

Evacuations begin in Bahamas as Category 4 Dorian bears down

August 31 2019, by Tim Ayles



A woman carries a girl in her arms after being evacuated from a nearby Cay due to the danger of floods after arrive on a ship at the port before the arrival of Hurricane Dorian in Sweeting's Cay, Grand Bahama, Bahamas, Saturday Aug. 31, 2019. Dorian bore down on the Bahamas as a fierce Category 4 storm Saturday, with new projections showing it curving upward enough to potentially spare Florida a direct hit but still threatening parts of the Southeast U.S. with powerful winds and rising ocean water that causes what can be deadly flooding. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

Hurricane Dorian shut down most major resorts in the Bahamas and forced authorities to evacuate much of the northern shore and low-lying islands Saturday as the fierce Category 4 storm prepared to unleash torrents of rain but was projected to spin farther away from the coast of the Southeast U.S. next week.

Forecasters expect Dorian, which packed 150 mph (240 kph) winds, to hit the northwestern part of the Bahamas on Sunday before curving upward. The [storm](#)'s slow march north could spare a direct hit in the U.S. but still threatens Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas with powerful winds and rising [ocean water](#) that causes potentially deadly flooding.

In the Bahamas, any remaining tourists were sent to government shelters in schools, churches and other buildings offering protection from the storm.

"My home is all battened up, and I'm preparing right now to leave in a couple of minutes. ... We're not taking no chances," said Margaret Bassett, 55, a ferry boat driver for the Deep Water Cay resort who chose to leave her home. "They said evacuate, you have to evacuate. It's for the best interests of the people."

Over two or three days, the hurricane could dump as much as 4 feet (1 meter) of rain, unleash high winds and whip up an abnormal rise in sea level called [storm surge](#), according to private meteorologist Ryan Maue and some of the most reliable computer models.



A woman carries a girl in her arms after being evacuated from a nearby Cay due to the danger of floods after arrive on a ship at the port before the arrival of Hurricane Dorian in Sweeting's Cay, Grand Bahama, Bahamas, Saturday Aug. 31, 2019. Dorian bore down on the Bahamas as a fierce Category 4 storm Saturday, with new projections showing it curving upward enough to potentially spare Florida a direct hit but still threatening parts of the Southeast U.S. with powerful winds and rising ocean water that causes what can be deadly flooding. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

Bahamas Prime Minister Hubert Minnis warned in a nationally televised briefing that "Hurricane Dorian is a devastating, dangerous storm approaching our islands."

Small skiffs rented by Bahamas authorities ran back and forth between outlying fishing communities and McLean's Town, a settlement of a few

dozen homes on the eastern end of Grand Bahama, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) from Florida's Atlantic coast.

Most were coming from Sweeting Cay, a fishing town of a few hundred people that sits about 5 feet (1.5 meters) above sea level and was expected to be left completely underwater by storm surge.

Still, a few fishermen planned to ride it out, which could put them in extreme danger.

"Hoping for the best, that the storm passes and everybody is safe until we return home," fisherman Tyrone Mitchell said. "All the ladies and children evacuated, and we have about six or seven men that (will) ride out the storm."



A child evacuated from a nearby Cay due to the danger of floods drags his suitcase when he arrives on a ship at the port before the arrival of Hurricane Dorian in Sweeting's Cay, Grand Bahama, Bahamas, Saturday Aug. 31, 2019. Dorian bore down on the Bahamas as a fierce Category 4 storm Saturday, with new projections showing it curving upward enough to potentially spare Florida a direct hit but still threatening parts of the Southeast U.S. with powerful winds and rising ocean water that causes what can be deadly flooding. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

The Bahamas on average faces a direct hit from a hurricane every four years. One Category 5 hurricane and seven Category 4 hurricanes have struck the Bahamas since storms were first recorded in 1851.

Construction codes require homes to have metal reinforcements for roof beams to withstand winds into the upper limits of a Category 4 hurricane, and compliance is generally tight for residents who can afford it. Poorer communities typically have wooden homes and are generally lower-lying, placing them at tremendous risk.

