



# INFOSERV

## Hurricane IRMA



# BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE



COMMEMORATIVE EDITION



## Govt. Agencies Placed on 'Full Alert' in Preparation for Irma

NASSAU, The Bahamas – All government agencies in The Bahamas have been put on full alert as various hurricane-tracking models indicate Hurricane Irma poses a “serious threat” to The Bahamas, Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis said Monday.

This includes the activation of emergency protocols by NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency) and the uniformed branches of the government and other relevant government agencies that provide the country’s essential services.

Prime Minister Minnis said the alert also extends to both public and private utility providers.

“The preparation of shelters and coordination with NGOs are also priorities,” Prime Minister Minnis added.

Dr. Minnis said even while the Government of The Bahamas is using all of the resources at its disposal to do all in its power to ensure that the country is fully prepared, there is a need for members of the general public and private institutions to make their preparations as well.

This includes monitoring the location of the hurricane by listening to updates available via reliable radio, television and social media outlets. This especially includes updates that are issued through the National Emergency Management Agency, The Department of Meteorology, other essential government services and non-government organizations that work closely with the Government of The Bahamas.

“Bahamians and residents should avoid relying on sources of information which may be questionable or unreliable, especially potentially fake information circulated through social media,” Prime Minister Minnis said.

Prime Minister Minnis said the Government of The Bahamas will do “all in its power” to ensure that the country is fully prepared for all aspects of disaster management and mitigation efforts – including rescue and recovery efforts.

Preparations, Prime Minister Minnis said, include ensuring that emergency communication networks, including with all Family Islands, are tested and ready for use.

“Even as the Government is taking the necessary precautions to prepare for Hurricane Irma, I want to stress the need for preparation by the general public and private institutions,” Prime Minister Minnis said. “This preparation includes monitoring the location of the hurricane by listening to updates through reliable radio, television and/or reliable social media.

“Bahamians and residents throughout the country need to monitor the location and proximity of Irma to the island or cay on which they live. Maritime traffic, fishermen and boaters should take all necessary precautions as Hurricane Irma approaches The Bahamas,” Prime Minister Minnis added.



**Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis (centre) addressing Monday’s (September 4, 2017) press briefing that provided members of the general public and private institutions with an update on the Government’s essential services hurricane preparedness. Also pictured (at left) is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Hon. Kevin Peter Turnquest and (at right) Ms. Elise Delancy, Secretary to The Cabinet (Acting).**



# PM Minnis Orders evacuation/ 'Take Irma Seriously'

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis Monday (September 4, 2017) challenged Bahamians and persons residing in The Bahamas to take the threat of Hurricane Irma “very seriously.”

“Life is precious. We must make every effort to preserve and protect life, including the elderly, the indigent and other vulnerable individuals,” Prime Minister Minnis said.

“The threat of Irma must be taken seriously. While property must be secured, material possessions can be replaced. The priority is to take precautions to save lives and minimize the risk of harm and injury.”

Addressing a press briefing Monday to update members of the general public and private institutions about the preparedness measures being undertaken by the relevant essential government services in anticipation of Hurricane Irma, Prime Minister Minnis said the Government of The Bahamas will do “all in its power” to ensure that the country is fully prepared for all aspects of disaster management and mitigation efforts – including rescue and recovery efforts.

Preparations, Prime Minister Minnis said, include ensuring that emergency communication networks, including with all Family Islands, are tested and ready for use.

“This includes monitoring the location of the hurricane by listening to updates available via reliable radio, television and social media outlets. This especially includes updates that are issued through the National Emergency Management Agency, The Department of Meteorology, other essential government services and non-government organizations that work closely with the Government of The Bahamas.

**NASSAU, The Bahamas – The Prime Minister accompanied by the Hon Marvin Dames and a contingent of senior government officials greet workers at the shelter.**



“Bahamians and residents should avoid relying on sources of information which may be questionable or unreliable, especially potentially fake information circulated through social media,” Prime Minister Minnis said.

Prime Minister Minnis also called on all citizens and residents to ensure that they have the necessary supplies in the event Hurricane Irma affects various parts of the country.

“This includes gathering supplies such as food, water, medicine, gasoline, flashlights, radios, batteries and any other necessary supplies. While we hope that we are not adversely affected by Hurricane Irma, the best course of action is to be well-prepared in advance. We will continue to report to the country as we remain vigilant and closely monitor events,” Prime Minister Minnis added.



## PM Welcomes First Set of Evacuees Ahead of Hurricane Irma



**NASSAU, The Bahamas – The Prime Minister accompanied on the tarmac of the Domestic Section of the Lynden Pindling International Airport by Opposition Leader, the Hon. Philip “Brave” Davis and a contingent of senior government officials Wednesday morning welcomed the first set of evacuees from the Southern Bahamas.**

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis and a contingent of senior government officials Wednesday September 6th morning welcomed the first set of evacuees from the Southern Bahamas ahead of the expected landfall of Hurricane Irma.

The Prime Minister, was also accompanied on the tarmac of the Domestic Section of the Lynden Pindling International Airport by Opposition Leader, the Hon. Philip “Brave” Davis.

The initial evacuees were from Inagua. The Bahamasair flight transporting the evacuees touched down at LPIA at 9:30am Wednesday, September 6, 2017. Flights took place throughout the day.

On its current path, Hurricane Irma, a dangerous Category 5 storm with sustained winds of approximately 185 miles per hour, poses a direct threat to the islands of Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Long Cay and Ragged Island.

Disaster Management and Department of Meteorology officials say the wind speed, rain and expected storm surge associated with a Hurricane of Irma’s stature could make Irma “a potentially catastrophic hurricane.”

The evacuations, which began early Wednesday morning, were part of a pledge made Tuesday by the Minnis Administration to begin evacuating Bahamians and residents of the southern-most islands into New Providence early Wednesday ahead of the potential impact from the storm.

“Most would have volunteered to come out.” Prime Minister Minnis said of the evacuees from Inagua. “We have organized various flights to evacuate individuals from the southern islands including Ragged Island; we have had one or two hiccups initially, however, we were able to correct those.”



Prime Minnis applauded Mr. Davis for his assistance in the “national” effort.

“We got great assistance also from the Leader of the Opposition, so I want to thank him for offering his support because this is not a political event, this is a national event, and it shows great maturity when both political parties can get together for one common purpose and that is to save the lives of our people,” Prime Minister Minnis added.

The initial group was housed at the New Providence Community Church, Blake Road. Team leaders and volunteers were already on hand to welcome them. The Kendal G.L. Isaacs Gymnasium and Loyola Hall will also be used to house evacuees from the southern Bahamas.

“These Centres will be adequately staffed by various personnel and will be secured by the Royal Bahamas Police Force,” Prime Minister Minnis said.



# Irma Described as Most Powerful Atlantic Ocean Storm in 100 Years

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Hurricane Irma, the monster storm that ripped through The Bahamas and several other territories throughout the Caribbean, before wreaking further damage in South Florida, United States of America, is being described as the strongest Atlantic Ocean hurricane ever recorded.

The ninth named storm of the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season, Irma is considered the most powerful storm to impact the Atlantic in more than 100 years because of her “unprecedented intensity over the Atlantic.”

