

# THE BAHAMAS - HURRICANE DORIAN

FACT SHEET #11, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2019

SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

## NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

**53**

Deaths Reported in The Bahamas due to Hurricane Dorian as of September 20  
GoB – September 2019

**54,000**

Number of People Targeted by USAID In-Kind Commodities  
USG – September 2019

**17,200**

Pre-Hurricane Estimated Population of Abaco  
UN – September 2019

**51,000**

Pre-Hurricane Estimated Population of Grand Bahama  
UN – September 2019

## HIGHLIGHTS

- GoB creates new agency to oversee recovery efforts
- Power restored to Grand Bahama's Rand Memorial Hospital
- DART continues to provide technical guidance to GoB, relief actors

## HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

FOR THE BAHAMAS HURRICANE RESPONSE IN FY 2019

USAID/OFDA <sup>1</sup>	\$16,284,726
USAID/FFP <sup>2</sup>	\$1,000,000
DoD <sup>3</sup>	\$8,490,000
<b>\$25,774,726</b>	

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- On September 22, Prime Minister (PM) of The Bahamas Hubert Minnis announced the creation of the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management, and Reconstruction. The new government agency will oversee early recovery efforts on The Bahamas' Abaco and Grand Bahama islands, which sustained extensive damage due to Hurricane Dorian.
- The Royal Bahamas Police Force (RBPF) confirmed 53 deaths due to Hurricane Dorian as of September 20, including 45 deaths reported in Abaco and eight deaths in Grand Bahama; the RBPF expects the death toll to rise amid ongoing debris removal operations in the most heavily affected areas of Abaco, including The Mudd and Pigeon Pea informal settlements. On September 23, Government of The Bahamas (GoB) officials announced plans to contract local companies to begin conducting more extensive debris removal in the informal settlements.
- Humanitarian actors, including USAID-supported partners, continue to meet the basic emergency food, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs of storm-affected populations on Abaco, Grand Bahama, and New Providence islands. Nearly 30 USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) members remain in The Bahamas to provide technical support to the GoB and other relief actors during the early stages of recovery, including advising on transitional shelter strategies.

<sup>1</sup> USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)

<sup>2</sup> USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP)

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Defense (DoD)

## CURRENT SITUATION

- During a September 22 press conference, PM Minnis announced the formation of a new government agency, the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management, and Reconstruction, which will be tasked with leading Hurricane Dorian early recovery and development efforts, as well as future disaster responses in The Bahamas. In addition, PM Minnis emphasized his intentions to restructure the GoB National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to improve the country's disaster preparedness, management, and recovery capabilities.
  - PM Minnis designated Abaco and surrounding cays and eastern Grand Bahama as special economic recovery zones on September 22, enabling tax exemptions, waivers, and other incentives for an initial period of three years to facilitate economic and social recovery in the communities most affected by the storm.
  - Grand Bahama's main container port, located in Freeport city, had resumed normal operations by September 23, enabling the import of critical relief supplies and building materials to the island, according to relief actors. However, as of September 20, Abaco's Marsh Harbour port remained only partially operational due to ongoing debris removal and the lack of a crane to facilitate cargo handling. Additionally, the port in northern Abaco's Cooper's Town remains inoperable, relief actors report.
  - Maps recently generated by non-governmental organization (NGO) MapAction indicate that areas of Abaco and Grand Bahama that were most densely populated prior to the storm face soil and water contamination, as well as potential health risks from hazardous materials, due to the concentration of hazardous sites—including gas stations, ports, and power plants—that sustained damage from Hurricane Dorian. Relief and recovery actors continue to work with the GoB to assess hazardous operations facilities and develop a comprehensive strategy for debris removal and waste management to mitigate humanitarian and environmental impacts from extensive hurricane damage.
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## DISPLACEMENT AND SHELTER

