



On October 2, International Medical Corps deployed an assessment team to Jamaica to monitor the progress of Hurricane Matthew in the Caribbean. International Medical Corps also mobilized an emergency team for Haiti to provide additional staff and support to International Medical Corps' existing Haiti Country Team. With Jamaica being spared the worst of the storm, the assessment team shifted to the Bahamas on October 5 in advance of Hurricane Matthew's impact on the Bahamas.

SITUATION UPDATE

Hurricane Matthew formed as a tropical storm near the Windward Islands on September 28, its forecasted trajectory placing several Caribbean islands directly in its path. At hurricane strength, the storm caused damage in northern Colombia and Venezuela before shifting toward the northwest. At 11:00 a.m. UTC on October 4, Hurricane Matthew made landfall on the westernmost tip of Haiti as Category 4 storm with maximum sustained winds of 145 miles per hour (mph). Following a subsequent landfall in eastern Cuba, Hurricane Matthew has weakened slightly to a Category 3 storm as it moves through the Bahamas island group on October 5 and 6.

The Caribbean has a well-developed coordination system for monitoring and responding to natural disasters. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) has been coordinating actively with the national authorities in Jamaica, the Bahamas, Haiti, and Turks and Caicos. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has activated response and needs assessment teams. As the storm tracked west, eastern Caribbean responses have been stood down but are monitoring the situation in the western Caribbean closely.

Jamaica

Jamaica, like many countries in the Caribbean, is vulnerable to a number of natural hazards, and the frequent tropical cyclones experienced by the island can easily lead to heavy storm surge, floods, and landslides. Jamaican government

FAST FACTS

- Hurricane Matthew is a Category 3 storm with maximum sustained winds of 120 miles per hour (10 p.m. UTC)
- Expected to pass through the Bahamas island group October 5 and 6 bringing dangerous rain and wind

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

- Infrastructure damage in Haiti has made the worst hit areas unreachable
- An estimated 350,000 people in Haiti will need humanitarian assistance as a result of Hurricane Matthew
- An International Medical Corps emergency response team is expected to land in Les Cayes the morning of October 6.

figures indicate approximately 3,500 people had evacuated to shelters as of October 4, the majority from the eastern parishes of St. Thomas and Portland. While the storm caused some flooding in southeastern and eastern parishes, the storm largely missed the island, and the Jamaican Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management scaled down Hurricane Matthew operations on October 4.

Haiti

Hurricane Matthew made landfall near Les Anglais in extreme southwestern Haiti at 11:00 a.m. UTC, 7 a.m. local time on October 4, 2015. Rain is expected through October 6, exacerbating flooding and the risk of further mudslides. Schools are closed through October 10, as many are being used as shelters and/or are assumed to have sustained damage. Marine transportation is restricted and the airports in Port au Prince and Cap Haitien were closed much of October 5. Access to the most affected areas—Grand-Anse, Nippes, Sud, and Sud-este—is extremely difficult due to downed trees and damaged infrastructure. The Ladigue bridge along in Petit Goâve on the main southern highway collapsed Tuesday, largely cutting off access to Nippes, Sud, and Grand-Anse departments. Communication with Grand-Anse has been down since the storm passed, further contributing to the difficulty assessing the damage and impact on residents.

The Government of Haiti's (GOH) National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) released preliminary assessment findings on October 4, and the GOH has already issued a call for international assistance. The UN estimates 350,000 people in immediate need of humanitarian assistance. The impact of the rain combined with storm surge flooded communities, destroying communications, transport, and housing infrastructure, particularly in the south. The Ministry of Public Health and Population and the Pan American Health Organization released a preliminary hospital impact assessment at 3:00 p.m. local time on October 4, indicating that of 15 listed hospitals, 6 were either not reachable or not functional. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team and the Department of Civil Protection will conduct a helicopter-based assessment October 5.

Preliminary figures indicate that 15,623 people are displaced among 152 shelters, including nearly 150 children living in an orphanage. NEOC reports that five persons are confirmed dead and one person is missing. In addition, 1,885 homes are damaged as well as some government buildings and shelters. Agricultural and livestock losses are also being reported, compounding an already difficult food security situation given the recent drought. Given the significant impact of the storm on infrastructure and the population, the GOH announced Wednesday it would postpone the election planned for Sunday, October 9.

The Bahamas

Comprising approximately 700 islands, much of the Bahamas are low-lying, rendering them particularly vulnerable to tropical cyclones and related impacts. As of October 5, the Bahamas Department of Meteorology had warned that storm surge and large waves may raise water levels by up to 15 feet above normal tide levels. In addition, NOAA forecasts 8 to 12 inches of rain, with some areas receiving up to 15 inches. By October 3, the Government of the Bahamas had begun evacuating residents in southeastern parts of the country, focusing on airlifting the elderly, the ill, and other vulnerable groups to safer locations. Contingency and response plans have been activated, including: placing assessment, relief, and recovery teams on stand-by and distribution of communications equipment to outlying islands.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS DEPLOYS TEAMS TO JAMAICA, THE BAHAMAS, AND HAITI

As Hurricane Matthew's initial track indicated that the storm may make landfall over either Jamaica or Haiti, International Medical Corps deployed a surge team to supplement its country presence in Haiti and deployed a small assessment team to Kingston, Jamaica, to monitor the storm and assist with a government-led response if needed.

Given the path of the storm and the limited impact on Jamaica, the assessment team moved to Nassau, the Bahamas, late October 4. International Medical Corps' team will remain in Nassau throughout the passage of Hurricane Matthew and coordinate with national authorities and relief actors in the event that international assistance is required.

A surge team arrived in the Dominican Republic on October 5 and will arrive by charter helicopter in Les Cayes on the morning of October 6 in order to assess needs and develop a response plan for the southern part of the country. Additionally surge staff en route include WASH and Logistics personnel. At this time, humanitarian organizations expect the needs to include: health, nutrition, emergency shelter, protection, food, and WASH. International Medical Corps' Haiti Country Team is implementing health, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs in Nord, Nord-este, Artibonite, and Ouest Departments. Working closely with the Ministry of Public Health and Population, International Medical Corps is managing a cholera treatment and prevention program reinforcing 36 existing health facilities with integrated treatment programs and 3 mobile medical teams in Nord, Nord-este, and Artibonite (each with 2 nurses and 1 hygienist). Additionally, International Medical Corps was recently awarded funding to establish severe acute malnutrition treatment program in Fond Verrettes in the Ouest department.



Although Hurricane Matthew's track shifted to the east, the storm brought heavy storm surge to the island and caused localized flooding.

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