



Sarah Price, ICU nurse, treats Michael Bevans, the first patient who showed up at International Medical Corps' mobile clinic triage center in High Rock, Grand Bahama. Michael lost nine of his family members in the storm.

SITUATION UPDATE

Ten days after Hurricane Dorian made landfall as one of the most powerful Caribbean storms on record, the situation in the Bahamas continues to evolve rapidly. The official death toll has risen to at least 50, with that number expected to rise as assessments and search-and-rescue efforts continue. Thousands of people need assistance, and tens of thousands are homeless.

Damage to infrastructure is widespread on Grand Bahama island, where International Medical Corps teams have been assessing needs and providing medical services at the request of the government. Staff members say that transportation to the island is difficult to arrange, electricity and clean water are not available on most of the island, and that—in the western part of the island, which was less affected by the storm—hours-long queues are common at the grocery stores, restaurants and gas stations that have any supplies available. Healthcare facilities on the western side of the island have been compromised, while clinics and other healthcare facilities in the central and eastern parts of the island have been destroyed completely. Teams can move around only in daylight, due to widespread damage to roads.

Critical needs include food, safe drinking water, sanitation, hygiene services and supplies, mental health services and care for hospice patients. And in the midst of this emergency, authorities are working to prepare for the possibility of future storms, given that peak hurricane season in the Atlantic typically runs through the end of October.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

At the request of the Bahamian Ministry of Health (MoH), and in coordination with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and World Health Organization (WHO), International Medical Corps is leading assessment efforts on Grand Bahama island, and is working as the primary provider of medical care in the central and eastern parts of the island, which were hardest-hit by the storm.

FAST FACTS

- Hurricane Dorian, a Category 5 storm that packed sustained winds of 185 mph and caused storm surges as high as 23 feet, was the strongest hurricane on record for the northwest Bahamas.
- 50 deaths are confirmed in the Bahamas so far, with authorities warning that the real number may rise precipitously as search-and-rescue efforts continue.
- More than 76,000 people on Abaco and Grand Bahama have been left homeless by the storm, according to the UN.
- According to World Food Programme estimates, Dorian destroyed 13,000 homes

As soon as the conditions permitted, we have been on the ground in Nassau, working to move people and supplies from the mainland to Nassau, and from Nassau to Grand Bahama, by airplane, helicopter and boat. On Sunday, our assessment team traveled to Grand Bahama to conduct planning meetings with the local health administration and hospital staff, while mobile medical teams began providing services to those in need.

On Monday, the assessment team began its work, moving from Freeport to the east, going house to house until it reached High Rock, in the center of the island, where the clinic there had been completely destroyed. The team assessed 50 people, provided tetanus shots for 37 people, and cared for 13 patients suffering from a range of issues, including puncture wounds, respiratory issues and rashes, among others. We also received more than 13,000 pounds of supplies delivered by FedEx, thanks to our long-time collaboration with the firm.

On Tuesday, two teams traveled back to High Rock—one team to provide medical care and medicine for those they had assessed the day before, and the other team to continue assessment efforts and provide care as needed. The teams set up a pop-up shelter for triage, conducted 34 wellness checks and treated 20 people. Back at Rand Memorial Hospital in Freeport (which was severely damaged by the storm and is only partially operational), at the request of the hospital's administration and chief clinical officer, we provided support to fill gaps in staff with a clinical nurse midwife, an oncology nurse and a mental health provider, to help provide care to those in need. These volunteers helped to give the hospital nurses—who had been working virtually non-stop since the storm hit—a break so they could rest, check on their families and assess damage to their homes.

On Wednesday, staff from International Medical Corps and Rand Memorial Hospital will attempt to reach McLean, on the island's eastern edge, to assess the situation and provide medical care to the community, which has been largely cut off by the storm. International Medical teams will continue to set up our Emergency Mobile Health facility in Freeport, where we will soon be able to provide outpatient health services to up to 100 patients per day, while mobile assessment and medical care teams continue to work in the central and eastern parts of the island. We are focusing on providing medical care and medicines, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene services, and hygiene supplies, given the need for clean water and the risk of water-borne diseases. In addition, due to the scope and scale of this disaster, and the loss of livelihoods and loved ones experienced by those who lived through it, we also have deployed specialists in providing mental health and psychosocial services. By the end of the day on Wednesday, we will have more than 30 people on the ground helping with the response.



On Monday and Tuesday, International Medical Corps teams assessed conditions and provided medical care in High Rock, where the local clinic was completely destroyed by Hurricane Dorian.