

# Hurricane puts 10 million in the crosshairs in Florida

August 30 2019, by Adriana Gomez Licon And Ellis Rua

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Lyle Fidgeon boards windows at the Ocean Grill in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. The National Hurricane Center says Dorian could hit the Florida coast as a major hurricane. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

An increasingly alarming Hurricane Dorian menaced a corridor of some

10 million people—and put Walt Disney World and President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in the crosshairs—as it steamed toward Florida on Friday with the potential to become the most powerful storm to hit the state's east coast in nearly 30 years.

Getting scarier with seemingly every update from forecasters, Dorian strengthened into an "extremely dangerous" Category 3 in the afternoon and was expected to become a potentially catastrophic Category 4 with winds of almost 140 mph (225 kph) before blowing ashore late Monday or early Tuesday.

The National Hurricane Center's projected track showed Dorian hitting around Palm Beach County, where Mar-a-Lago is situated, then moving inland over the Orlando area. But because of the difficulty of predicting a storm's course this far out, forecasters cautioned that practically all of Florida, including Miami and Fort Lauderdale, could be in harm's way.

They warned, too, that Dorian was moving more slowly, which could subject the state to a prolonged and destructive pummeling from wind, storm surge and heavy rain.

"This is big and is growing and it still has some time to get worse," Julio Vasquez said at a Miami fast-food joint next to a gas station that had run out of fuel. "No one knows what can really happen. This is serious."



Caydence Galvis, 12, right, helps her mom, Yvonne Galvis fill bags during a sandbag giveaway in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Margate, Fla. (Amy Beth Bennett/South Florida Sun-Sentinel via AP)

Trump declared a state of emergency in Florida and authorized the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster-relief efforts.

As Dorian closed in, it played havoc with people's Labor Day weekend plans. Major airlines began allowing travelers to change their reservations without a fee. The big cruise lines began rerouting their ships. Disney World and the other resorts in Orlando found themselves in the storm's projected path.



Jessica Armesto and her 1-year-old daughter, Mila, had planned to have breakfast with Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy at Disney World. Instead, Armesto decided to take shelter at her mother's hurricane-resistant house in Miami with its kitchen full of nonperishable foods.

"It felt like it was better to be safe than sorry, so we canceled our plans," she said.



Residents of Flagler Beach, Fla., fill sandbags Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, to help protect their homes in preparation for Hurricane Dorian Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. (AP Photo/John Raoux)

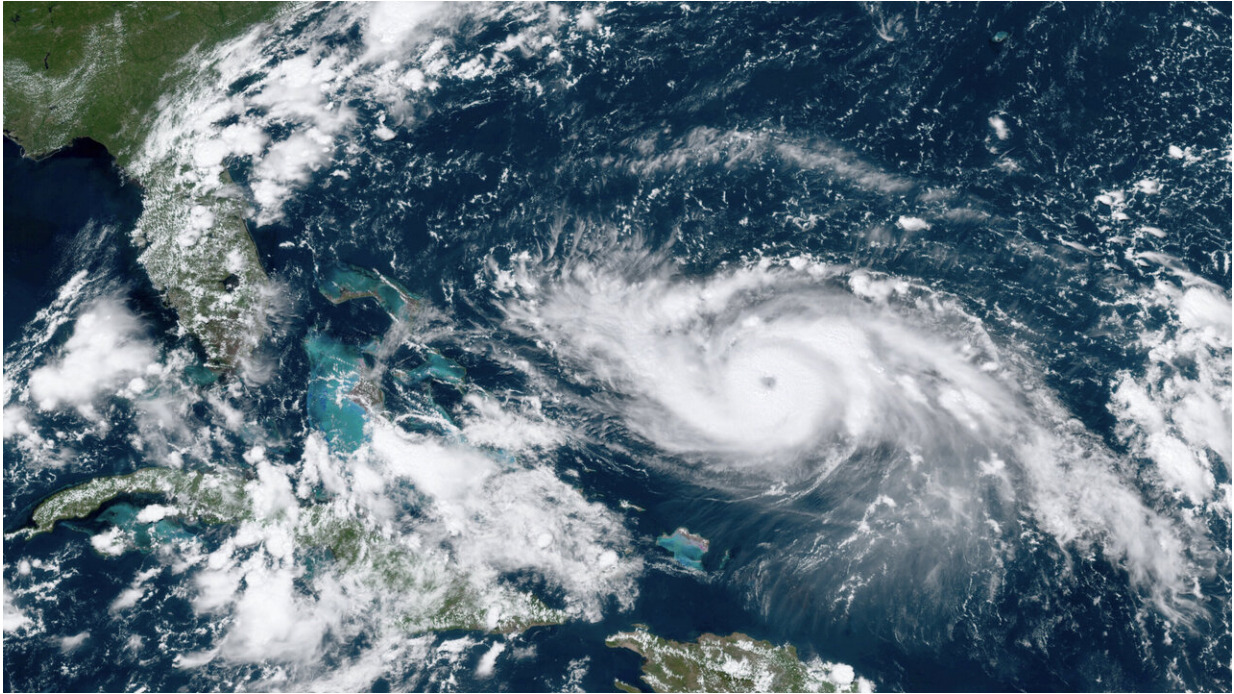


Lisa Vance helps her husband Stephan go up the mast of their sailboat to do a repair in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, at the Vero Beach City Marina in Vero Beach, Fla. The National Hurricane Center says Dorian could hit the Florida coast as a major hurricane early next week. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)





