

Strengthening Hurricane Fiona heads north toward Bermuda

September 21 2022



A man stands outside his house in the aftermath of Hurricane Fiona in El Seibo, Dominican Republic.

Hurricane Fiona continued its slow and devastating march northward after slamming the Turks and Caicos Islands on Tuesday and leaving a

trail of destruction in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

The US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said Wednesday morning that the storm had grown stronger, registering maximum wind speeds of 130 miles per hour (210 kilometers per hour) as it barreled toward Bermuda.

The NHC said Fiona was 105 miles (170 kilometers) north of Turks and Caicos and had been upgraded to a Category 4 hurricane, the second highest level on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

"Swells from Fiona are expected to reach Bermuda by early Thursday. The swells could cause life-threatening surf and rip current conditions," the NHC said in its latest advisory.

At least five people have died as the storm churned across the Caribbean—one in the French overseas department of Guadeloupe and two each in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

"Hurricane Fiona has proven to be an unpredictable storm," Anya Williams, the deputy governor of Turks and Caicos, said in a broadcast.

Williams said no casualties or serious injuries had been reported in Turks and Caicos, but she urged residents to continue to shelter in place.



A young person rides his bicycle in Nagua, Dominican Republic.

Blackouts were reported on Grand Turk and several other islands in the archipelago and 165 people were admitted to shelters, she said, adding that Britain's Royal Navy and the US Coast Guard are standing by to provide assistance.

Dominican Republic President Luis Abinader has declared three eastern provinces to be disaster zones: La Altagracia—home to the popular resort of Punta Cana—El Seibo and Hato Mayor.

Authorities said Tuesday that more than 10,000 people had been moved to "safe areas," while about 400,000 are without electricity.

Footage from local media showed residents of the east coast town of Higüey waist-deep in water trying to salvage personal belongings.

"It came through at high speed," Vicente Lopez told AFP in Punta Cana, bemoaning the destroyed businesses in the area.



This undated handout photo shows members of the National Guard providing hurricane assistance in Puerto Rico.

'I have food and water'

US President Joe Biden has declared a state of emergency in Puerto Rico and dispatched the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