Irma was not selective in her approach, wreaking havoc in Barbuda, Haiti, Cuba, The Bahamas, Turks and Caicos Islands, St. Martin/St. Maarten/St. Barts (Barthelemy); Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, U.S. Virgin Islands and the British Virgin Islands.

Other island-nations such as Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Barbados, also felt her wrath before Irma turned her attention to Florida and its cays.

“The effect of Hurricane Irma on the more densely populated areas from the northern Caribbean to Florida has been horrific,” Bahamian Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis said. “It is the same kind of catastrophic damage that has occurred on Ragged Island which is now uninhabitable.” I extend the thoughts, prayers and solidarity of the people and Government of The Bahamas to those in our region who

suffered the loss of life and catastrophic damage as a result of this monster storm.”

‘Catastrophic damage’ is the phrase Disaster Management officials and news organizations across the Caribbean and the United States of America are using to describe the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

While experts are still working to calculate the exact damage Irma wrought, initial assessments indicate that Irma was responsible for at least 30 deaths in the Caribbean; that she destroyed 90 percent of the buildings and vehicles in Barbuda; destroyed 70 percent of the homes in Dutch St. Maarten and further destroyed 90 percent of government and business structures, along with 90 percent of the electricity infrastructure in Anguilla.

That’s not counting costs to the environment, agriculture, fisheries, shipping, tourism sector, utilities and other infrastructure, nor personal losses, across the Caribbean.

Grenada Prime Minister and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Chairman, Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, who visited The Bahamas, September 15-16, to get a first-hand view of the destruction caused by Irma, said it is clear the impact Climate Change is having on the Atlantic Hurricane Season, as storms are becoming more and more ferocious.





# PM: Early Evacuation Helped Save Lives, 'A Generation of Ragged Islanders'

NASSAU, The Bahamas – The early evacuation of the majority of residents of Ragged Island ahead of the powerful and destructive Hurricane Irma helped to save “a generation of Ragged Islanders,” Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis said Wednesday.

In all, the Government of The Bahamas was able to evacuate more than 1500 residents of The Bahamas – from MICAL (Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay) and Ragged Island (1200 persons) –and Bimini (365 persons) ahead of the storm.

Prime Minister Minnis said the evacuations also minimized the potential for severe trauma for those evacuated, especially young children.

“Had the evacuations not occurred, we could have lost a generation of Ragged Islanders,” Prime Minister Minnis said. “That we have been spared the loss of life of Bahamian brothers and sisters, especially those from Ragged Island, is most fortunate and is the result of taking emergency action to evacuate the residents of our most south-eastern island.”

Hurricane Irma entered The Bahamas as a Category 5 storm on Thursday, September 7, 2017, with sustained winds of 175 miles per hour. The centre of Irma passed over Little Inagua at about 1:00 a.m. Friday (September 8) and continued moving west, northwest, passing about 30 miles south of Salina Point, Acklins, at about 6:00 a.m. Friday as a Category 5 Hurricane.

Hurricane Irma weakened slightly to a Category 4 storm with sustained winds of 150 miles per hour before its centre passed over Ragged Island at about mid-day Friday (September 8).

Irma continued moving westwards towards and along the northern coast of Cuba before turning northward and crossing the lower Florida Cays on Sunday morning (September 10) before making landfall on the southwest coast of Florida later that day.

Hurricane Force winds were experienced in the islands of Inagua, Mayaguana, Acklins and Crooked Island on Thursday night (September 7) and early Friday morning (September 8); in south Long Island on Friday morning (September 8) and in Ragged Island Friday morning and afternoon during Hurricane Irma's passage through The Bahamas.

Tropical storm winds were experienced in north Long Island; Long Cay; Exuma and its Cays; Rum Cay; San Salvador; Cat Island; Andros; New Providence; Bimini and Grand Bahama.

There were reports of tornado activity embedded in thunderstorms associated with some outer bands of Irma in Bimini and Grand Bahama on Sunday (September 10, 2017).





## Road to Recovery Begins with ‘Serious Determination’



**SOUTHERN BAHAMAS** – The road to recovery for residents of the southern islands negatively impacted by Hurricane Irma began with “serious determination,” Monday (September 11, 2017).

Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis and a team of senior Administration officials took the first, critical steps on the road to recovery from Hurricane Irma Monday (September 11, 2017), visiting the three islands in the Southern Bahamas that were most impacted by the very dangerous Category 4 storm, September 8, 2017.

They were there to get on-the-ground briefings from Damage Assessment Teams that traveled as part of the Prime Minister’s delegation, and to speak with residents – some of whom decided to “ride out” the dangerous storm.

The work of the Initial Damage Assessment Teams and the Damage Assessment Teams is critical in Disaster Management, as their assessments will be used to help provide Government planners with a road map towards determining the appropriate course of action to be taken on the path to recovery.

Prime Minister Minnis was scheduled to visit the islands on Sunday (September 10, 2017) after the ‘All Clear’ was given for the Southern Bahamas, but severe headwinds in New Providence forced aviators to push back Dr. Minnis’ visit to Monday.

The Prime Minister was accompanied by Minister of Works, the Hon. Desmond Bannister; Minister of Agriculture and Marine Resources, the Hon. Renward Wells; Minister of Education, the Hon. Jeffrey Lloyd; Minister of Health, Dr. the Hon. Duane Sands; Minister of Transport and Local Government, the Hon. Frankie Campbell; Minister of Tourism and Aviation, the Hon. Dionisio D’Aguilar; Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Darren Henfield; Minister of Social Services and Urban Development, the Hon. Lanisha Rolle, and Minister of Labour, Senator, the Hon. Dion Foulkes.

The delegation also comprised Opposition Leader, the Hon. Philip Davis, and administrative, technical and logistics experts from the Office of the Prime Minister; the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA); Ministry of Works (including those from the Water and Sewerage Corporation and Bahamas Power and Light); and the Ministry of Transport and Local Government; Tourism and Aviation and Agriculture and Fisheries, among others.

The delegation’s first stop was Salina Point, which bore the brunt of Irma’s wrath in Acklins. Their next stop was Crooked Island, which sustained little damage to infrastructure, homes, businesses and government buildings.

The final leg of the journey took the delegation to Ragged Island. It was clear to see from the air upon approach, that the island-community had been ravaged by Hurricane Irma.

Downed power lines and poles snapped in half by hurricane-force winds still littered the community. Government buildings (school, police station, clinic, post office), homes and businesses were either flattened by the storm or severely damaged.

Communications were also out due to the extensive damage caused to the island’s infrastructure.

Navigating the community on foot and in the few vehicles that survived Irma’s wrath, proved a bit tricky as assessment teams and members of the delegation had to manoeuvre around large electricity poles and wires that blocked pathways.

The stench from the rotting carcasses of dead animals was also evident.

Prime Minister Minnis told residents that he was ordering a second round of evacuation for the 17 persons who “rode out the storm,” in their best interest. The evacuations are set to begin Wednesday, September 13, 2017, for those willing to evacuate.



# Pace Towards Recovery/Reconstruction Quickens



**A number of delegation members traveling on a truck, on September 16, 2017, to see firsthand the damage caused by Hurricane Irma on Ragged Island.**

NASSAU, The Bahamas – The Minnis Administration quickened its pace towards the road to recovery and reconstruction from the wrath of Hurricane Irma even further on Thursday, September 14 (2017), completing damage assessments in the last two Bahamian islands negatively impacted.

