



! HURRICANE FIONA

project
HOPE

Situation Report #5

September 23, 2022

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Hurricane Fiona **moved over Bermuda as a Category 3** storm Thursday night/Friday morning.
- **Over 8,000 homes in the Dominican Republic** have been damaged or destroyed and 500,000 residents remain without electricity
- In Puerto Rico, only **38% of the population have electricity, and just 67% have access to water**. There are growing concerns related to potential for diesel fuel shortages and risk to communications towers over the next week.
- **Vulnerable populations** including the elderly, mobility impaired, and isolated communities are a priority as affected populations return or remain home in areas impacted by flooding
- Project HOPE is **actively responding in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic**, with a focus on WASH, cold chain and insulin access, prevention of vector-borne illnesses and COVID, as well as mental health and psychosocial support and ensuring equitable access to primary healthcare services.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Bermuda braced for Hurricane Fiona's 125 m.p.h. winds early Friday morning as the storm reached the islands as a Category 3 hurricane.

The storm already caused extensive damage in Turks and Caicos, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico earlier this week. Three more weather systems have formed in the Atlantic basin; at least one of which is expected to form into a named storm.¹

Puerto Rico

Hurricane Fiona made landfall as a Category 1 storm in Puerto Rico on September 18, 2022, with significant rainfall up to 35 inches in some areas of the island.²

In the aftermath of Fiona, eight storm-related deaths have been confirmed.³ Water service continues to be an issue for 350,000 residents, and nearly 1 million people still do not have power.⁴

The government is prioritizing restoring power to hospitals and emergency medical facilities. Such efforts would provide welcome relief as reports of diesel shortages have raised concerns for these facilities that are running generators to stay operational. Management of cold-chain and supplies of vaccines also continue to be an issue with the lack of electricity. Additionally, cellular towers are currently running on diesel-fueled backup generators; and telecommunications blackouts may be imminent as diesel becomes more scarce.⁵

An ongoing lack of water raises concerns for hygiene, sanitation, spread of infectious and vector-borne diseases, and access to clean drinking water.



*Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team in Puerto Rico delivery water and hygiene supplies to shelters in the impacted areas.
Photo credit: Project HOPE, September 2022*

¹ <https://abcnews.go.com/International/tropical-storm-gaston-systems-form-atlantic-hurricane-fiona/story?id=90265129>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/article/tropical-storm-fiona-hurricane.html>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/hurricane-fiona-strengthens-category-4-storm-it-heads-toward-bermuda-2022-09-21/>

⁴ <https://www.preps.pr.gov/>

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<https://twitter.com/DavidBegnaud/status/1573068121753407489?s=20&t=djx12KYUxTgkPXuDPB7sdA>

Dominican Republic

Project HOPE has a team on the ground in the Dominican Republic, where it has implemented global health programs for over 30 years.

The Dominican Republic's government is reporting that over 8,000 homes have been damaged by Hurricane Fiona and is aiming to rebuild them immediately as the hurricane season may be far from over.⁶ Three hundred and fifty thousand homes and businesses are still without electricity. Over 1,000,000 people are without water.⁷

Health authorities are prioritizing WASH and the prevention of mosquito-borne illnesses including malaria, chikungunya and Zika in communities affected by widespread flooding.

Bermuda

Although the storm passed northwest of Bermuda at a Category 3, there has been a significant amount of rain and high winds. Island officials closed schools in advance and opened shelters, and the government is currently assessing the impact. Officials have confirmed that 30,000 people were without power and that it cannot be restored until the winds subside.⁸

PROJECT HOPE RESPONSE

Project HOPE has emergency response teams in both the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, and is readying additional staff for deployment to support the response.

In Puerto Rico, Project HOPE has been engaging with shelters and the surrounding affected communities, providing much-needed hygiene supplies, as well as water, chlorine tabs, and water filters to the impacted populations. Project HOPE is shipping over 10,000 Disaster Hygiene Kits to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic and is also working with existing partners to locally procure and distribute additional health and water, sanitation, and hygiene supplies.

Project HOPE's Emergency Response Team is also mobilizing local medical staff and mental health/psychosocial support for home visits within impacted communities to provide care and case referrals to local clinics. These home visits

⁶ <https://dominantoday.com/dr/local/2022/09/22/abinader-more-than-8000-homes-will-be-rebuilt-this-weekend/>

⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/22/weather/hurricane-fiona-puerto-rico-dominican-republic-thursday/index.html>

⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/article/tropical-storm-fiona-hurricane.html>



will have a specific focus on the most vulnerable, such as the elderly and those who are bedridden.

Since power outages remain a significant concern, Project HOPE is procuring FRIO bags for distribution, which allow individuals to keep their insulin cold when electricity is not available. Post-Hurricane Maria, Project HOPE installed a cold-chain system on the island that is still functional. The Emergency Response Team will be meeting with health officials to determine how best to continue support of the cold-chain system.

In the Dominican Republic, our Emergency Response Team is focusing on water, sanitation, and hygiene and needs. The Team has also procured mosquito nets and insect repellent for distribution to address the threat of vector-borne diseases due to the substantial rain and flooding. Project HOPE will also be supporting health facilities in affected communities to provide targeted care and health education outreach for those most in need.

Project HOPE has responded to multiple disasters in the Latin America and Caribbean region, including the 2021 earthquake in Haiti, Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas in 2021, Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Central America in 2020, and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico in 2017.