After walloping the islands, forecasters said the ever-strengthening Dorian was expected to dance up the Southeast coastline, staying just off the shores of Florida and Georgia on Tuesday and Wednesday before skirting South Carolina and North Carolina on Thursday.

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster declared a state of emergency Saturday, mobilizing state resources to prepare for the possibility the storm could still make landfall. Trump already declared a state of emergency in Florida and authorized the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster-relief efforts.

The National Hurricane Center in Miami said the risk of strong winds

and rising water will increase along the shores of Georgia and the Carolinas by the middle of next week.



A beachgoer runs under the rain at the Hollywood Beach Boardwalk on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019 Hollywood, Fla. The latest forecast says Hurricane Dorian is expected to stay just off shore of Florida and skirt the coast of Georgia, with the possibility of landfall still a threat on Wednesday, and then continuing up to South Carolina early Thursday. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)

The center also stressed that Dorian could still hit Florida. But after days of a forecast that put the state in the center of expected landfalls, the storm's turn northeast is significant.

Carmen Segura, 32, said she had installed hurricane shutters at her house in Miami, bought extra gas and secured water and food for at least three days. She feels well prepared and less worried given the latest forecasts but still a bit uneasy given how unpredictable the storm's expected path has been.

"Part of me still feels like: So, now what?" she said.

Millions of people in Florida have been in the changing potential path of the hurricane, and Gov. Ron DeSantis warned them not to let their guard down.

"Looking at these forecasts, a bump in one direction or the other could have really significant ramifications in terms of impact. If it bumps further east, that obviously is positive. If it bumps just a little west, than you're looking at really, really significant impacts," DeSantis said.



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)



People line up to buy water at a store 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)



Gold Coast Crane workers and Dania Beach lifeguards remove the lifeguard tower in preparation for Hurricane Dorian as the storm approaches the Florida coast on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019 at Dania Beach, Fla. The latest forecast says Hurricane Dorian is expected to stay just off shore of Florida and skirt the coast of Georgia, with the possibility of landfall still a threat on Wednesday, and then continuing up to South Carolina early Thursday. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



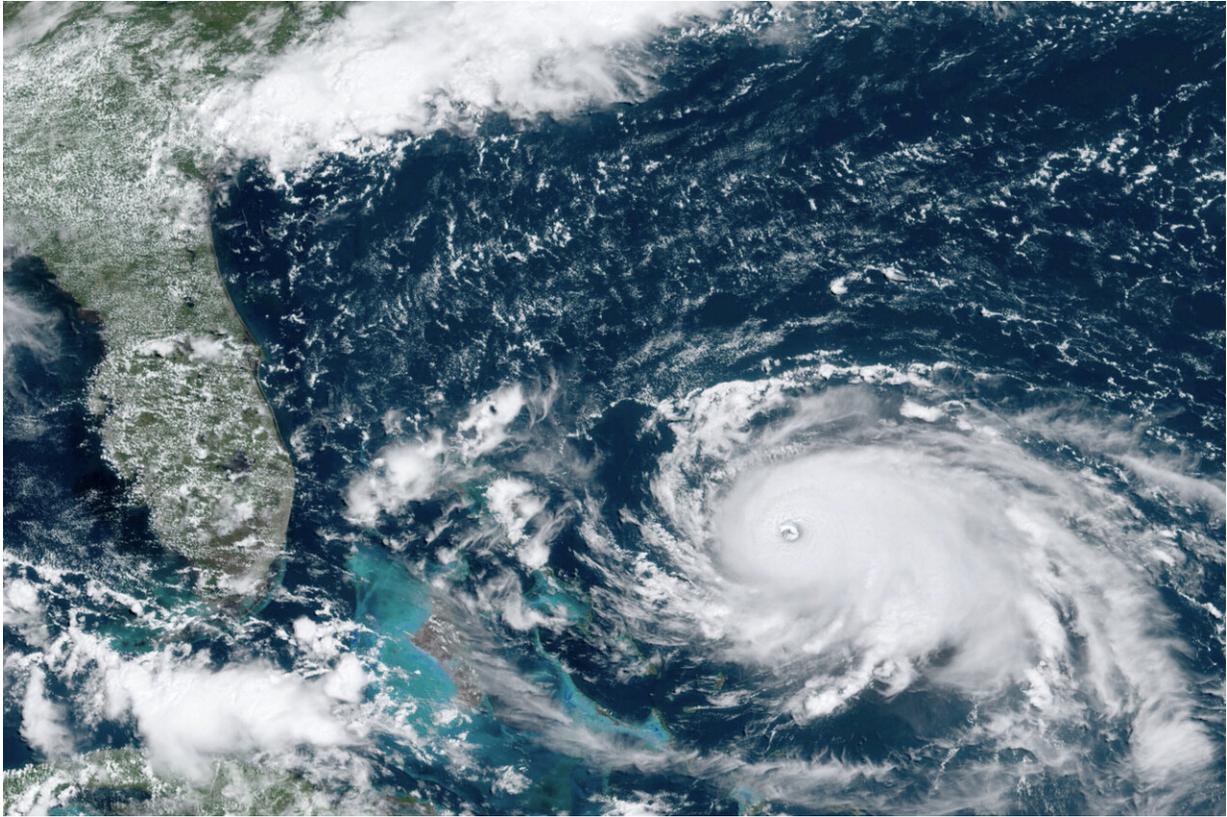
A boy plays on the beach as a No Swimming flag flies, Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019, in Lake Worth, Fla. Hurricane Dorian is bearing down on the northwestern Bahamas as a Category 4 storm. Forecasters say Dorian is then expected to go up the Southeast coastline. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)