Simultaneously, agencies such as the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and its partners, along with non-governmental organizations such as the Bahamas Red Cross, have been organizing, delivering and distributing relief supplies into the affected islands.

The Minnis Administration took the first, critical steps on the road to recovery from Hurricane Irma Monday (September 11), when the Prime Minister and a team of senior Administration officials, government advisors/planners, disaster managers and technical, environmental and logistical experts from various government corporations, ministries and agencies visited the three islands in the Southern Bahamas where Irma made her first landfall and were most impacted by the very dangerous Category 4 storm.

The work of Damage Assessment Teams is critical in Disaster Management, as their assessments will be used to help provide Government planners with a road map towards determining the appropriate course of action to be taken on the path to recovery and reconstruction.

Thursday's first stop was Bimini. North Bimini (Alice Town, Bailey Town and Porgy Bay) sustained the brunt of the damage with downed power lines and wires, large casuarina trees that were ripped from their roots and fell across the street, and roof and other damage to homes and businesses. Clean-up crews were hard at work clearing debris.

A portion of Bailey Town, including Porgy Bay, was without electricity when the Damage Assessment Teams visited Thursday, but crews from the Bahamas Power and Light Company were already working to restore electricity to the affected areas.

Bimini's Heritage Sites, a large part of the island-community's selling point as the "Gateway to The Bahamas" were saved from any major damage.

An Initial Assessment of the environmental impact of the storm on Bimini's treasured mangroves, bone fishing flats, and ocean indicates they survived the storm in good shape. A full assessment of the impact of Hurricane Irma on Bimini will be provided.

The final stop for the day was in Freeport, Grand Bahama where some of the homes in the communities of Imperial Park I and II, sustained major and minor structural damage as a result of tornado activity associated with Hurricane Irma.

Twenty-eight families (approximately 100 persons) were identified as victims of the tornadoes in Imperial Park with 27 of those families getting support from family members or choosing to remain in their homes with adequate food and water supplies.

Sea surge associated with powerful Irma resulted in coastal erosion and flooding mainly along the southern coastal communities of Lucaya, Smith's Point, High Rock, McClean's Town, William's Town, Lewis Yard, Hunter's, Eight Mile Rock and West End, Grand Bahama.

"We are fortunate to have been spared greater harm and damage," Prime Minister Minnis said. "So let us give thanks to the Lord of Life for our many Blessings. Let this gratitude be expressed in generosity by reaching out to others in need here at home and in our region."



**Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretary-General, His Excellency, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque (left) speaks, on September 16, 2017, with**

**53-year-old resident Mr. Terence Wallace, concerning his ordeal during the passage of Hurricane Irma over Ragged Island.**



# Government Offers a Second Evacuation of Residents from Ragged Island



**RAGGED ISLAND, The Bahamas** – Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis Monday September 11th urged the remaining residents of Ragged Island who decided to “ride-out” Hurricane Irma in their homes to take advantage of a second opportunity to be evacuated to safety in the wake of the massive destruction inflicted by the storm.

The Government of The Bahamas on Monday committed to sending a flight into the ravaged island early Tuesday morning (September 12, 2017) to evacuate the 17 residents who did not take advantage of the initial opportunity to be evacuated from the island ahead of the dangerous storm.

Prime Minister Minnis later conceded to requests from a number of residents for more time to secure some of their personal property. The flight into Ragged Island has now been rescheduled for Wednesday morning (September 13, 2017).

The Category 4/5 Storm caused massive damage and destruction to the island on Friday, September 8, 2017 with early estimates suggesting that almost 90 per cent of the buildings there were either completely destroyed or were severely damaged.

Prime Minister Minnis told residents that he was ordering the second evacuation in their best interests.

A Medical Doctor by profession, Prime Minister Minnis said the stench from the rotting carcasses of dead animals, presence of downed power lines and poles resulting in the absence of electricity, the absence of running and potable water, the loss of communications, the destruction of the clinic nullifying the availability of any potential medical treatment in the event of injury and/or sickness, and the presence of large amount of debris, could present health hazards for residents.



“What we see here today is complete devastation here in Ragged Island. All roofs are destroyed; health facilities are destroyed. Today we have no water, we have no light, no medical facility and as you walk about you can smell the stench from the carcasses of dead animals,” Prime Minister Minnis told.

“There are a lot of exposed nails around, if anything should happen to you there is no medical facility here – none. (And) It’s only going to get worse over the next few days. It’s only a matter of time before mosquitoes start. I think it would be best for you to be evacuated to New Providence. I know some of you want to stay but I think the health conditions are going to deteriorate, the stench is going to become worse, and you are placing your lives in jeopardy.

Prime Minister Minnis said officials have taken residents’ concerns about leaving their properties unattended into consideration and have moved to address those concerns.

“I know that you are concerned about leaving your properties here, but we will have the Defence Force send the relevant vessel here to provide security and to try to clean up as soon as possible.”



**Scenes of the devastation on Ragged Island caused by Hurricane Irma during the passage of the storm through the Southeastern Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands on Friday, September 8, 2017.**



# British Government Official Applauds Local Evacuation Efforts



NASSAU, The Bahamas – Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, the Rt. Hon. Lord Ahmad has commended the Government of The Bahamas for its decision to evacuate citizens and residents from the country's most vulnerable islands ahead of Hurricane Irma.

Lord Ahmad, on September 9, also expressed the “concern” of the British Government in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, adding that assistance was dispatched to CARICOM to address emergency needs.

The government, along with its partners and with the assistance of Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Philip Davis, evacuated more than 1500 citizens and residents from the islands of Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay, Ragged Island and Bimini ahead of the approach of the monster storm.

Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis said, September 13, in the House of Assembly, the evacuations not only helped to save the lives of an untold number of Bahamians and residents, but also saved a generation of Ragged Islanders – minimizing the potential for severe trauma to those persons.

“Had the evacuations not occurred, we could have lost a generation of Ragged Islanders,” Prime Minister Minnis said. “That we have been spared the loss of life of Bahamian brothers and sisters, especially those from Ragged Island, is most fortunate and is the result of taking emergency action to evacuate the residents of our most south-eastern islands.

“Hurricane Irma was one of the greatest challenges we have ever faced and I think we should all thank God that The Bahamas has been blessed and that He has watched over us and we must all be thankful of that,” Prime Minister Minnis added.

He thanked the residents of MICAL (Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay), Ragged Island and Bimini for agreeing to evacuate on short notice.





## PM Vows to ‘Transform’ Ragged Island Into Model for Sustainable Community

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis has vowed to transform Ragged Island into a model for sustainable community by rebuilding it into the first “fully green island in the region.”

The Prime Minister said the Government of The Bahamas will accomplish this objective through the use of renewable energy and smart technologies from solar energy, to sustainable water purification systems.

Ragged Island sustained the brunt of the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma in The Bahamas. Most of the homes there were destroyed or severely damaged. Power lines are down, Utilities are non-functioning. Public buildings, including the government-operated school, the clinic and other public facilities are severely damaged or destroyed.

Prime Minister Minnis said Ragged Island can emerge from the destruction and devastation caused by Hurricane Irma as a new model for sustainable communities throughout the region and The Bahamas.

“Out of the devastation and the destruction, a new Ragged Island will emerge including stronger building codes, improved zoning, and strategies to mitigate against Climate Change and rising sea levels,” Prime Minister Minnis pledged.

