

THE BAHAMAS - HURRICANE DORIAN

FACT SHEET #1, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2019

SEPTEMBER 4, 2019

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

20

Deaths Reported in The Bahamas due to Hurricane Dorian as of September 4
GoB – September 2019

76,278

Estimated Number of People in The Bahamas Affected by Hurricane Dorian
CDEMA – September 2019

17,200

Estimated Population of Abaco
UN – September 2019

51,000

Estimated Population of Grand Bahama
UN – September 2019

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hurricane Dorian severely damages homes and infrastructure and causes extensive flooding in Abaco and Grand Bahama
- GoB and relief actors report challenges accessing populations in need due to impaired transportation routes and persistent storm conditions
- GoB launches search-and-rescue operations and coordinates response activities from a 24/7 emergency operations center
- USG declares disaster in The Bahamas, mobilizes staff and relief commodities to meet immediate humanitarian needs

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- Hurricane Dorian made landfall over The Bahamas' Abaco and Grand Bahama islands from September 1 to 2 with sustained wind speeds of approximately 180 miles per hour (mph), resulting in at least 20 deaths, the Government of The Bahamas (GoB) reports. The storm—a Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale—damaged an estimated 13,000 houses in The Bahamas, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); however, preliminary damage assessments remained ongoing as of September 4.
- On September 2, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Stephanie Bowers declared a disaster in The Bahamas due to the effects of Hurricane Dorian. On the same day, USAID activated a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to lead the U.S. Government (USG) response, as well as a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team (RMT) to support the DART. The DART and RMT are responding to the situation in coordination with other USG counterparts, GoB representatives, and humanitarian partners.
- To date, USAID/OFDA has positioned 26 disaster response experts in The Bahamas to support GoB-led disaster assessment and response efforts. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) is supporting immediate response efforts by conducting helicopter search-and-rescue activities; as of September 4, the USCG had rescued 39 individuals in Abaco and three individuals in Grand Bahama from flood-inundated areas. USAID is also deploying an international urban search-and-rescue (USAR) team, comprising 57 people and four canines, to The Bahamas on September 4.

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BAHAMAS HURRICANE RESPONSE IN FY 2019

USAID/OFDA ¹	\$886,641
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\$886,641

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

CURRENT SITUATION

- From September 1 to 2, Hurricane Dorian made landfall over Abaco and Grand Bahama with sustained wind speeds of approximately 180 mph, resulting in at least 17 deaths in Abaco and at least three deaths in Grand Bahama, according to the GoB. International media report that in addition to destructive winds, the hurricane brought heavy rains and storm surges of up to 23 feet to Abaco and Grand Bahama, causing severe damage to buildings and infrastructure and extensive flooding.
- The IFRC estimates that the storm—a Category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale—damaged or destroyed 13,000 houses in The Bahamas. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) further estimates that Hurricane Dorian affected nearly 76,300 people on Abaco, Grand Bahama, and neighboring islands. Additionally, approximately 450 people and 350 people, respectively, had sought refuge in hurricane shelters in Abaco and Grand Bahama as of September 4, according to GoB National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA); numbers of displaced individuals are expected to rise as assessment teams begin to access hurricane-affected areas.
- Relief actors' access to hurricane-affected areas of The Bahamas remained limited as of September 3 due to persistent storm conditions and damaged airports. The UN reports that only one of six airports and airstrips located in Abaco remained open to air traffic as of September 3; however, road conditions from the open airstrip remain poor. Moreover, the only international airport in Abaco, the Leonard M. Thompson International Airport in Abaco's town of Marsh Harbour, is among those closed; the Grand Bahama International Airport in Freeport, Grand Bahama, was also submerged in water as of September 3.
- Based on pre-impact projections, the UN anticipates that populations in The Bahamas affected by Hurricane Dorian will require emergency food, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance, in addition to early recovery support. The UN has also received reports that saltwater has contaminated wells in Abaco, resulting in pressing safe drinking water needs.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