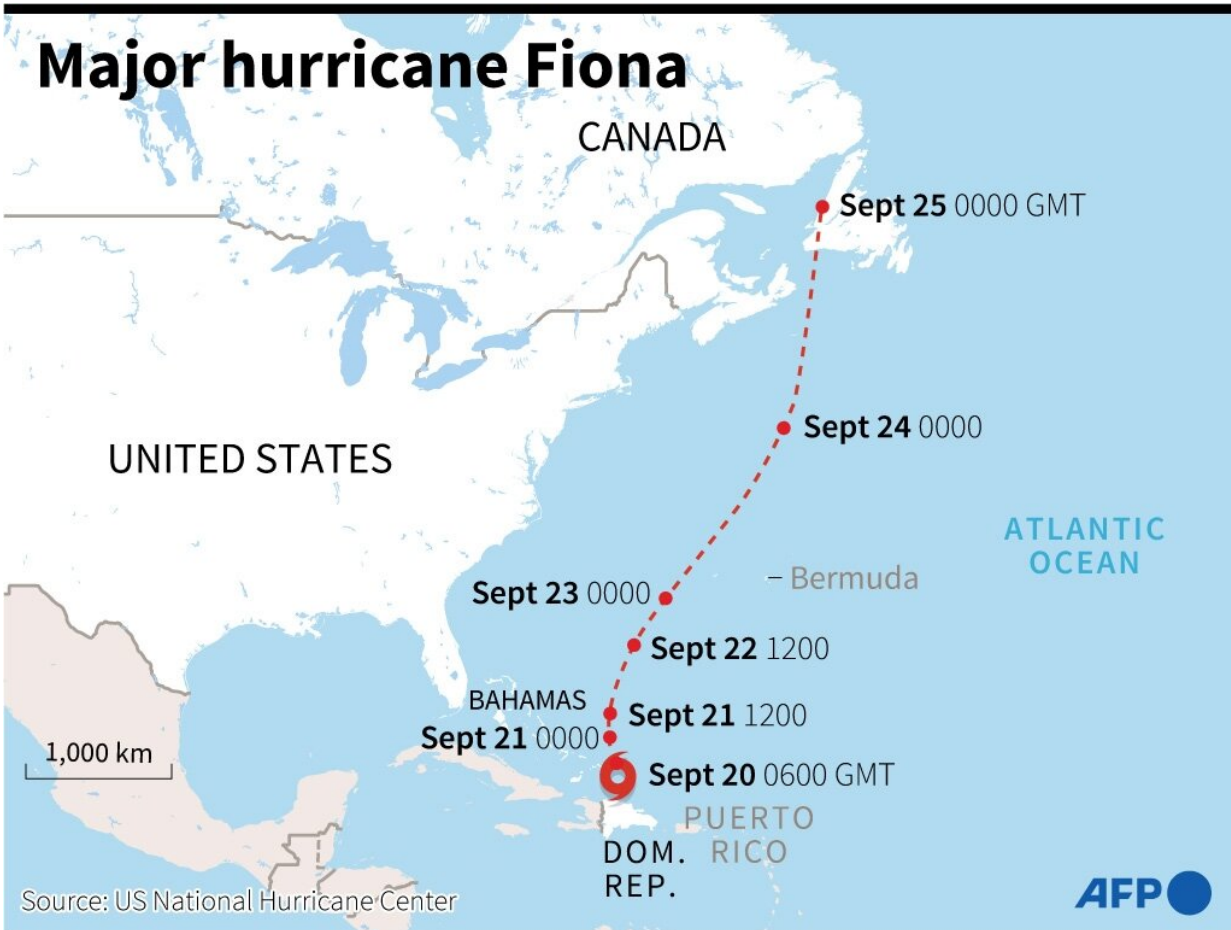
to the island, which is still struggling to recover from Hurricane Maria five years ago.

"We're sending hundreds of additional personnel to support all affected communities," FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell said Tuesday after a tour with Pedro Pierluisi, the island's governor.

Pierluisi said the storm had caused catastrophic damage on the island of three million people since Sunday, with some areas receiving more than 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain.

Michelle Carlo, medical advisor for Direct Relief in Puerto Rico, told CBS News that "a lot of people in Puerto Rico are suffering right now."

"About 80 percent of Puerto Ricans are still without power and about 65 percent are without water service," Carlo said.



Map showing the projected path of Hurricane Fiona.

Across Puerto Rico, Fiona caused landslides, blocked roads and toppled trees, [power lines](#) and bridges, Pierluisi said.

A man was killed as an indirect result of the power blackout—burned to death while trying to fill his generator, according to authorities.

On Monday afternoon, Nelly Marrero made her way back to her home in Toa Baja, in the north of Puerto Rico, to clear out the mud that surged inside after she evacuated.

"Thanks to God, I have food and water," Marrero—who lost everything when Hurricane Maria hit—told AFP by telephone.

The latest storm has left around 800,000 people without drinking water as a result of power outages and flooded rivers, officials said.

After years of financial woes and recession, Puerto Rico in 2017 declared the largest bankruptcy ever by a local US administration.



A damaged restaurant located after the passage of Hurricane Fiona in Samana, Dominican Republic.

Later that year, the double hit from hurricanes Irma and Maria added to

the misery, devastating the [electrical grid](#) on the island—which has suffered from major infrastructure problems for years.

The grid was privatized in June 2021 in an effort to resolve the problem of blackouts, but the issue has persisted, and the entire island lost power earlier this year.

© 2022 AFP

Citation: Strengthening Hurricane Fiona heads north toward Bermuda (2022, September 21) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-09-hurricane-fiona-north-bermuda.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.