



Medar Kajemba (WASH Advisor) is one of the International Medical Corps staff members who worked on setting up handwashing facilities in the areas where our health workers are conducting patient treatments. Three sinks have been installed at the High Rock Clinic.

FAST FACTS

- Since September 9, International Medical Corps has treated more than 420 patients.
- Nearly a month after Hurricane Dorian devastated parts of the Bahamas, nearly 600 people remain missing. The official death toll now stands at 56.
- We are increasing MHPSS capacity and coverage by cross-training volunteers, especially those with prior mental health training.
- Three handwashing facilities have been installed at our High Rock Clinic.

SITUATION UPDATE

Nearly a month after Hurricane Dorian devastated parts of the Bahamas, almost 600 people are still missing. The official death toll is 56, but, given the number of people still missing, the number of fatalities is expected to rise. Recovery teams face major challenges as they work to access hard-to-reach, isolated areas where widely dispersed groups of transient and largely undocumented people had lived before the storm. Across the Bahamas, the hurricane caused about \$7 billion in property damage.

In the past week, Prime Minister of the Bahamas Hubert Minnis announced the formation of a new government agency, the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction, which will lead Hurricane Dorian recovery and development efforts, as well as future disaster responses in the country. Prime Minister Minnis also addressed the United Nations General Assembly on Friday, September 27, describing Hurricane Dorian as a “generational tragedy” and called on world leaders to take urgent action to combat the global climate crisis.

Though normal commercial flights are slowly resuming, the main airport terminal on Grand Bahama is destroyed, forcing passengers flying out of the airport to wait for their flights in tents. Roads are littered with debris and downed trees, and Bahamians are continuing work on what is left of their homes.

The Grand Bahama Power Company has restored power to Freeport’s Rand Memorial Hospital, which has been operating at limited capacity since the storm hit. Health workers at the Rand Memorial Hospital have noted a number of concerns they face in the coming weeks and months, including immediate needs for:

- community mobilization to address key health and hygiene challenges at damaged health facilities and their catchment communities;

- mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), given an anticipated rise in need from the wider population as the shock of the destruction begins to fade, and many have lost homes and loved ones; and
- restoration of water, sanitation and hygiene services health facilities (for example, the 8 Mile Rock clinic has a reservoir but cannot get the water into the facility).

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

Working with the Grand Bahama Public Health Authority (PHA), International Medical Corps is expanding and reconfiguring its response to meet the island's medical and healthcare needs. Our teams of doctors and nurses continue to see patients at the emergency primary healthcare clinic we have set up at High Rock, while mobile medical teams working from High Rock continue to conduct visits to more isolated communities, such as Pelican Point and McCleans Town, where all pre-existing healthcare capacity has been destroyed.

In Freeport, the island's main city, we are continuing to support a maternity clinic serving public healthcare patients temporarily housed at the privately-owned Sunrise Medical Center. Some of our medical volunteers have provided labor, delivery and postpartum care to patients, while one volunteer nurse has assisted the local nurses and doctors at the Special Care Unit, where premature babies need regular feedings and antibiotics.

Our volunteers also are continuing to support existing, but short-staffed, clinics west of the capital in the towns of Eight Mile Rock and Hawksbill. And, as recovery continues, we focusing on long-term recovery by training local service providers and community health workers and volunteers to undertake standard health education and surveillance of disease outbreaks.



Eoin Ryan, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) adviser for International Medical Corps, briefs representatives from USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) at the High Rock clinic.

A new technical advisor for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) arrived on Thursday. He visited the High Rock Clinic and worked on setting up handwashing facilities in the areas where our health workers are conducting patient treatments. Water-quality monitoring will be conducted in upcoming weeks and will include two tests: a microbiological test for water samples from all water sources and water tankers that International Medical Corps uses, conducted on a monthly basis; and a free residual chlorine test, which will be conducted on a daily basis by the WASH monitors. In other areas, water testing will be increased where perceived threats of outbreaks exist.

In the coming week our MHPSS advisor will meet with management of the West End, 8 Mile Rock and Hawksbill clinics to arrange training activities with local health workers. We are increasing capacity and coverage by cross-training existing volunteers, especially those with previous mental health training, to help cover immediate MHPSS needs.