

HURRICANE IRMA

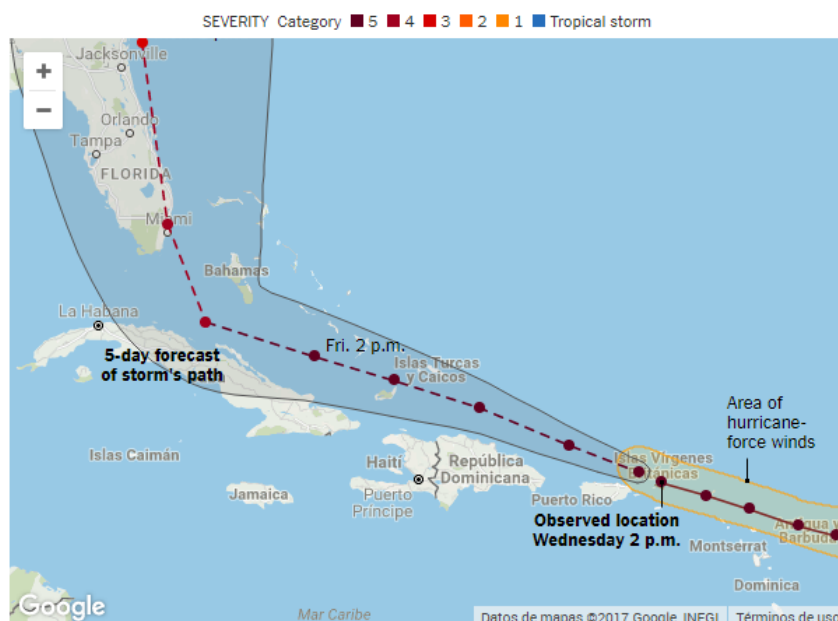
SITUATION UPDATE

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Hurricane Irma Makes Landfall

Category 5 Hurricane Irma, one of three hurricanes in the Atlantic Basin, was the most intense Atlantic hurricane in 12 years. At least 40 people across the Caribbean and in Florida were killed, including an infant in Barbuda and at least 10 in Cuba.

The hurricane's maximum sustained winds are at 180 mph with even higher gusts. In addition to heavy wind and rain, Irma's life-threatening storm surge has brought large breaking waves and coastal flooding. The storm hammered buildings and ripped off roofs in its path. In Barbuda, the storm caused unprecedented destruction, with 90 percent of buildings damaged or destroyed, including up to 132 schools, according to the Prime Minister.



In South Caicos and Grand Turk, the capital of Turks and Caicos, suffered some of the most severe devastation when the hurricane's wrath levelled most of the buildings. UNICEF is already on the ground throughout the region with pre-positioned supplies of drinking water, food and medicine, and emergency kits to be distributed to affected children and families in coordination with national authorities.

In Puerto Rico, over 57,000 people are without water and two-thirds of the population is without power, as officials work to assess damage. Some areas could be without power for months. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

Prior to making landfall, over 7 million people evacuated the state of Florida. On Saturday Hurricane Irma hit with gusts of up to 145mph, flooding downtown Miami, creating dangerous storm surges as large as fifteen feet on the west coast. 3.3 of the 6.2 million without power are located in the Florida Keys region. Tornado warnings have also been issued in the four southernmost counties.

Putting Children First in Irma's Wake

UNICEF is concerned about the needs of the more than 10.5 million children in Irma's path – particularly as regards safe drinking water, nutrition, health and protection of vulnerable children and adolescents. UNICEF in Latin America and the Caribbean, in coordination with its country offices and headquarters in New York, activated emergency situation protocols last week, and experts have been in contact with governments and other partners to offer assistance. UNICEF's long-term presence throughout the Caribbean enables it to protect vulnerable children before, during, and after any emergency.

The telecommunications, power supply and water systems in Anguilla, British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands remain down, with over 90 per cent of these systems are estimated to be damaged. In the storm's wake, UNICEF is providing immediate support to these children and families. To assist the return to normalcy for children in these four affected countries, UNICEF has been working with partners on the ground to identify and respond to the most immediate needs. Supplies already on the ground in Antigua and those being immediately include water tanks, recreation kits, School in a Box, and early childhood development kits, impacting over 45,000 children.

Early estimates suggest that 74,000 people, including 20,000 children, have been affected in these islands. 5,000 children in the Eastern Caribbean are estimated to have urgent humanitarian needs, and 19,000 children will have their schooling disrupted. UNICEF will also support the reestablishment of education systems and early learning systems as safe spaces.

UNICEF has activated its U-Report platform to send messages to youth and adolescents via Facebook Messenger and social media accounts. UNICEF has already reached over 3,100 young people with information on how to prepare, store food, water and medicine and how to protect homes from the storm. UNICEF will also use U-Report to find out who was affected by the hurricane, whether there is damage to buildings in certain communities, assess access to services and identify cases of children separated from their families.

With UNICEF's universal mandate to ensure the fundamental survival, protection and well-being of children, regardless of race, religion, geography, gender or politics, UNICEF USA stands at the ready to support the most vulnerable children and their families in the wake of Hurricane Irma.



Even in the middle of a disaster, UNICEF can get temporary classes up and running within 72 hours. The School-in-a-Box kit helps create an oasis of learning for children in trauma, which provides a sense of normalcy from an emergency. The kit contains basic school supplies, such as exercise books, pencils, erasers, scissors and other materials to ensure children continue learning during times of disaster.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit unicefusa.org.