



Downed power lines outside a hospital in Saint Elizabeth, Jamaica

Hurricane Beryl, the earliest Atlantic hurricane to reach Category 5 strength, cut a deadly path through the Caribbean, making landfall in the south of Jamaica as a Category 4 storm on July 3. In the days that followed, Hurricane Beryl crossed Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula then made landfall in southeast Texas on July 8 as a Category 1 storm. Now classified as a post-tropical cyclone and moving toward Canada, Hurricane Beryl is responsible for at least 21 deaths, with 11 in the Caribbean and 10 in the United States.^{1,2}

In both Jamaica and Texas, the intense winds and major flooding caused high water levels and severe damage, with many uprooted trees and downed power lines rendering roads impassable and leaving residents without power. Though most roads in Jamaica have now been cleared and the airports reopened, a reported \$6.4 million in crops and infrastructure were destroyed, leaving many Jamaicans without adequate access to food, clean water and other necessities. Affected areas extend beyond the southern part of the island, to northern regions like Portland, Saint Ann, Saint Mary, Saint Thomas and Trelawny, impacting hospitals and health centers in the region. Local procurement of food and supplies is exceedingly difficult, and the risk of waterborne diseases resulting from floods is a significant concern.

In Texas, President Biden declared a federal disaster in all affected counties.³ The storm surge and high winds blocked roads and severely damaged buildings and houses, with fallen trees, power lines and other debris reportedly trapping many residents in their houses and cars. The storm left nearly 3 million homes and businesses without power, more than half of which are still experiencing outages.⁴ As a major heatwave sweeps through Texas, the power outages pose a significant concern, as full restoration of power is estimated to take several weeks.⁵ Many hospitals and clinics have also closed their doors and canceled services due to the power outages, structural damage and unsafe road conditions.⁶

As Hurricane Beryl has ushered in what is anticipated to be the "most active hurricane season on record,"⁷ rapid response and recovery efforts are critical to restoring health and health-related services.

FAST FACTS

- Hurricane Beryl left devastating destruction through the Caribbean as a Category 4 hurricane, and through the Yucatan Peninsula, before finally making landfall in the US as a Category 1 storm on July 8.
- There have been a reported 21 deaths from the storm; 11 in the Caribbean and 10 in the US.
- Due to the debris and flooding, many communities in Jamaica do not have access to clean water, sanitation and electricity. The flooding and standing water pose high risks of outbreaks of water- and vector-borne disease.
- Texas still is recovering from the storm, as 1.7 million people remain without power and a severe heatwave with temperatures up to 105 degrees Fahrenheit affects the state.

¹ <https://www.fox4news.com/weather/hurricane-beryl-update-death-toll-power-outages>

² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/5/hurricane-beryl-makes-landfall-in-mexico-after-11-killed-across-caribbean>

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/07/09/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-declaring-a-federal-emergency-in-texas/>

⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/09/weather/beryl-storm-texas-power-outages-heat/index.html>

⁵ <https://poweroutage.us/area/state/texas>

⁶ <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/health/article/houston-hospitals-hurricane-beryl-closings-19562637.php>

⁷ <https://www.foxweather.com/weather-news/hurricane-researchers-release-stunning-prediction-for-2024-season>

International Medical Corps Response

In response to Hurricane Beryl, International Medical Corps deployed teams to both Jamaica and Texas.

In **Jamaica**, the team identified urgent needs for disposable personal protective equipment, medical supplies, solar panels, mobile wash stations and water tanks. Impacted communities are in great need of basic necessities, including food and water, clothing, mattresses and blankets, cleaning kits, water boots, generators, cots, diapers and hygiene items, emergency lighting and tarps. Training of healthcare personnel is also critical—including training in primary trauma care, mass casualty management and Stop the Bleed—to support increased healthcare needs.

In **Texas**, International Medical Corps deployed an assessment team to support local response and recovery efforts, focusing on health clinics and organizations serving the most vulnerable communities—those most at-risk from the repetitive impact of flood damage, power outages and increased heat.

On Wednesday, the team traveled from Houston to the coastal and island communities of Galveston and Sargent, where the storm initially made US landfall.⁸ The Galveston port has been closed and the city's phone lines are reportedly inactive, while widespread power outages persist amid the heat wave.⁹ In Sargent, where many younger and older people reside, more than 20% of the population is reportedly uninsured and live below the poverty line, highlighting potential vulnerabilities in the hurricane's aftermath.¹⁰

Both teams continue to work with local partners to identify additional response needs.

International Medical Corps in the US and Caribbean

International Medical Corps has been an emergency responder in the United States and Caribbean since 2005, when we partnered with local community clinics overwhelmed by Hurricane Katrina. In the US, International Medical Corps is more active than ever before—for example, working with national, state and local partners in the healthcare system to address the significant challenges that faced domestic healthcare services, and deploying emergency response teams in response to disasters that have struck in recent years. Across the Caribbean and the US, International Medical Corps was a first responder during the 2010 Haiti earthquake, 2017's Hurricane Maria, 2019's Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas, and Hurricane Michael in 2018, Hurricane Ian in 2022 and Hurricane Idalia in 2023. Over the past seven years, International Medical Corps has engaged partner networks of more than 275 hospitals, clinics and health-related facilities and NGOs across 18 states and territories, supporting more than 6 million patients and healthcare providers in the US.



An International Medical Corps staff member conducts a field visit to a hospital in Saint Elizabeth that was impacted by the storm.

⁸ <https://www.kbtx.com/2024/07/10/coastal-community-comes-together-beryl-recovery/>

⁹ <https://www.galvestontx.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?CID=1&sort=date>

¹⁰ https://data.census.gov/profile/Matagorda-Sargent_CCD_Matagorda_County_Texas?q=060XX00US4832192465#populations-and-people