

Hurricane Michael makes landfall in Florida as category four storm

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Hurricane Michael made landfall in the panhandle of Florida on Wednesday afternoon as a category four hurricane with winds up to 150 miles per hour. Tens of thousands of Floridians had already lost power before landfall as the storm's winds lashed the coast.

The hurricane is one of the strongest on record to make landfall in Florida and the first ever of that strength to hit the Florida Panhandle. It is projected to move through Georgia, Alabama and the Carolinas in the coming days and bring widespread flooding and power outages in those areas.

An estimated 375,000 people live in areas under mandatory evacuation. Some 4,000 people had already taken refuge in shelters by Tuesday night, according to the Red Cross.

The storm surge is expected to reach up to nine feet, a dangerously high level that will cause severe flooding in coastal areas. In some areas of Florida it could climb as high as 14 feet. Tornado warnings were also in effect for most of northern Florida and Georgia.

Throughout the region, a familiar scene played out. Terrified residents scrambled to evacuate, while those without the means to leave sought to fortify their homes with sandbags and board up their windows. Grocery store shelves were emptied of bottled water, canned food and other emergency items, and gas stations saw long lines as motorists attempted to fill up their tanks before supplies ran out.

Governor Rick Scott declared a state of emergency and mobilized 2,500 national guardsman. A state of emergency was also declared by the governors of Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas. Other than frequent warnings to evacuate the area immediately, Governor Scott, like his counterparts in other states, offered no assistance to residents in the path of the storm.

Hurricane Michael is the strongest storm ever to hit the US in the month of October. It comes less than a month after Hurricane Florence devastated the Carolinas, killing 48 people and destroying thousands of homes. Unlike Florence, which developed in the Atlantic Ocean and whose area of landfall was predicted over a week in advance, Michael developed quickly over the course of the last few days in the Gulf of Mexico.

This year marks the third consecutive year the state of Florida has been hit by hurricanes, following Irma in 2017 and Matthew in 2016. The combined death toll for those two storms was 92.

Despite the growing frequency of powerful storms every hurricane season, there has been no attempt by either state or federal officials to create response plans that would ensure that all citizens were evacuated in advance of the storm. Nor has there been any serious attempt to upgrade infrastructure in commonly affected areas so as to better withstand the impact.

As global warming fuels ever more powerful storms, the criminal negligence of the ruling elites becomes ever more apparent. That warming ocean waters would lead to more frequent and stronger storms has been the consensus opinion of climate scientists for decades, yet no action has been taken by either the Republican or Democratic parties.

The Republicans deny the science of climate change while the Democrats offer half-measures that will do little to mitigate future disasters. Both parties will do nothing that impacts the wealth and profits of the ruling elites to which they are beholden.



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