

Hurricane Dorian: Tens of thousands homeless in the Bahamas as damage assessed on Canadian coast

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As the remnants of Hurricane Dorian slammed Canada's Atlantic coast over the weekend, the devastation wrought by the storm has only begun to be assessed.

The Bahama islands of Grand Bahama and Great Abaco are in a state of ruin. While the death count from Dorian has reached an official total of 43 people, authorities predict the final amount to be much greater as bodies are found amid the wreckage and additional deaths from lack of clean water, food and medicine occur as humanitarian crises set in following the storm's passage. "There's a horrible amount of disease that can develop after an event like this," said Darren Tosh, director of aid group Samaritan's Purse, to the BBC.

In addition to the loss of life and infrastructure, many residents of the most heavily impacted areas lack the means to rebuild after the continuous wave of devastating storms in recent years.

"Dorian will go down in history as the worst catastrophe in this region, not only due to the highest recorded wind speed in the North Atlantic but also because the storm stalled over Abaco and Grand Bahama Island for over 24 hours," risk modeler Karen Clark told Bloomberg.

The Bahamian government, led by the conservative Free National Movement party of Prime Minister Hubert Minnis, has done little to coordinate relief and rescue efforts for the tens of thousands stranded. As is typical in such conditions, while the wealthy are able to provide their own means of travel, the islands' poor are left to fend for themselves.

According to Bloomberg, early estimates of the storm's damage in the Bahamas surpass \$7 billion.

Over 70,000 persons have been reported homeless and in need of aid in the northern Bahamas, which were directly hit by the then-category 5 storm. "There's nothing left here. There are no jobs," said 19-year-old Avery Parotti to the Associated Press as she waited to be evacuated from Great Abaco.

The crisis is especially distressing for undocumented immigrants residing in impoverished working-class areas on the islands, who face the possibility of deportation and separation from friends and family displaced by the hurricane.

The Bahamian economy, which derives nearly 50 percent of its gross domestic product from the islands' tourist industry, or \$4.3 billion, is also expected to be set back, as both Grand Bahama and Great Abaco constitute major tourist destinations. "A lot of persons think all of the Bahamas is gone, the entire thing ... when people see devastation like this they tend to hold back ... on what they plan on doing," said a Nassau-based vendor to the *Orlando Sentinel* of the storm's impact.

The *New York Times* notes that the clearing of debris and efforts to lead rescue attempts have been conducted by private citizens as well as various charity groups. "This is a catastrophe, and they [the government] should be here in numbers," said Marsh Harbour resident Martin McCafferty to the *Times*. "The government hasn't sent one plane!" the *Times* quotes another saying.

A second death caused by Dorian has been reported in the continental United States. According to the office of North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, the body of a 67-year-old man in Pamlico County was discovered after he was knocked off a ladder while attempting to

prepare for the storm. Pamlico County is located near Ocracoke Island, a part of North Carolina's Outer Banks, which was heavily impacted. According to North Carolina's governor's office, there is "significant concern about hundreds of people trapped on Ocracoke Island," which is only accessible by air or by boat.

To the north, weather caused by post-tropical storm Dorian uprooted trees and lifted boats and other vehicles in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, tossing them into residential and business areas alike with 100-mph-force winds. In Nova Scotia, over 450,000 residents reported power outages out of a total population of nearly 1 million, while some areas reported over 6 inches of rainfall in the space of only a few hours.

Speaking of the present state of the storm, CNN meteorologist Gene Norman explained to the *Times* that "the change in classification [from hurricane to post-tropical storm] is technical, the fact of the matter is it's still a dangerous situation and people in the area should not let their guard down."



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