



*Bahamian Deputy Prime Minister Peter Turnquest speaks to a group gathered at a non-denominational church service held at International Medical Corps' medical clinic in High Rock, Grand Bahama.*

## SITUATION UPDATE

International Medical Corps opened a primary healthcare clinic Monday in the community of High Rock, whose only healthcare clinic was destroyed in the storm. There is little left standing in the area, located 32 miles east of Grand Bahama island's capital, Freeport. Two weeks ago, High Rock counted about 600 residents. Today, fewer than 100 remain, living without water, power and working toilets, with only the remains of their homes for shelter.

Local government officials say that by the end of the week they hope to set up two field kitchens in High Rock that would provide one hot meal per day—a step likely to draw back more residents of what was a very close-knit community.

Speaking Sunday in the shadow of the new clinic, set up the day before on a concrete slab that had been the foundation of a building swept away by the storm, Deputy Prime Minister Peter Turnquest thanked International Medical Corps for its swift response and for providing care for survivors. He told the gathering of about 50 people that “we will get through this together, and stand up again together.”

He also cautioned of tough times ahead. There is an acute shortage of building materials, he said, at a time when the need is urgent. He also noted the restoration of power as among the biggest immediate issues facing the country. With downed power lines littering the roadsides of Grand Bahama's eastern areas, Turnquest said there would be a great need for generators to enable families to return to their homes quickly.

With more than 2,000 people still in shelters, there is pressure on the government to complete mandatory structural assessments on residential properties before families are allowed to reoccupy their homes.

## FAST FACTS

- The official death count now stands at 51, but with 1,300 people still unaccounted for, that number expected to rise.
- The flow of people displaced by the storm to government shelters has plateaued, with some 2,070 in 16 official shelters as of September 15, according to OCHA.
- Air transportation is gradually being restored to pre-storm levels, according to OCHA. All airports in Abaco are either operating normally or operating with limited capacity. In Grand Bahama, only one airport remains non-operational.
- Since arriving, International Medical Corps has deployed 48 healthcare professionals and supporting staff, including eight physicians, 22 registered nurses and nurse providers, one pharmacist, two MHPSS specialists and 15 support staff.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

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Since arriving in the disaster stricken country, International Medical Corps has deployed a total of 48 healthcare professionals and supporting staff to provide assistance to survivors. This number includes eight physicians, 22 registered nurses and nurse providers, one pharmacist, two mental health and psychosocial services (MHPSS specialists) and 15 support staff, including experts in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and logistics. As of Sept. 17, we have 25 healthcare volunteers and staff providing services on Grand Bahama island, and four based in Nassau.

In its first two days of operation, the High Rock clinic and mobile medical teams operating from it treated more than 60 patients, addressing a variety of issues, including infections, lacerations and puncture wounds. They also helped patients with chronic diseases, such as hypertension, who had lost their medications in the storm.

At the request of Bahamian mental health and social services staff, International Medical Corps has integrated MHPSS into both the High Rock clinic and the mobile medical teams serving the eastern part of Grand Bahama island. So far, we have seen some patients with common signs of stress as a result of natural disasters, including sleeping problems, disorientation and grief.

We currently are in discussions with Rand Memorial Hospital in Freeport, which under normal circumstances covers the island's inpatient, outpatient and community-based mental health needs, to support its community-based mental health efforts and facilitate hospital referrals. We also are supporting the local mental health system by raising awareness of MHPSS needs and available services, as well as providing psychological first aid and emotional support.

UNICEF, in its role as lead in WASH-related activities in the Bahamas, has selected International Medical Corps as the focal point for that response on Grand Bahama island. Our WASH technical advisor has installed two 500-gallon water bladders at the High Rock clinic to provide potable water for the clinic and for the residents who have remained in the community. The fresh water is trucked in from Freeport, 32 miles away.

With the clinic now open, providing both fresh water and healthcare to the community, and with the potential of government-providing hot midday meals by the end of this week, local residents believe that community members who are staying with relatives or in shelters elsewhere may decide to return, despite the extensive damage, further increasing demand for the clinic's services.

The local Grand Bahama television station, ZNS, visited the clinic Tuesday and did its second report on the facility in three days, as part of a broader effort to heighten awareness of the availability of medical services in the area. This adds to other media reports on International Medical Corps' activities, including recent reports from [Voice of America](#), the [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazerra](#) and [WNPR](#).



*International Medical Corps volunteers and staff gather in the High Rock clinic to discuss plans for the day's clinical and mobile care.*