“I assure the wonderful people of Ragged Island that their island will be rebuilt. We will work with private institutions, international agencies and foreign partners to create a more sustainable island-community at Ragged Island. “We know by faith and the experience of history that out of tragedy, can often come new life. (That) Despair can be transformed into hope.”



**Prime Minister Minnis discussing the impact of Hurricane Irma and the resolve to re-build, in the House of Assembly, September 13, 2017.**

“This is the first time in the modern history of The Bahamas that an entire island has witnessed the wholesale destruction of its infrastructure, both public and private,” Prime Minister Minnis said:

At its conclusion, Andrew was responsible for the destruction of more than 65,000 houses while damaging 124,000 others. Sixty-five persons lost their lives as a result of the Hurricane, which left a \$26.5 billion bill in its wake.

“One civil servant, who has visited our islands after various hurricanes, including in 1992 after Hurricane Andrew, expressed that this is the worst destruction he has seen in The Bahamas after a major hurricane,” Prime Minister Minnis added.

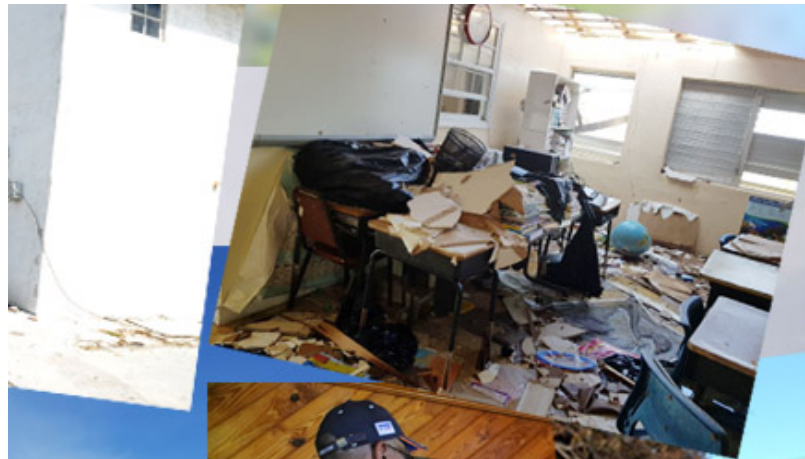
Hurricane Andrew was a Category 5 Storm that struck The Bahamas and the States of Florida and Louisiana, United States of America, in mid-August, 1992. Effects of the Hurricane were felt in other U.S. States such as Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi.



# HURRICANE IRMA









# GB Minister 'This is not the time to panic'



FREEPORT, Grand Bahama – “This is not the time to panic, but to prepare... and to pray.”

That was the admonishment from Minister of State for Grand Bahama, Senator Kwasi Thompson, during an emergency press briefing in regards to the threat of Hurricane Irma to The Bahamas, and Grand Bahama in particular.

The press briefing, which was held in the Board Room in the Office of The Prime Minister, gave the opportunity for all relevant authorities to outline their respective ministry's preparedness and most importantly, to urge Grand Bahamians to prepare for the arrival of the massive Category Five Hurricane.

“This is a very serious storm, so we are asking all residents to take the necessary precautions,” added Minister Thompson. “While we do all that we can to prepare our homes and our families for an event like this, we also want to acknowledge that there is someone who has even more power than we do, and so we are encouraging all Bahamians to pray.

“As you go about your preparations, we advise you to closely monitor reports from the local Met Office, as these forecasts may change,” added Minister Thompson. “It may get better, as well as it may get worse.”

The GB Minister urged residents in the flood zones – those living on the coastline – to begin making plans now to evacuate their homes and to move further inland. This, he said, is important because of the potential storm surge and flooding that can arise during the passage of Hurricane Irma.

“I want to appeal especially to those residents in West End, Hunters, Pinder's Point and the surrounding areas, that you should begin now to evacuate those areas,” said Minister Thompson. “There are a number of shelters on the island, which will be made available as early as Friday.

“We are advising residents that if you are going to evacuate, this should be done by early morning, because we believe that the weather is going to go downhill from Friday evening. It should be noted that we have increased the number of shelters here on the island.”

Ms. Paula Marshall of the Department of Social Services said that they are in the process of identifying even more shelters for residents, but noted that some have already been prepared.

“As you prepare for the hurricane, we ask that you follow certain protocols,” noted Ms. Marshall. “You must secure important documents in a sealed bag or packet and you must take those documents with you if you evacuate to a shelter.

“If you must go to a shelter, ensure that you take along, blankets, toiletries, medications, food and water.”

The shelters that will be available to Grand Bahamians include the Foster B. Pestaina Centre (which will be for special medical needs), First Baptist Church, The Central Church of God, Jack Hayward High School, Maurice Moore Primary School, St. Georges High School, Cancer Association, Eight Mile Rock High School, Church of God of Prophecy in Seagrape, A Social Affair, Grace Bible Church and the Freeport Adventist Church.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Emrick Seymour said that the police force is in a state of readiness for Hurricane Irma, but also advised residents not to wait for the last minute to complete their hurricane preparations.

“Some of us may have seen, or heard about some of the devastation which this storm caused in the Leeward Islands, so we have an idea of just how serious this monstrous storm can be,” said ACP Seymour.





# Grand Bahama Experienced Tornadoes As Hurricane Irma Proceeded Through Florida

FREEPORT, Grand Bahama – As a result of Hurricane Irma, though not in its direct path, Grand Bahama experienced tomadic activity on Sunday, September 10, 2017 affecting some 100 residents.

At about 12:45 p.m, a tomado touched down leaving destruction in its wake.

Assessment teams were dispatched from NEMA; and shortly before 6:00 p.m., it was reported that about 12 homes were struck and one business, Colina Insurance Company on the Mall Drive, received roof damage.

The Lodge Hall on East Sunrise Highway was also impacted with significant roof destruction.

Other affected areas included Alexis Drive in Imperial Park where eight homes were damaged – three with significant, and five with minor, roof damage along with devastation of doors and windows. An eight-unit building on East Beach Drive had significant roof loss; a residence on Tamarind Street had significant roof damage and the rear bedroom was destroyed.

Those affected were placed with family or friends.

The Government of The Bahamas has already made provisions for relief efforts for those affected by Hurricane Irma, said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Hon. K. Peter Turnquest, during an interview on Sunday.

He said everyone was of the view that “we were on the backside of the storm and then all of a sudden these tomadoes popped up,” referring to the events of just after midday.

Mr. Turnquest added that the government is thankful there was no loss of life. “The Cabinet has already looked at the overall needs and provisions for rapid relief efforts that will kick in tomorrow.”

Other than the tomadic activity, the island fared well with the passing of Hurricane Irma, said Minister of State for Grand Bahama in the Office of the Prime Minister, Senator the Hon. Kwasi Thompson on Sunday evening during a press briefing at the Emergency Operation Centre. He thanked all those who worked tirelessly to ensure that residents were safe, namely those from the Royal Bahamas Police Force, Defense Force, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Social Services, NEMA, Ministry of Works and the Administrator’s Office.

He said that those affected by the tomado will be offered the full assistance of government. “Our heart goes out to them. They range from babies, two years old, to senior citizens and some were even disabled. And so our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to those persons who lost their homes. Some whose entire roof just lifted off, leaving the house uninhabitable. So, we will do our best to ensure that those persons are taken care of to the best of our ability here in Grand Bahama,” said Senator Thompson.