- NEMA reports that nine collective shelters housing more than 1,600 people remained operational in New Providence as of September 23, representing a decrease of approximately 20 percent from September 13, when more than 2,000 people were residing in 13 GoB-managed shelters. In Grand Bahama, the number of displaced individuals in GoB-managed shelters has remained consistent, with approximately 70 people residing in two collective shelters during the same time period. The GoB Department of Social Services is working to find housing options in existing houses or apartments for the residents remaining in Grand Bahama collective shelters, according to NEMA.
- PM Minnis recently outlined GoB plans to provide transitional housing in Abaco and Grand Bahama to enable populations displaced by Hurricane Dorian to return to the islands. While specific details remain under consideration by GoB officials and relief actors, PM Minnis described the use of tents as a temporary measure while more durable, storm-resistant public housing units are constructed. As of September 22, PM Minnis emphasized that work on temporary housing will begin only after approval from the Ministry of Environment and Housing (MoEH), which has been conducting environmental assessments to examine hazardous material risks resulting from Hurricane Dorian.
- USAID/OFDA partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM) continues to provide shelter coordination support to the GoB Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development, including technical guidance on the management of collective shelters and development of relocation and transitional housing strategies. IOM is conducting a second round of its Displacement Tracking Matrix exercise to determine accurate displacement information for Abaco, Grand Bahama, and New Providence, including individuals' intentions to return to communities of origin. The UN agency is also assisting the GoB with efforts to cross-check the current list of approximately 1,300 missing persons with people in collective shelters and other records of displaced individuals.
- The Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS) continues to supply collective shelters with basic relief items as needed, as well as supporting individuals residing with friends and relatives in New Providence, reaching nearly 500 households on the island with relief commodities as of September 23. BRCS is also operating a call center, in coordination with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to manage volunteers and donations and re-establish family links, which has enabled seven displaced people to reunite with their families to date.

## **HEALTH, PROTECTION, AND WASH**

- On September 22, the Grand Bahama Power Company restored power to Freeport’s Rand Memorial Hospital, which sustained damage due to Hurricane Dorian and has been operating at limited capacity. The company continues efforts to restore power to residential areas and businesses throughout Grand Bahama, primarily in heavily-damaged eastern areas of the island.
  - USAID/OFDA partner the International Medical Corps (IMC) deployed two medical teams, comprising nine nurses and physicians, to areas west of Freeport on September 20 at the request of the Grand Bahama Public Health Authority. The teams provided emergency medical services at two GoB-operated health facilities and conducted home visits for residents in surrounding communities. Additionally, IMC expanded operating hours and increased staff numbers at its High Rock emergency medical team facility, which services storm-affected residents and recent returnees in eastern Grand Bahama. IMC continues to assess the healthcare needs of remote communities in Grand Bahama, including on Sweetings Cay located off of the eastern coast of the island, and plans to prioritize mental health and psychosocial support for individuals coping with challenges related to post-disaster early recovery and rebuilding.
  - IMC also completed installation of a potable water system at the High Rock health facility that includes two 500-gallon safe drinking water storage containers for patients and surrounding community members. IMC plans to deploy additional WASH specialists to Grand Bahama in the coming days to assist the GoB to restore WASH systems in eastern Grand Bahama.
  - As of September 20, DART technical specialists had conducted WASH assessments of 12 storm-affected locations in Abaco and Grand Bahama and seven collective shelters in New Providence, in partnership with the GoB Water and Sewerage Corporation (WSC) staff. DART specialists concluded that WSC, with support from NGOs and other relief actors, is largely meeting emergency WASH needs of impacted populations. However, until the power grids in Abaco and Grand Bahama are fully restored, current WASH activities necessitate temporary power generation, which requires a reliable fuel source and regularly scheduled maintenance.
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## **FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS**

- Relief actors, including the GoB, NGOs, and UN agencies, continue to meet immediate food needs of storm-affected populations in Abaco, Grand Bahama, and New Providence. World Central Kitchen (WCK) continues to address food needs, providing more than 20,000 meals per day in Freeport, as well as delivering food commodities to Abaco and surrounding cays, including Moore’s Island, where WCK constructed a pier to facilitate transport of relief commodities and began food deliveries by September 21.
  - Hurricane Dorian damaged approximately 80 percent of fishery infrastructure in Grand Bahama and up to 100 percent in some areas of Abaco, according to the National Fisheries Association of The Bahamas, which is conducting loss and damage assessments in coordination with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The fisheries sector plays an important role in The Bahamas’ economy, according to FAO, and the UN agency is working alongside the GoB Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources and other relief actors to augment livelihoods opportunities for hurricane-affected populations during the ongoing early recovery phase of the response. As of September 21, USAID/OFDA partner IFRC had coordinated with FAO to identify vulnerable groups to inform beneficiary targeting for potential income-generating activities.
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## **COORDINATION, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND LOGISTICS**

- USAID partner the UN World Food Program (WFP) continues to provide coordination and logistics support for the storage, transport, and distribution of food assistance and relief commodities. The UN agency is providing warehouse management and technical guidance to assist NEMA with organizing donations and, as of September 18, WFP had established four temporary mobile storage units in Abaco and one in Nassau. Despite the establishment of temporary

units, relief actors note the need for long-term commercial warehouse options to efficiently sort and store unsolicited donations and NGO-provided relief supplies.

