and medicines; rehabilitate water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure; conduct hygiene promotion to prevent the spread of disease; and assess and address psychosocial support needs, to help individuals who have lost loved ones and livelihoods. We will provide immediate outpatient healthcare as we continue to assess the most critical needs for the population of approximately 51,000 people on Grand Bahama island.



International Medical Corps' assessment team (from left: Dr. Natalie Moore, nurse Claire Liszkay, Mike Greenwell and Allan Havers) on its way to Grand Bahama on September 8.

In the United States, the North Carolina Primary Care Association contacted International Medical Corps with a request for assistance to Ocracoke Health Center, the sole healthcare facility on the barrier island of Ocracoke. The center provides primary care, pediatric care, behavioral health, dental health and migrant health services. International Medical Corps domestic program staff will deploy to assess the impact of Dorian on Ocracoke Island's community health infrastructure; we will share findings from these assessments in future situational reports.

As of Thursday, September 5, response operations have ceased in Florida. Over the previous several days, a Nurse Strike Team comprising six volunteers assisted 127 medical-needs shelter guests in Palm Coast, Florida. They helped treat guests with a variety of medical conditions, as well as oxygen dependency, electricity dependency (CPAP, wheelchairs) and dialysis. International Medical Corps' relationship with the Florida Department of Health continues to be a strength of the domestic program.