**ARRIVING IN GRAND BAHAMA - Prime Minister Dr. the Hon. Hubert Minnis, arrived in Grand Bahama on Thursday afternoon for a tour of the areas destroyed by Hurricane Irma and resulting tornadoes. Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister, Senator the Hon. Kwasi Thompson, and Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture, the Hon. Michael Pintard, are seen greeting the Prime Minister and his delegation.**



**MAKING A STATEMENT - Following a tour of the damaged areas in Freeport and a brief lunch, Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert Minnis on Thursday made a statement to the media, explaining what he had seen and commending the teamwork displayed.**





# Grand Bahama Begins Road To Recovery After Hurricane Irma

FREEPORT, Grand Bahama – The process for the restoration of utilities, as well as certain infrastructure in Grand Bahama has begun.

With the remnants of Hurricane Irma quickly pulling away, Grand Bahamians, like many Bahamians who were adversely affected by the major devastating storm, have begun to put together the pieces, and bring normalcy to their lives.

In a two-hour press conference at the Emergency Operation Centre, led by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, K. Peter Turnquest and by Minister of State for Grand Bahama, Senator Kwasi Thompson, officials and representatives from all of the relevant agencies revealed their respective plans for the restoration of Grand Bahama.

Because Grand Bahama did not suffer the full impact of Hurricane Irma on Sunday, September 10, 2017, it was revealed by all who addressed Monday's press conference that restoration will not be as difficult and prolonged as it was following hurricane Matthew last year October.

"God is good, and we could all agree that Grand Bahama and most of the densely populated parts of the country dodged a bullet this time," said Deputy Prime Minister Turnquest.

"The memory of (hurricane) Matthew is fresh in our minds and so we certainly want to acknowledge and give God thanks for having spared us from a devastating storm."

According to officials from the various agencies and corporations, power, water and other utilities are expected to be restored within a short period of time. Minister Turnquest pointed out that Grand Bahama International airport will be re-opened by Tuesday, September 12, 2017.

While jubilant about "minor" damages caused by Hurricane Irma to the island of Grand Bahama, Minister Turnquest said that his prayers were with those who did suffer significant personal loss to their homes and property as a result of tornadoes that touched down in Grand Bahama on Sunday.

"You would have heard that Bimini suffered significant damage and it may take a little longer to have full restoration there," said Minister Turnquest. "There was also significant damage in other islands like Ragged Island and in the Southern islands like Mayaguana and Inagua.

"These Bahamians will require our assistance. As persons from around the country helped us when we were in need last year, we call on Bahamians here in Grand Bahama to lend their assistance to your brothers and sisters in those islands."



**Road To Recovery – Deputy Prime Minister and Member of Parliament for East End, the Hon. K. Peter Turnquest, Minister of State for Grand Bahama, Senator the Hon. Kwasi Thompson addressed the two-hour, live broadcast press conference at the Emergency Operations Centre in Freeport on Monday, September 11, 2017. The DPM said that all agencies (both Government and private) were working expeditiously to restore electricity, water and other utilities to the island of Grand Bahama following the passing of Hurricane Irma on Sunday.**





# CARICOM Chairman Pledges Support for Bahamas During Recovery



**Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Darren Henfield (left) speaks, on September 16, 2017, as (from second left) Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Chairman and Grenada Prime Minister Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, Minister of Labour Sen. the Hon. Dion Foulkes and Bahamas Ambassador-Designate to CARICOM His Excellency Reuben Rahming listen, during a delegation visit to Ragged Island to see firsthand the damage caused by Hurricane Irma.**

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Chairman and Grenada Prime Minister, Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, said both the Caribbean Community and the Government and people of Grenada will stand with The Bahamas as the country recovers from the destruction/damage caused by Hurricane Irma.

Dr. Mitchell arrived in New Providence on Friday, September 15, 2017 accompanied by CARICOM Secretary-General, His Excellency, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, and a number of senior Caribbean Community officials. The CARICOM Chairman departed New Providence on Saturday (September 16).

Prime Minister Mitchell and his team visited Ragged Island on Saturday, September 16. They were accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Darren Henfield; Minister of Labour, Senator the Hon. Dion Foulkes; Captain Stephen Russell, Director of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA); Mrs. Sharon Haylock, Director-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other senior government officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Prime Minister.

In 2004, almost 13 years to the date of Hurricane Irma's passage through The Bahamas, Hurricane Ivan ripped through Grenada, damaging 90 per cent of the homes and killing 12 persons. Prime Minister Mitchell suffered personal loss in that storm when his residence was flattened, forcing him to move his Office to a Naval vessel.

Like Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Ivan was the ninth named storm of the Atlantic Hurricane Season and was said to be the most powerful storm to hit the Caribbean in ten years.

"When Grenada was destroyed in 2004, not only did the government of The Bahamas respond, but the people of The Bahamas came forward with family and friends and provided tremendous support even going so far as taking individual initiative and brought goods and service to our country so we feel compelled to respond," Dr. Mitchell said.

"People in Grenada have been calling different media houses asking how can they get some goods and services to The Bahamas because there is a lot of connection between Grenada and The Bahamas," Prime Minister Mitchell continued, "as a matter of fact, the entire CARICOM Community has been operating in the same way.

"The leadership of CARICOM felt we had to be here to demonstrate – at the highest possible level of CARICOM – that we are with you and that we are going to be there supporting you in the immediate needs that you have and in the reconstruction efforts," Dr. Mitchell added.

Dr. Mitchell said the CARICOM Leadership has mandated CARICOM Secretary-General La Rocque to organize a Donors Conference to help raise funds to assist all of the countries impacted by Hurricane Irma.

"The rebuilding and reconstruction process (in many of the Caribbean countries) will not be over the short haul because of the massive clean-up efforts and the recovery part of it, but rather over the long haul because we are going to rebuild smarter and more resilient," Ambassador LaRocque said.

Dr. Mitchell said CARICOM countries will have an "enormous opportunity to state their region's collective case" as it relates to Climate Change and its impacts and securing aid for Small-Island Developing States (such as those in the Caribbean, which are prone to destruction caused by hurricanes) at the next Small States Forum scheduled for Washington, D.C., United States of America, this October.

Since 2000, the Small States Forum (SSF) has brought together Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors from 50 Member States, along with high-level representatives from the UN, IMF, OECD, UNDP and the Commonwealth Secretariat, during the World Bank Group/IMF Annual Meetings.

"Right now CARICOM holds the chair of the Small States Forum and that is very significant because the major aspect of the Small States Forum is a ten-million-dollar programme that we are now chairing," Dr. Mitchell said. "There is an enormous opportunity for us to place the issues of climate change and disasters as a key component insofar as aid is concerned."

Dr. Mitchell said it is going to take the "collective effort" of all CARICOM Member States to drive home the point of Climate Change and disasters and their destructive impacts to the region.

