Hurricane Ian

Situation Report #3

September 30, 2022

Hurricane Ian made landfall on September 28, 2022 in southwest Florida near the city of Fort Myers. The storm brought winds of 155 miles per hour and a storm surge up to 18 feet, causing catastrophic flooding. The storm has trapped people in their homes and caused extensive infrastructure damage, limiting people’s ability to seek medical help and/or replenish supplies. Emergency responders continue to work on search and rescue operations, and we anticipate a rising death toll.¹

Situation Overview

Hurricane Ian brought widespread devastation to areas of southwest Florida, particularly in Lee and Sarasota Counties, with the storm surge reaching as high as one-story battered communities on the coastline. Thousands of homes and businesses have been destroyed as families and first responders continue to work to locate those who remain unaccounted for.


Quick Facts

- After devastating southwest and central Florida this week, Hurricane Ian has been upgraded to a Category 1 storm as it approaches the Carolina coast.
- More than 2.6 million residents across Florida have lost power and many communities and health facilities have no access to clean water.
- Flooding and storm surge was severe, inundating some communities and likely will take days to recede.
- Project HOPE’s Emergency Response Team is providing needed supplies to affected communities.
Throughout Wednesday night, the storm was downgraded with maximum sustained winds of 65 mph as it approached the Orlando area and continued east. While storm surges wreaked havoc on southwestern cities, inland flooding remains the biggest concern in Orange County. To date, flooding has resulted in the evacuation of over 40 nursing homes and 91 assisted living facilities as water reached dangerous levels and areas lost power.

Ian moved across the state as a tropical storm where it caused a significant storm surge and flooding of up to 6 feet in St. Johns County.

Infrastructure damage has been severe with downed power lines across the state, resulting in over 2.6 million without power, which could take days to restore. Storm damage also made the Sanibel Causeway impassable, which is the only way to access two barrier islands, and the state is assessing additional infrastructure damage. Many cities are still experiencing interruptions to water and sewer service, which is also impacting medical facilities.

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Hurricane Ian has gained power offshore and is approaching the North and South Carolina coasts as a Category 1 storm. It is expected to weaken over the weekend after making landfall. Considerable flooding is anticipated throughout the weekend along the South Carolina coast.

Project HOPE Response

Project HOPE had prepositioned an Emergency Response Team (ERT) on the ground before the storm made landfall, and they are working with partners across the state to provide critical supplies and assess health needs. Project HOPE Medical Volunteers will be providing additional surge support to health clinics and conducting community outreach in affected areas to reach the most vulnerable, such as elderly people and those with disabilities and pre-existing conditions.

The Emergency Response Team continues to visit shelters in the affected areas to distribute much-needed supplies, including over-the-counter medicines, diapers and wipes, ready-to-use baby formula, glucometers and test strips, hygiene kits, water, ready-to-eat food, first-aid kits, and more. In Fort Meyers, for instance, Project HOPE was the first organization to reach a shelter that had yet to receive supplies, despite housing hundreds of displaced people. The team also visited a search and rescue shelter that was housing 2,000 people in Cape Coral. The team also continues to liaise with vulnerable clinics throughout the region to understand what needs they have for everything from pharmaceuticals to hygiene items and medical supplies.

Project HOPE’s Emergency Response Team remains engaged with our Florida voluntary organizations active in disasters (VOAD) partners, the State Association of Free and Charitable Clinics, and our logistics partners at Amazon, DHL, and MAP International.

Project HOPE has a long history of responding to natural disasters and has responded to several hurricanes in the U.S. and territories, including Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, Laura, Ida, Katrina, and, most recently, Hurricane Fiona. In Florida specifically, Project HOPE responded to Hurricane Irma in 2017 and Hurricane Laura in 2020, providing medical supplies, PPE, and health support to impacted communities, including the elderly and disabled.

For inquiries, contact media@projecthope.org.