- After Hurricane Dorian crossed into the Atlantic Ocean during the evening of September 2, NEMA and the Royal Bahamas Defense Force began conducting search-and-rescue operations in Abaco and Grand Bahama.
- NEMA is coordinating emergency response activities at its 24/7 national emergency operations center located in the capital city of Nassau. The agency is also undertaking efforts to assess hurricane-related damages across The Bahamas, despite widespread power and communications outages caused by the storm.
- According to CDEMA, a regional intergovernmental agency for disaster management in the Caribbean, the GoB has supplies sufficient to meet the emergency food and safe drinking water needs of affected populations in Abaco and Grand Bahama for a period of approximately two weeks; however, the GoB has yet to dispatch the supplies given ongoing logistical constraints.
- From September 2 to 3, Hurricane Dorian stalled over Grand Bahama, producing strong winds that prevented international relief teams from flying into affected areas to conduct humanitarian assessments, the UN reports.
- Several international non-governmental organizations are mobilizing staff to respond to emergency humanitarian needs in The Bahamas, including in the areas of health, shelter, and WASH. In addition, the Pan American Health Organization has positioned staff in Nassau and is providing technical support to the Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) coordinator within the GoB Ministry of Health to evaluate EMT deployment offers.
- On September 4, the UN World Food Program (WFP) released a three-month Limited Emergency Operation appeal for The Bahamas, outlining more than \$5.4 million in requirements to assist 39,000 people through early December. WFP plans to provide ready-to-eat meals across affected areas during an initial response period and will adjust assistance based on forthcoming rapid needs assessments; the UN agency is also preparing to provide emergency logistics and supply chain management support to CDEMA, NEMA, and other relevant actors.
- The IFRC also issued an emergency appeal for Hurricane Dorian response funding in The Bahamas on September 3, requesting 3.2 million Swiss francs—approximately \$3.2 million—to support the Bahamas Red Cross Society in delivering assistance to approximately 20,000 people over the next 12 months.

USG RESPONSE

- On September 2, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Bowers declared a disaster in The Bahamas due to the effects of Hurricane Dorian. In response, USAID/OFDA provided an initial \$200,000 to The Bahamas Red Cross Society to support immediate response efforts, including the distribution of emergency relief commodities to hurricane-affected populations and the provision of emergency shelter, logistics, and WASH support. USAID also activated a DART and RMT on September 2 to coordinate overall USG response efforts.
- As of September 3, USAID/OFDA—with aerial support from the USCG—had positioned 26 disaster response experts in The Bahamas and mobilized a 26-person RMT in Washington, D.C., to support GoB-led disaster assessment and response efforts. In addition, the USCG, which operates under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, had mobilized a C-130 cargo plane to enable GoB and USG officials to assess the extent of hurricane damage in The Bahamas. A first aerial assessment over Abaco took place on September 3, with participation from Prime Minister of The Bahamas Hubert Minnis, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Bowers, and the DART team lead; the assessment noted extensive destruction on Abaco, particularly in northern areas. Additional assessments, including over Grand Bahama, are planned to commence as weather conditions permit.
- USAID/OFDA chartered a commercial flight to airlift approximately 32 metric tons of relief commodities—including hygiene kits and water storage containers for 3,000 people and plastic sheeting to provide emergency shelter for 22,500 people—from a regional warehouse in Miami, Florida, to Nassau on September 4. USAID/OFDA is coordinating with NEMA to distribute the supplies to populations in need.
- USAID/OFDA is also working with the USCG to ship 250 rolls of plastic sheeting—sufficient to support shelter requirements for approximately 12,500 people—to The Bahamas aboard five USCG Cutters; the ships are due to arrive to the islands on September 5.
- The USCG is coordinating with the GoB to support aerial search-and-rescue operations in The Bahamas. As of September 3, USCG helicopters had rescued 39 individuals in Abaco and three individuals in Grand Bahama.
- USAID will deploy an international USAR team—the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department’s Virginia Task Force 1, or USA-1—to the Bahamas on the evening of September 4. A second team—the Los Angeles County Fire Department’s California Task Force 2, or USA-2—is on standby to deploy if needed. Each team comprises 57 people and four canines.
- The DoD has made available up to \$5 million in Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid funds to support USAID/OFDA-led response operations in the Bahamas, including through military air transport for humanitarian personnel and cargo.
- The Federal Aviation Administration issued a notice to airmen on September 4 to refrain from operations in the airspace in the vicinity of Abaco and Grand Bahama to allow for search-and-rescue and humanitarian missions.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE BAHAMAS HURRICANE DORIAN RESPONSE IN FY 2019¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/OFDA			
The Bahamas Red Cross Society	Shelter, WASH	Abaco and Grand Bahama	\$200,000
	In-Kind Relief Commodities	Abaco and Grand Bahama	\$177,251
	Logistics Support	Abaco and Grand Bahama	\$487,374
	Program Support		\$22,016
TOTAL USAID/OFDA FUNDING			\$886,641
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE HURRICANE RESPONSE IN FY 2019			\$886,641

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 4.

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.
- 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/ or +1.202.661.7710.
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at 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>