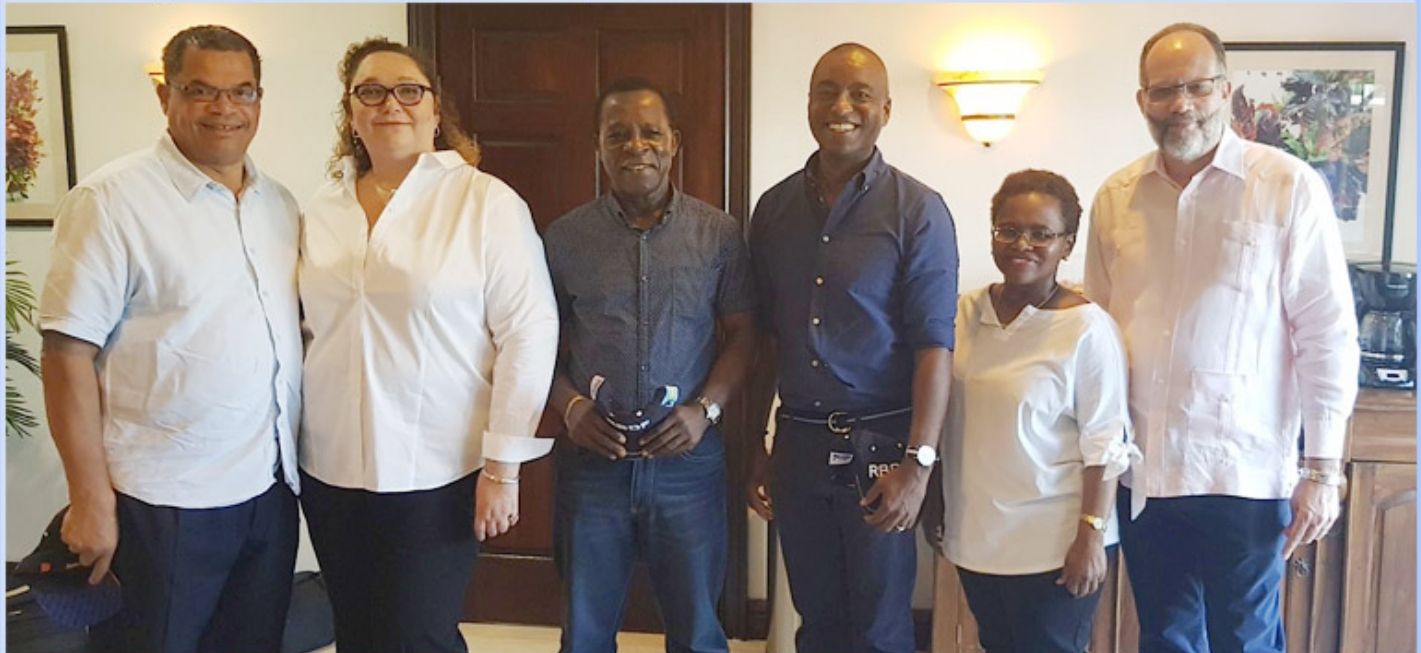
"All of us collectively in CARICOM, all of our institutions, the OECS Secretariat and all Institutions, must work together coming up to that conference in Washington. We should be able to make a tremendous impact as Chair of that important forum at this particular time and in fact with all of the disasters that just occurred, it strengthened our hand and strengthened our case (with regards to) the whole issue of Climate Change; and the special resources available for small states such as The Bahamas and Grenada and other countries in the Caribbean must be given top priority," Dr. Mitchell added.



## CARICOM Media briefing



**CARICOM Chairman and Grenada Prime Minister Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell (right) and Bahamian Prime Minister Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis (centre) addressed members of the media following Dr. Mitchell's return from Ragged Island where the CARICOM Chairman viewed the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma. Dr. Mitchell was accompanied to Ragged Island by a team of senior Bahamian and Caribbean Community officials. Dr. Mitchell was hosted to a small luncheon immediately upon his return to New Providence. Prime Minister Minnis attended the luncheon. Also pictured ( at left) is CARICOM Secretary-General, His Excellency, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque.**



**NASSAU, The Bahamas – Bahamas Minister of Foreign Affairs the Hon. Darren Henfield (third right) hosted a small luncheon for CARICOM Chairman and Grenada Prime Minister, Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell (third left) on Saturday (September 16, 2017) following the delegation's return from Ragged Island where they toured the devastation caused there by Hurricane Irma. Dr. Mitchell was accompanied by a number of senior Caribbean Community officials, among them, CARICOM Secretary-General, His Excellency, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque (far right). Bahamian Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis also attended the luncheon. Pictured from left: Minister of Labour, Senator, the Hon. Dion Foulkes; Foreign Affairs Acting Permanent Secretary Donna Lowe; Dr. Mitchell; Minister Henfield; Director-General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sharon Haylock; and Ambassador LaRocque.**



# USAID Donates to NEMA

NASSAU, The Bahamas—The United States Agency for International Development/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) made a donation to NEMA, (September 14, 2017), of \$166,000 in Hurricane Irma Relief Supplies that included 300 plastic sheeting rolls, 1,000 hygiene kits, 2,400 water containers, 1,020 kitchen sets and 1,500 blankets.

Representatives of USAID/OFDA along with the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) were at Jet Aviation in New Providence for the presentation around mid-day.

US Embassy Charge d'Affaires, Lisa Johnson stated that a Boeing 767 full of supplies would arrive into New Providence from the Miami warehouse with provisions that would be sent to the Northern and Southern Bahamas.

NEMA's Deputy Permanent Secretary, Chrystal Ginton accepted the donation on behalf of NEMA and highlighted that the US Government has not only assisted after hurricanes Joaquin, Matthew and Irma, but also assists with ongoing local training programs to better prepare for disasters.



**Hurricane Irma Relief Supplies arrived at Jet Aviation in Nassau, September 14, 2017 from the United States Agency for International Development/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA). Pictured watching the supplies being offloaded are Deputy Permanent Secretary of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Chrystal Ginton (left) and US Embassy Charge d'Affaires, Lisa Johnson (right).**





# Hurricane Irma Evokes 'Political Maturity'



NASSAU, The Bahamas – Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis Wednesday commended Opposition Leader, the Hon. Philip "Brave" Davis for his assistance in helping to ensure that Bahamians and residents of the Southern Bahamas were safely evacuated into the capital.

The first group of evacuees arrived at the Domestic Section of the Lynden Pindling International Airport at 9:30am Wednesday morning, September 6, onboard a Bahamasair Jet. The islands of the Southern Bahamas – Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Long Cay and Ragged Island – are expected to face the brunt of Hurricane Irma, a dangerous Category 5 Hurricane. Multiple flights were scheduled into the Southern Bahamas all day Wednesday (by Bahamasair) as part of the emergency evacuation efforts.

Prime Minister Minnis said Mr. Davis' involvement in the process showed a new kind of "political maturity in The Bahamas."

"We got great assistance also from the Leader of the Opposition, so I want to thank him for offering his support because this is not a political event, this is a national event, and it shows great maturity when both political parties can get together for one common purpose and that is to save the lives of our people," Prime Minister Minnis added.

The Prime Minister said it was his belief that it was necessary to involve the Leader of the Opposition as part of ongoing efforts to promote national unity in all spheres of Bahamian life.

"This is a time for national unity," Prime Minister Minnis said. "In this spirit, I have briefed the Leader of the Opposition on Hurricane Irma, I have also invited the Leader of the Opposition to join me at the Office of the Prime Minister during the preparation for Hurricane Irma and to offer his advice as the country faces the threat posed by this monster hurricane, including during the rescue and recovery stages after the storm passes."

