



Thursday, 25 August, 2011

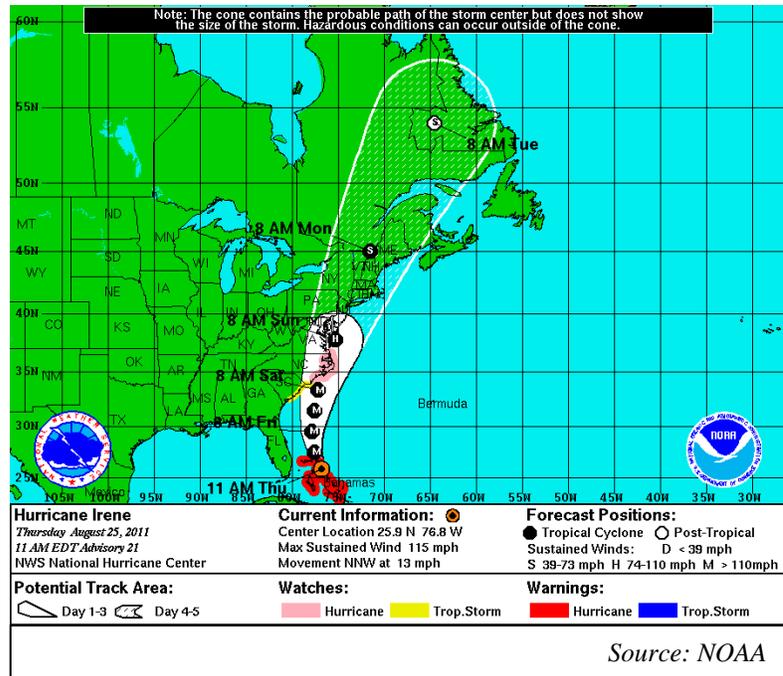
PAHO/WHO EOC SITUATION REPORT #1 Hurricane Irene

Event

Hurricane Irene is currently a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale. Additional strengthening is forecast in the next day and Irene could become a Category 4. Maximum sustained winds are near 120 mph with higher gusts. Hurricane Irene is expected to continue in the northwestward direction near 12 mph through the night, as it neighbors the eastern coast of the United States.

The hurricane has passed Turks and Caicos and the southern Bahamas islands by today morning. The Bahamas continues to experience Hurricane wind conditions as Hurricane Irene moves across the archipelago, but should begin to diminish later today. The storm conditions are expected to produce additional rainfall accumulation of 6 to 12 inches. Extremely dangerous storm surge will raise water levels by as much as 7 to 11 feet above normal tide levels accompanied by large and dangerous waves over the Bahamas.

Hurricane Irene passed through Puerto Rico, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic by Tuesday causing high winds and flooding in affected areas. In the Dominican Republic, number of people sheltered on 28 official shelters 2,691 and people sheltered on friends or family houses 29,725.



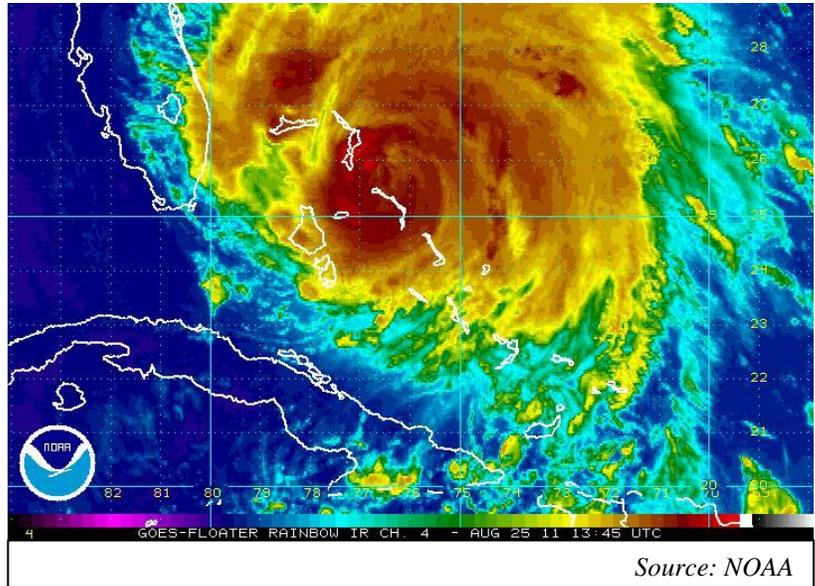
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Contact PAHO/WHO Emergency Operations Center at +1 (202) 974-3399 and eoc@paho.org

Turks and Caicos Islands:

Health Impact

1. There are no reports of deaths.
2. Except for loss of electrical power at the Cockburn Town Medical Center and the Grand Turk Wellness Center, Grand Turk hospitals and clinics suffered no damages. South Caicos health facility was not damaged but there was some flooding.
3. Two shelters remained open in Grand Turk where some people sought refuge.
4. The majority of the Island of Grand Turk still remain without electrical power, domestic tap water, and cell phone service.
5. Minor infrastructure damage and some localized flooding in Grand Turk
6. Initial assessments in Providenciales have been impeded due to continuing tropical storm conditions (torrential rain and category 2 winds) resulting in poor visibility and intermittent communications
7. 90% of homes in Gracebay have reported some minor damage and/or flooding
8. Some roads are impassable due to flooding
9. There are concerns that the housing in Haitian communities in Providenciales will be significantly affected.



National Actions

1. British Ministry of Defense has dispatched a relief vessel, Royal Fleet Auxiliary Wave Ruler including a full hurricane relief team. The team will complete a helicopter survey and assessment of the effects of Hurricane Irene.
2. Ministry of Health is increasing surveillance for food, water, and vector born diseases.

Immediate Needs

There is limited information on the effects of Irene on the outer Islands, especially Salt Cay at the time of report. It is necessary to reinforce needs and damage assessment efforts.

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas:

Impact

1. Hurricane warnings remain in effect. So far, major islands affected include Mayaguana, Acklins, and Crooked Islands.
2. Mayaguana reports some structural damage to incomplete buildings and power and telephone is down.

National Actions

1. 111 people are in shelters mainly on Acklins and Crooked Islands.
2. The Bahamas Defence Force has deployed a vessel to begin assessments of the southern Bahamas islands and provide initial assistance to the impacted populations.

PAHO/WHO

Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization is monitoring the epidemiological situation in Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Turks and Caicos. Current cholera epidemic in Haiti and Dominican Republic may see increase in number of cases due to floods in the hurricane affected areas, which will require reinforcement of preventive measures. Turks and Caicos and Bahamas have detected cases of dengue prior to the hurricane. Further preventive measures are necessary to stop spread of dengue in flooded areas.

The initial needs as well as public health impacts have been identified during initial damage assessment. PAHO/WHO has prepositioned Rapid Response Team members in the Bahamas and Turks and Caicos. The team will be activated for damage assessment, environmental health management, information management, epidemiological surveillance, and logistics support.

Sources: PAHO/WHO Rapid Response Team; Ministry of Health of Bahamas, Turks and Caicos, CDEMA, DFID