

# Initial Report on Hurricane Irma and its Impact on CDEMA Participating States

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September 7, 2017

## Hurricane Irma

Hurricane Irma, a catastrophic Category 5 Hurricane brought life-threatening winds, storm surge and rainfall to the northeastern Caribbean Islands.

As the Hurricane got closer



Figure 1 Aerial photograph of Hurricane Irma (National Hurricane Centre, 2017)

Antigua, Barbuda, Anguilla, Montserrat, St. Kitts & Nevis, Dominica, Turks and Caicos as well as other countries were given Hurricane watch and warnings and all preparations were made. However, as Irma swept over these islands with wind speed of 185 mph (295 km/h) associated with higher gusts and rainfall in excess of 300 mm (Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, 2017) all infrastructures were damaged leaving the populations scared, devastated, without basic necessities and homeless.

## Antigua and Barbuda

*“The devastation is not like we’ve ever seen before – we’re talking about the whole country ... of Barbuda being significantly destroyed.”*

-Michael Joseph, President of the Red Cross in Antigua and Barbuda (The Guardian , 2017)

Barbuda was the first island to experience the wrath of Hurricane Irma on September 6,



Figure 2 Barbuda after Hurricane Irma (The Guardian , 2017)

2017 at 1:47 am ET (Business Insider, 2017). Hurricane Irma caused severe flooding, storm surge that exceeded 4 meters and damaging waves that lead to inundation of the coastline. Barbuda’s roads, hospitals and communication systems have been destroyed (Cable News

Network, 2017). Approximately 95% of the infrastructure has been blown down or knocked over, roofs blown off by wind gusts of 155 mph measured by the available instruments at the local weather stations (before being blown away) and severe flooding left 60% of the islands population homeless. During the hurricane many who remained home had to seek shelter in the last room in the household that was left standing. The estimated damage is at least \$100 Million USD (The Guardian , 2017). It has been reported that a 2-year-old child was killed as a family tried to escape a damaged home during



Figure 3 Antigua after Hurricane Irma (Cable News Network, 2017)

the Hurricane while 3 persons have been injured. On the other hand, Antigua was described to be “totally demolished [with many] have lost their roof” by Gaston Browne, Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister (The Guardian , 2017). With Hurricane Josea in the Atlantic basin slowly approaching, civilians of Barbuda may have to evacuate for their safety.

## Anguilla

Hurricane Irma made landfall in the British territory of Anguilla on September 6, 2017 at 8 a.m. (Business Insider, 2017). ET. At the moment of landfall Hurricane Irma had been registered as a Category 5 hurricane with wind speeds of over 185 mph. It has been reported that there have been major damage to private homes, shelters, hospitals and schools on the island but the tourist resorts have only suffered minor damage (Jamaica Observer, 2017). The Caribbean Disaster

Emergency Management Agency has reported that 90% of the roads are impassable (Jamaica Observer, 2017). Additionally the communication system is completely down. The airport only suffered minor damage but is still closed along with two ports. The Royal Anguilla Police Force has so far reported that only one person has died during the passing of Hurricane Irma.

St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica and Montserrat have survived minimal damage by Hurricane Irma. All airports, schools and other facilities will reopen later this week. Hurricane Irma continues on the projected track as a Category 5 hurricane with weakened wind speed at 175 mph (National Hurricane Centre, 2017). On the other hand, Turks and Caicos, Dominica Republic, Haiti, Bahamas are awaiting the landfall of Hurricane Irma.

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