**NASSAU, The Bahamas – The Prime Minister accompanied by Opposition Leader, the Hon. Philip "Brave" Davis and a contingent of senior government officials addressing the media.**

The evacuations which began in earnest early Wednesday morning, are being viewed as the "largest such evacuations in the history of the country."

Residents of the Southern Bahamas - Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Long Cay (MICAL) – and Ragged Island are at the greatest risk with regards to the severity of the hurricane and have been advised "in the strongest possible terms" to comply with the emergency evacuations as the wind speed, rain and expected storm surge associated with the storm makes Irma a potentially catastrophic hurricane.

"This is history in the making; this has never happened before when you talk about air evacuations into the capital and it is essential that we have involvement of both parties and so I want to thank the Opposition and others who have come onboard in helping to make this a non-political event," Prime Minister Minnis added.

Prime Minister Minnis said the Government of The Bahamas will continue to work with its partners to ensure the safety of every Bahamian and resident of The Bahamas. He called on members of the public to assist wherever they can.

"We will still need the support of the Bahamian public in donating whatever they can because this is a national event and we need complete national support as we move forward," Prime Minister Minnis said.

"Hurricane Irma may be one of the strongest hurricanes ever recorded. In the days ahead I will call on the goodwill and generosity of Bahamians at home and abroad, and residents to offer whatever they can in terms of volunteerism, monetary and other resources to help those affected by Hurricane Irma."



## PM Minnis Outlines Risks of Climate Change

NASSAU, The Bahamas – Climate Change is now one of the most fundamental development challenges facing countries of the African, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) grouping, Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis said Wednesday (September, 20, 2017).

Addressing the Opening Session of the 5th Meeting of ACP (Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific) Ministers In Charge of Fisheries and Aquaculture at Melia Nassau Beach Resort, Prime Minister Minnis said various climate models suggest damage from natural disasters have increased sharply and that: “such damage is likely to worsen, especially from flooding.”

The Prime Minister’s address came at a critical time as a number of Caribbean Countries (The Bahamas included) are trying to recover from the wrath of Super Storms, Hurricanes Irma and Maria which wreaked havoc in the region during the month of September.

“The National Wildlife Federation in the United States notes that the latest science connecting hurricanes and global warming suggests more is yet to come,” Prime Minister Minnis said.

“Tropical Storms are likely to bring higher wind speeds, more precipitation and bigger storm surge in the coming decades.”

Prime Minister Minnis observed Climate Change also poses risks for sustainable development and tourism, in addition to sustainable fisheries.

Prime Minister Minnis said there is no denying the impact Climate Change is having on the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season. There have already been 13 named storms just three-and-one-half months into the season, with two-and-one-half months left to go. (The Hurricane Season lasts June 1 through November 30.)

Already, there have been three Super-Storm Hurricanes (Harvey, Irma, Maria) that have left an estimated hundreds of billions of dollars worth of devastation and destruction across the region and parts of the United States of America.

Maria, the latest of the three Super Storms, has wreaked major havoc in Dominica and Puerto Rico.

“Like typhoons and monsoons (in Asia), these Super Storms leave many communities and countries in the Caribbean particularly vulnerable,” Prime Minister Minnis said.

“This includes Small-Island Developing States (SIDS) and low-lying areas such as The Bahamas and a number of small-island Pacific States here today. Climate Change is now one of the most fundamental development challenges for countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific,” Prime Minister Minnis remarked.



### Opening Session of the 5th Meeting of ACP (Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific)





# TIMELINE FOR DEALING WITH HURRICANE IRMA

As Hurricane Irma was developing into a Category 5 monster hurricane in the East Atlantic, quickly approaching the Northern Caribbean, The Government of The Bahamas went on full alert.

Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis, his Cabinet Ministers and senior government officials from across the government service were continuously advised on the direction and possible severity of the storm by officials of the Bahamas Department of Meteorology.

Because of the severity of the threat of the storm, and the uncertainty of where Hurricane Irma would strike, the Government had to prepare for a variety of outcomes, possible scenarios and various contingencies.

The Cabinet met on three separate occasions in the lead-up to Hurricane Irma. Plans for rescue and recovery in potentially affected islands, were discussed “in detail” at those meetings, according to Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis.

Below is a timeline of Government’s action in response to the threat of Hurricane Irma and immediately after the hurricane hit.

**SUNDAY, September 3** – Prime Minister Minnis meets with 45 officials, including Cabinet Ministers, senior civil servants and heads of various agencies at the Office of the Prime Minister to be briefed on their respective plans in preparation for Hurricane Irma.

**MONDAY, September 4** – Prime Minister Minnis meets with disaster managers/strategists for a second time at the Paul H. Farquharson Conference Centre, Royal Bahamas Police Force Headquarters, and then provides update on Hurricane Irma to media, members of the public, following the meeting. The briefing was carried Live on television and radio and live streamed through various social media initiatives

**MONDAY, September 4** – Government agencies placed on Full Alert after various hurricane-tracking models indicate that Hurricane Irma posed a “serious threat” to The Bahamas.

**MONDAY, September 4** – NEMA activates emergency protocols ahead of approaching storm.

**MONDAY, September 4** - Prime Minister, Dr. the Hon. Hubert A. Minnis encourages Bahamians and persons residing in The Bahamas to take the threat of Hurricane Irma “very seriously.”

**TUESDAY, September 5** – Prime Minister Minnis delivers a National Address utilizing Live radio and television; Live Stream and other Social Media to further apprise citizens throughout the country of “serious threat” posed by Irma and to announce Emergency Evacuations for residents of the Southern Bahamas including Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Long Cay and Ragged Island.





# TIMELINE FOR DEALING WITH HURRICANE IRMA

The Prime Minister noted the following during that address:

• That on its current path, the dangerous Category 5 Storm, with sustained winds of approximately 185 miles per hour, posed a dire threat to Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins, Long Cay and Ragged Island.

• That wind speed, rain and expected storm surge made Irma potentially a catastrophic hurricane and that accordingly, the Government must act quickly to protect lives with particular emphasis on the residents of the Southern Bahamas who were at greatest risk.

• That because of the potentially catastrophic effect and loss of life resulting from Hurricane Irma, and after consultation with Cabinet colleagues, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the Department of Meteorology, the Government made the decision to undertake emergency evacuations to New Providence for residents of MICAL (Mayaguana, Inagua, Crooked Island, Acklins and Long Cay) and Ragged Island.

• That the evacuations would begin early Wednesday morning (September 6, 2017) and would be conducted by airlift. (The evacuations turned out to be the largest such evacuations ever conducted within the Commonwealth of The Bahamas).

• That Bahamians and persons residing in The Bahamas to take the threat of Hurricane Irma “very seriously.”

\* That the residents of MICAL and Ragged Island should comply with the emergency evacuations.

\* **WEDNESDAY, September 6** – Emergency evacuations from MICAL and Ragged Island began. Prime Minister Minnis, senior government officials and Opposition Leader, the Hon. Philip “Brave” Davis greeted first group of evacuees, including the elderly, babies and children at Domestic Terminal of the Lynden Pindling International Airport.

[The emergency evacuations resulted in more than 1500 persons being evacuated from MICAL (1200) and Bimini (365).]