A group of people fish at Dania Beach Pier on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019 at Dania Beach, Fla. The latest forecast says Hurricane Dorian is expected to stay just off shore of Florida and skirt the coast of Georgia, with the possibility of landfall still a threat on Wednesday, and then continuing up to South Carolina early Thursday. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



Workers Elmer Ramos, right, and Mariano Arzayus put plywood over the windows of the Yogurt Ur Way Cafe in preparation for Hurricane Dorian as the storm approaches the Florida coast on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019 at Hollywood, Fla. The latest forecast says Hurricane Dorian is expected to stay just off shore of Florida and skirt the coast of Georgia, with the possibility of landfall still a threat on Wednesday, and then continuing up to South Carolina early Thursday. (David Santiago/Miami Herald via AP)



This GOES-16 satellite image taken Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019, at 16:00 UTC and provided by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), shows Hurricane Dorian, right, churning over the Atlantic Ocean. Hurricane Dorian bore down on the Bahamas as a fierce Category 4 storm Saturday, with new projections showing it curving upward enough to potentially spare Florida a direct hit but still threatening parts of the Southeast U.S. with powerful winds and rising ocean water that causes what can be deadly flooding.(NOAA via AP)

Maue, the meteorologist, said that though "the worst effects of a direct landfall are not in the forecast," "it's going to be pretty scary because you're going to have this gigantic [hurricane](#) sitting off the coast of Florida, and it's not going to move."

The storm upended Labor Day weekend plans. Major airlines began

allowing travelers to change their reservations without fees. The big cruise lines began rerouting their ships.

Disney World and Orlando's other resorts faced a potential risk, but they held off announcing any closings with Dorian days away and its track uncertain. Florida authorities also have not ordered immediate mass evacuations.

But some counties told residents of barrier islands, mobile homes and low-lying areas to flee beginning Sunday—though those orders could change.

Dorian was centered 415 miles (670 kilometers) east of West Palm Beach and was moving northwest at 8 mph (13 kph).



A man surfs along Lake Worth beach, Saturday, Aug. 31, 2019, in Lake Worth, Fla. Hurricane Dorian is bearing down on the northwestern Bahamas as a Category 4 storm. Forecasters say Dorian is then expected to go up the Southeast coastline. (AP Photo/Lynne Sladky)

In the Bahamas, canned food and bottled water disappeared quickly from shelves and people boarded up their homes.

"We ask for God's guidance and for God to assist us through this," Minnis said.

© 2019 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Evacuations begin in Bahamas as Category 4 Dorian bears down (2019, August 31) retrieved 20 September 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2019-08-evacuations-bahamas-category-dorian.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.