

BY THE NUMBERS

1,000 families in Puerto Rico have received water filtration units and solar lanterns

300 families Puerto Rico have received cash to meet their most immediate needs

1,650 people in Dominica will receive training to construct stronger buildings and houses that are better able to withstand strong storms



Severina de Jesus Hernandez surveys ruined belongings pulled from her son's home after Hurricane Maria inundated it with water in Adjuntas, Puerto Rico. Photo by Allison Shelley for Lutheran World Relief

SITUATION REPORT

2017 Hurricane Devastation in the Caribbean

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SITUATION OVERVIEW

Beginning on September 8, 2017, Hurricane Irma tore through the Caribbean, leaving a trail of destruction and devastation. As communities were assessing the damage and just starting the rebuilding process, Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 20 as a Category 4 hurricane, dealing a crippling blow to island nations. Both hurricanes Irma and Maria registered as some of the most powerful hurricanes in recorded history, with maximum sustained winds of 155 mph.

Six months later, thousands of people throughout the Caribbean are still struggling to get their lives back on track and recoup their losses. Throughout Puerto Rico, electricity and infrastructure recovery has been sporadic, with thousands of residents in rural parts of the island still without electricity and running water. More than 300,000 Puerto Ricans have left the island since Hurricane Maria, settling with friends or relatives on the U.S. mainland.

In Dominica, a small island country of 73,000 people about 400 miles southeast of Puerto Rico, citizens face a similar plight. Of the 26,085 houses in the country, it is estimated that 39 percent were heavily damaged and 23 percent were completely destroyed. The local government and humanitarian organizations are faced with the daunting task of rebuilding the country's infrastructure from scratch.

RESPONSE EFFORTS

The U.S. National Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) were deployed to Puerto Rico to assess needs and jump-start relief and clean-up efforts. Due to logistical and communication challenges, large swaths of the population, especially in rural areas, have yet to receive FEMA assistance. Diaspora communities in the U.S. mainland and some international aid organizations have mobilized to deliver an overwhelming amount of support to the island. In Dominica, where there were very few humanitarian organizations operating, rebuilding efforts have been slow and are still in early stages of progress.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF – ACTIONS TAKEN AND NEXT STEPS

Lutheran World Relief responds to humanitarian needs in developing countries overseas, where we can organize the most effective response and have the greatest impact due to our expertise and capabilities. Due to the overwhelming devastation and need in Puerto Rico, we have committed more than \$136,000 to an initial response effort.

In collaboration with Casa Pueblo, a Puerto Rican organization with more than 35 years of experience in environmental advocacy and community development, we have provided 1,000 families in the Adjuntas municipality with water filtration units, solar lanterns that can also be used to charge cell phones, and distributed cash to 300 families to meet their most immediate needs.

We are currently exploring additional opportunities to help Puerto Ricans recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria and better prepare for future natural disasters.

Lutheran World Relief is also collaborating with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to support their efforts through a network of churches throughout the island.

In Dominica, Lutheran World Relief is partnering with Habitat for Humanity International to help local builders, government officials and community leaders construct stronger buildings and houses that are better able to withstand strong storms. The project will reach 1,650 people and will also facilitate access to affordable building materials and promotes safe repairs and reconstruction of houses.

In Cuba, we have contributed \$40,000 to our partners in the ACT Alliance, mainly the Cuban Council of Churches (CCC), to support a project that provides shelter and food security to affected communities.

ABOUT LWR

With nearly 75 years of demonstrated expertise helping to transform some of the hardest-to-reach places in the developing world, LWR is an innovative, trusted international nongovernmental organization committed to those otherwise cut off from basic human services and opportunities.

LWR helps communities living in extreme poverty adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being and we respond to emergencies with a long-term view. When a disaster hits — whether it's a drought, tsunami or civil war — we work alongside communities over months and years to help them recover and adjust to new realities, ensuring that they are prepared to withstand the next unexpected challenge. Regardless of whether these challenges are chronic or acute LWR invests in communities to enable those living in extreme poverty to build the resilience they need to thrive.

For additional information about LWR's response to this situation and other emergencies around the world, please visit lwr.org. You can also join the conversation about how LWR is responding to emergencies with a long-term view at facebook.com/LuthWorldRelief or twitter.com/LuthWorldRelief.



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