**THURSDAY, September 7 – MONDAY, September 11** – Hurricane Irma passes through The Bahamas.

**SATURDAY, September 9** – Prime Minister Minnis participates in the Fifth Special Emergency Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) via teleconferencing.

**SATURDAY, September 9** – Prime Minister Minnis received call from the Rt. Hon. Lord Ahmad, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

**SATURDAY, September 9** – Prime Minister Minnis meets with Cabinet Ministers the Hon. Frankie Campbell (Minister of Transport and Local Government), the Hon. Dionisio D’Aguilar (Minister of Tourism and Aviation), the Hon. Darren Henfield (Minister of Foreign Affairs), the Hon. Lanisha Rolle (Minister of Social Services and Urban Development) and Senator, the Hon. Dion Foulkes (Minister of Labour) at the Office of the Prime Minister.

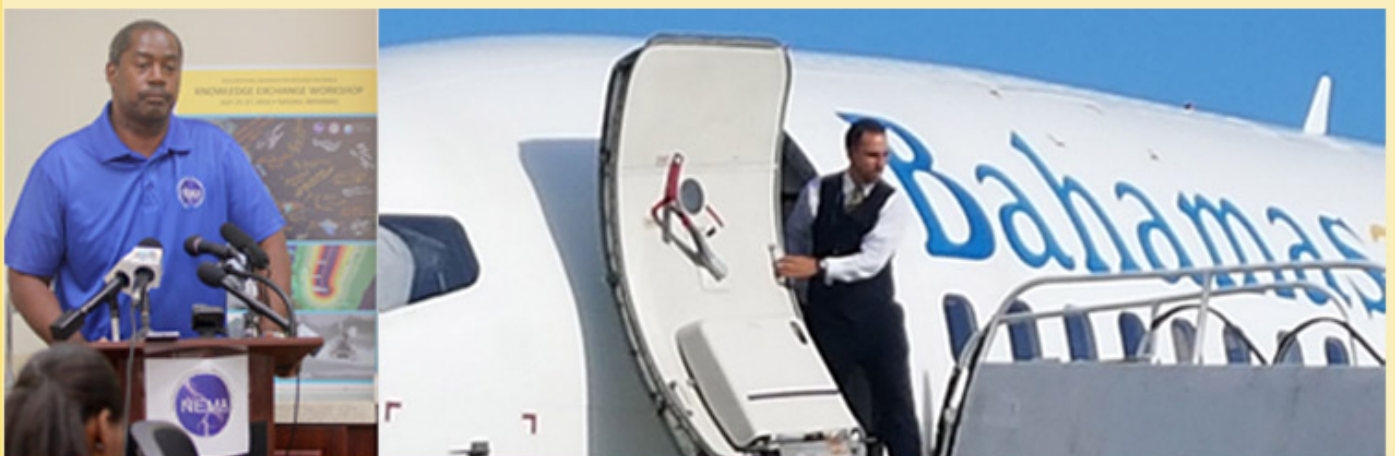
**MONDAY, September 11** – Prime Minister Minnis, Cabinet Ministers, senior government officials, technical, environmental and logistical experts from various government agencies, disaster managers and Damage Assessment Teams take the first, critical steps on the road to recovery by traveling to Acklins, Crooked Island and Ragged Island to assess damage caused by Hurricane Irma.

**TUESDAY, September 12** – Government commences return of residents of Mayaguana, Crooked Island, Long Cay, Acklins and Bimini to their homes at Government’s expense.

**TUESDAY, September 12** – Cabinet convenes to address Hurricane Irma.

**WEDNESDAY, September 13** – Residents of Inagua who were evacuated ahead of the storm were returned home, many of them traveling on the same flight as the delegation – led by Prime Minister Minnis – that would assess damage in Inagua and Mayaguana.

**THURSDAY, September 14** – Prime Minister and delegation travel to Bimini and Freeport, Grand Bahama to assess damage in those areas. Bimini and Freeport were the final two Bahamian islands to be impacted by Hurricane Irma.





## ALERT - WATCH - WARNING

**1 - Hurricane Alert.** Issued 60 hours in advance of a hurricane. Ensure that seasonal preparations are completed. Listen to instructions from local officials.

**2 - Hurricane Watch.** Issued 48 hours in advance of a storm and means hurricane conditions with sustained winds of 74mph or higher are likely. Prepare homes & businesses and listen to instructions from local officials.

**3 - Hurricane Warning.** Hurricane Warning. Issued 36 hours in advance of the storm and means hurricane conditions with sustained winds of 74mph or higher are likely. Preparations should be completed. Listen to instructions from local officials.



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## RECEIVE SMS AND EMAIL ALERTS FROM:

### The Royal Bahamas Police Force

- \* Missing / Wanted Persons
- \* Crime Prevention Tips
- \* Traffic Diversions

### Department of Meteorology

- \* Severe weather warnings

### National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)

- \* Emergency Preparedness Tips
- \* Tropical Cyclone Warnings

### Bahamas Information Services (BIS)

- \* National Events
- \* Government Communication

The system will be used in addition to other mechanisms normally employed by agencies for communicating with the public

The Government of the Bahamas is piloting an alert messaging system as part of the Sustainable Nassau initiative, funded with technical assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank. UMS Messaging Systems Americas a recognized alert messaging solution provider offered to conduct the pilot, at no cost, for a limited period ending December 2017.

Due to SMS constraints, persons are encouraged to register an email address to receive more frequent alerts from all of the agencies listed above.

NEMA will also have the ability to use the system to send a daily SMS alert to ALL active cellular subscribers during a hurricane/tropical storm, regardless of pre-registration.



## Hurricane SHELTERS 101

### TIPS: Be Ready Before the Storm

#### What to bring:

- Water -1 gallon per person
- Food
- Clothing and bedding
- Personal items
- Medications
- First-aid supplies
- Important papers
- Miscellaneous items like games, toys, battery powered radios, flashlights, batteries

#### Other tips

- Be ready to set up a home away from home
- Take a shower and eat before leaving home
- Register immediately upon entering the shelter
- Obey shelter rules

See NEMA-Bahamas Facebook Page for Shelter listings or [www.bahamas.gov.bs](http://www.bahamas.gov.bs)

#### Have a Pet?

Contact The Bahamas Humane Society: (242) 325-6742. Emergency: (242) 357-9451, (242) 557-9452

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## Hurricane Tips for Animal Owners

- Contact the nearest animal shelter to arrange for boarding. (Most people shelter do not allow pets.)
- If you stay home, be sure to stock up on your pet's food, water, medications (including tranquilizers), old newspapers (dogs), kitty litter (cats).
- Keep outdoor animals in the utility room or bathroom to limit range.
- If you must leave your animals outside be sure that they have a breakaway collar with a phone contact.
- Release any tied animals. Do not leave animals tied outside.
- If you do not have an I.d. tag, use permanent marker to write your phone contact on collars. This can help reunite you with your pet.
- If your pet goes missing, contact The Bahamas Humane Society with details and a photograph and be sure to follow up.



Before and after the storm, be a responsible pet owner.

- Be sure your pet has adequate food, water, and shelter.
- Have your pet seen by a veterinarian regularly.
- Be sure your pet has an I.d. (available at the BHS).
- Join The Bahamas Humane Society as a member.



The Bahamas Humane Society  
(242) 325-6742  
Emergency CONTACT 357-9451 357-9452

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