- WFP continues to provide regular trucking of supplies and personnel across affected islands as a common service to relief partners and government agencies requiring transport. The UN agency has also chartered four vessels to transport relief commodities on behalf of several organizations from the capital city of Nassau to Freeport and Marsh Harbour between September 15 and 23.
- On September 22, the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team, which was activated on September 7 to assist NEMA officials with coordinating relief activities at the Abaco emergency operations center (EOC), officially demobilized, along with members of the USAID/OFDA-supported Americas Support Team. However, members of the DART, including a six-person incident management team, remain in place at the Abaco EOC to augment GoB capacity to effectively prioritize needs and coordinate the more than 60 organizations involved in the response. In addition, incident management assistance teams from the U.S. Coast Guard remain embedded in the Grand Bahama and Nassau EOCs to provide guidance to NEMA and other GoB entities.
- To further support the GoB’s transition from humanitarian relief to early recovery, the UN Development Program is providing debris removal and waste management support to the MoEH, as well as building damage assessment support to the Ministry of Public Works. The UN agency plans to continue interventions in The Bahamas focused on early recovery and promoting resilience, including providing guidance on a revised building code in affected areas.

## CONTEXT

- From September 1 to 2, Hurricane Dorian made landfall over Abaco and Grand Bahama as a Category 5 storm on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, bringing sustained winds of approximately 180 miles per hour, heavy rains, and storm surges of up to 23 feet to the islands.
- As a result of widespread flooding and destruction to infrastructure caused by Hurricane Dorian, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Stephanie Bowers declared a disaster in The Bahamas on September 2. In response, USAID/OFDA provided an initial \$200,000 to the BRCS and rapidly activated a DART and Response Management Team. USAID/OFDA is working with multiple U.S. Government (USG) agencies, partners, and the GoB to swiftly provide humanitarian assistance to populations in The Bahamas most severely affected by the hurricane.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BAHAMAS HURRICANE DORIAN RESPONSE IN FY 2019<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/OFDA</b>			
The Bahamas Red Cross Society (BRCS)	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Countrywide	\$200,000
Fairfax County Fire and Rescue and Los Angeles County Fire Departments <sup>2</sup>	Urban Search and Rescue	Abaco	\$3,639,351
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Economic Recovery and Market Systems, Health, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Countrywide	\$2,340,000
International Medical Corps (IMC)	Health, Protection, WASH	Grand Bahama	\$2,691,000
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management, Shelter and Settlements	Countrywide	\$1,500,000
	In-Kind Relief Commodities		\$219,350
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)	Health, WASH	Countrywide	\$2,600,000

U.S. Coast Guard	Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management	Grand Bahama, New Providence	\$141,135
UN World Food Program (WFP)	Logistics Support	Countrywide	\$1,064,186
	In-Kind Relief Commodities	Countrywide	\$324,935
	Logistics Support	Countrywide	\$1,157,434
	Program Support		\$407,335
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$16,284,726</b>
<b>USAID/FFP</b>			
WFP	Food Security	Countrywide	\$1,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/FFP FUNDING</b>			<b>\$1,000,000</b>
<b>DoD<sup>3</sup></b>			
	Logistics Support	Countrywide	\$8,490,000
<b>TOTAL DoD FUNDING</b>			<b>\$8,490,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE HURRICANE RESPONSE IN FY 2019</b>			<b>\$25,774,726</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 24.

<sup>2</sup> Figures are subject to change. Los Angeles County Fire Department personnel comprised part of the Americas Support Team.

<sup>3</sup> DoD figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 24.

## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org/hurricane-dorian/](http://www.cidi.org/hurricane-dorian/).
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information Call Center: +1.202.661.7710.
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID website at <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/responding-times-crisis/where-we-work>