People shop for supplies before the arrival of Hurricane Dorian, in Freeport, Bahamas, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Forecasters say the hurricane is expected to keep on strengthening and become a Category 3 later in the day. (AP Photo/Tim Aylen)



This GOES-16 satellite image taken Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, at 17:20 UTC and provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shows Hurricane Dorian, right, moving over open waters in the Atlantic Ocean. Forecasters are now saying Dorian could be a Category 4 with winds of nearly 140 mph (225 kph) when it is forecasted to hit Florida late Monday or early Tuesday. It's also imperiling the Bahamas, where the storm is expected to hit by Sunday. (NOAA via AP)





Tourist Loren Fantasia from Baltimore, swings on the beach before the arrival of Hurricane Dorian, in Freeport, Bahamas, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Forecasters said the hurricane is expected to keep on strengthening and become a Category 3 later in the day. (AP Photo / Ramon Espinosa)





Workers board up a shop's window front as they make preparations for the arrival of Hurricane Dorian, in Freeport, Bahamas, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019. Forecasters said the hurricane is expected to keep on strengthening and become a Category 3 later in the day. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)



In this Thursday, Aug. 29, 2019 photo, Jessica Armesto holds her one-year-old daughter, Mila's, at their home in Miami. Jessica was hoping that Mila could meet a real-life Minnie Mouse at Disney World before Hurricane Dorian derailed her plans. The U.S. National Hurricane Center says Hurricane Dorian could hit the Florida coast over the weekend as a major hurricane. (AP Photo/Marcus Lim)





Matt Rohrer loads sandbags in the back of his vehicle for his home in preparation for Hurricane Dorian Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Flagler Beach, Fla. (AP Photo/John Raoux)



In this Nov. 24, 2017, file photo shows President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Fla. Trump's prized resort in Florida is potentially sitting directly in the path of Hurricane Dorian, which is forecast to become an extremely destructive storm. The resort, which is currently closed for the summer, is on the wealthy barrier island of Palm Beach. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon, File)

Still, with Dorian days away and its track uncertain, Disney and other major resorts held off announcing any closings, and Florida authorities ordered no immediate mass evacuations.

"Sometimes if you evacuate too soon, you may evacuate into the path of the storm if it changes," Gov. Ron DeSantis said.



Homeowners and businesses rushed to cover their windows with plywood. Supermarkets ran out of bottled water, and long lines formed at gas stations, with fuel shortages reported in places. The governor said the Florida Highway Patrol would begin escorting fuel trucks to help them get past the lines of waiting motorists and replenish gas stations.

At a Publix supermarket in Cocoa Beach, Ed Ciecirski of the customer service department said the pharmacy was extra busy with people rushing to fill prescriptions. The grocery was rationing bottled water and had run out of dry ice.



A resident fills bags during a sandbag giveaway in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Margate, Fla. (Amy Beth Bennett/South Florida Sun-Sentinel via AP)

"It's hairy," he said.

As of 2 p.m. EDT, Dorian was centered about 625 miles (1,005 kilometers) east of West Palm Beach with winds of 115 mph (185 kph) and was moving northwest at a slowed-down 10 mph (17 kph).

Dorian could prove to be the strongest hurricane to hit Florida's Atlantic Coast since Andrew, a Category 5 that obliterated thousands of homes south of Miami with winds topping 165 mph (266 kph) in 1992.

An estimated 10 million people live in the 13 Florida counties with the highest likelihood of seeing hurricane-force winds from Dorian by Wednesday morning. After passing through Florida, it is expected to rake the Southeast coast through the Carolinas.





Rich DiGiulio removes an awning from the Mulligans Beach House Bar & Grill in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Vero Beach, Fla. The National Hurricane Center says Dorian could hit the Florida coast as a major hurricane. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

Coastal areas could get 6 to 12 inches (15 to 30 centimeters) of rain, with 18 inches (46 centimeters) in some places, triggering life-threatening flash floods, the hurricane center said. FEMA official Jeff Byard said Dorian is likely to "create a lot of havoc" for roads, power and other infrastructure.

Also imperiled were the Bahamas , where canned food and bottled water were disappearing quickly and the sound of hammering echoed across the islands as people boarded up their homes. Dorian was expected to hit by Sunday with the potential for life-threatening [storm surge](#) that could raise water levels 15 feet above normal.

"Do not be foolish and try to brave out this hurricane," Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said. "The price you may pay for not evacuating is your life."

Florida's governor urged nursing homes to take precautions to prevent tragedies like the one during Hurricane Irma two years ago, when the storm knocked out the air conditioning at a facility in Hollywood and 12 patients died in the sweltering heat. Four employees of the home were charged with manslaughter earlier this week.



Workers cover stained glass windows with plywood sections at the Santa Maria del Mar Catholic Church in preparation for Hurricane Dorian, Friday, Aug. 30, 2019, in Flagler Beach, Fla. (AP Photo/John Raoux)

DeSantis said the timely message from those arrests is: "It's your responsibility to make sure you have a plan in place to protect those folks."

At NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, NASA moved a 380-foot-high mobile launch platform to the safety of the colossal Vehicle Assembly Building, built to withstand 125 mph (200 kph) wind. The launcher is for the mega rocket that NASA is developing to take astronauts to the moon.



The hurricane season typically peaks between mid-August and late October. One of the most powerful storms ever to hit the U.S. was on Labor Day 1935. The unnamed Category 5 hurricane crashed ashore along Florida's Gulf Coast on Sept. 2. It was blamed for over 400 deaths.

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