

# SITUATION REPORT

## Atlantic Hurricanes



SEPTEMBER 21, 2017

### IRMA

#### SITUATION

On September 6, Hurricane Irma made its first landfall affecting the Caribbean Islands of Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, St Barthélemy, St. Martin, Sint Maarten, Turks and Caicos, and the US Virgin Islands. Approximately 5.5 million people in the region were affected by strong rains, winds and severe flooding brought on by the hurricane.

On September 10, Irma reached the U.S. mainland ripping through Florida damaging and destroying homes, leaving almost 7 million people without power, before making its way through Georgia, Alabama, North and South Carolina before dissipating over Tennessee.

At least 80 deaths were reported, and significant damage and destruction to homes, livelihoods, infrastructure, and utilities were experienced across all areas in the path of the storm.



Trailer home destroyed by Hurricane Irma, in Villa Muñeco, Culebra. Debris from where a bathroom once stood, can be seen out in the open.

Photo: Yuisa Rios/FEMA

#### RESPONSE

##### Domestic

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with local affiliates, synods and congregations on the ground in responding to this disaster. Lutheran Services of the Virgin Islands, Lutheran Services Florida, Lutheran Services of Georgia, as well as the Caribbean Synod, the Florida and Bahamas Synod the Southeastern Synod are all part of the Lutheran Disaster Response Network and we continue to work with them to coordinate the response.

ELCA members and congregations have opened their homes to shelter evacuees, collected funds and supplies for survivors and provided volunteer help to assist those who need it.

In Florida, the area hardest hit on the U.S. mainland, Lutheran Services Florida, is running the FEMA funded Crisis Counseling Assistance program along with caring for the nearly 50 staff impacted by the event.

ELCA Community Development Services is working with us and exploring opportunities for long-term engagement.

##### RESPONSE

We invite you to stand by our neighbors on the during this time. Your gifts ensure that our church will be able to provide help and hope for those left homeless or otherwise affected by this disaster for years to come.

##### International

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the ACT (Act as Church Together) Alliance in responding to the devastation brought on by Hurricane Irma in Cuba. Our local partner—the Cuban Council of Churches will provide relief and recovery services in the provinces of Havana, Mayabeque, Matanzas, Villa Clara, Sancti Spiritus, Ciego de Avila, Las Tunas, Camagüey, and Guantánamo. Holguín

The response plan includes distribution of food, personal and water purification system; livelihood recovery; psychosocial support; and child protection. hygiene

### MARIA

#### SITUATION

Less than two weeks after Irma rocked the Caribbean Islands and the US Atlantic coast, Hurricane Maria formed, tearing through a similar path as Irma. Many of the small Caribbean islands were hit a second time, causing more widespread damage and exacerbating damage already done by Irma.

We know that there significant damage and destruction in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands but we have yet to hear reports of the extent. We have been continually contacting colleagues, congregations, and friends. In a report from the ground in Puerto Rico, Rev. Idalia Negrón, Assitant to the Bishop and DEM of the Caribbean Synod said, "Continue praying because now the storm [is bringing] 10 more inches of rain we already had 25 inches."

She also reported that there is a 7 pm curfew for all residents. We have heard that similar practices are in place for many of the impacted islands for the safety of the residents

### ONE MORE THING...

It was almost a year ago that Hurricane Matthew devastated the populations of Cuba, Haiti and the southern U.S. Atlantic Coast.

Internationally, Lutheran Disaster Response provided \$150,000 contribution for immediate relief and reconstruction activities.

In Haiti, 1,000 people received personal hygiene kits; 450 families participated in cash-for-work activity where debris cleared and lands were prepared for the season early this year. Seeds were also provided to 675 families to help initiate agricultural production for consumption and additional income. 21 homes were also rebuilt and repaired with foundation and secured roof.

In Cuba, 110 families received a month's worth of food supply; 150 families received personal hygiene kits; 173 farmers were provided with seeds; 80 water tank filters were distributed in 8 communities benefiting more than 9,800 individuals; irrigation systems were repaired and a windmill was constructed to help pump and water in the fields.



Photo: DKH/ Thomas Lohnes



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