



The Bahamas – How to Help After Hurricane Dorian

It is reported that at its peak Dorian had maximum sustained winds of 270 km an hour with gusts of up to 321 kilometres an hour with storm surges between five and seven metres high. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said that more than 13,000 houses had been severely damaged or destroyed - about 45 per cent of all homes on the two islands worst affected, Abaco and Grand Bahama. The UN have now released their latest assessment of the situation which can be found at the following link <https://reliefweb.int/country/bhs>

The key summary is as follows:

Dorian cleared Grand Bahama on 3/9 and is now making its way along the coast of Georgia. Initial reports from Abaco and Grand Bahama suggest serious damage and critical needs for those affected. A flyover of Abaco on 3/9 shows that parts of the island are devastated. There is severe damage to homes, businesses and infrastructure. The southern part of the island has suffered less devastation than the north. At least seven deaths have been reported. The Minister of Health reports that 21 people from Abaco were brought to Princess Margaret Hospital in Nassau with a wide range of injuries, adding that Rand Hospital in Grand Bahama is currently unable to provide any medical treatment due to flooding that forced the evacuation of patients. The Minister of State for Grand Bahama reports that 50 patients from a local children's hospital were relocated. The Bahamas Telecommunications Company (BTC) reports most of their towers in Abaco are down. Marsh Harbor port, the main port in Abaco, is reportedly under water. In Grand Bahama, roads are impassable and Fishing Hole Road Bridge, which connects West Grand Bahama and Freeport, is almost underwater, according to the Minister of State of Grand Bahama. Unconfirmed media reports cite surge of about 20 feet higher than the average roof of the homes in the Bahamas and that the Freeport airport is completely flooded. The Government has stated that they have the capacity to supply food and water for both islands for two weeks. Supplies will be sent once the all-clear has been given. Teams in Bahamas are beginning reconnaissance flights over Abaco and Grand Bahama to assess the scope and extent of the damage. The UK, through the Department for International Development (DFID), has deployed boats to Marsh Harbor, Abaco, as well.

First responders in Marsh Harbor, Abaco, report that the dock is secured with RBDF, Royal Navy and Coast Guard forces. "The International Federation of the Red cross has assessed that more than 13,250 houses were destroyed or severely damaged with Abaco Island having the most vulnerable population with a large Haitian community which will need a significant amount of assistance to recover from and rebuild after this storm. Initial assessments carried out by the World Food Programme (WFP) with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and other humanitarian partners, indicate that Abaco will likely require food and access to clean drinking water for more than 14,000 people and Grand Bahama for over 47,000 people.

It important to note that whilst northern islands of Grand Bahama and Abaco and Cays have suffered very severe damage, the majority of The Bahamas archipelago escaped major damage and is returning to normal activity – with hotels and other tourism operations able to operate normally, including Nassau's airport Lynden Pindling International.

The Bahamian Ministry of Finance have issued a Declaration of Exigency under the Tariff Act removing tariffs on all goods entering The Bahamas for relief efforts and also other fees and taxes relating to entry of vessels for the next 90 days. The document can be downloaded at: <https://www.cdema.org/>

For financial donations, national relief funds are being coordinated at www.bahamas.com/relief