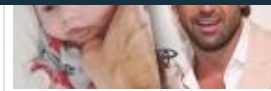


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Latin America

Hurricane Maria Hammers Puerto Rico, Leaves Massive Floods, No Electricity



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By [Maria G. Valdez](#) | Sep 20 2017, 08:30PM EDT



An Inhabitant of the Puerto Nuevo neighborhood walks through flood water during the passage of Hurricane Maria, in the neighborhood Puerto Nuevo, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on September 20, 2017. Maria slammed into Puerto Rico on Wednesday, cutting power on most of the US territory as terrified residents hunkered down in the face of the island's worst storm in living memory. After leaving a deadly trail of destruction on a string of smaller Caribbean islands, Maria made landfall on Puerto Rico's southeast coast around daybreak, packing winds of around 150mph (240kph). HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP/Getty Images

Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico on Wednesday morning as a Category 4 storm with maximum sustained winds of 155 mph. Although at 5 p.m. ET, Maria had weakened significantly to a Category 2 storm with maximum sustained winds of 110 mph, it left a trail of devastation in the island, ripping roofs off buildings, filling homes with water, and knocking out power to the entire population.

"Definitely Puerto Rico — when we can get outside — we will find our island destroyed," Puerto Rico's emergency management director, **Abner Gomez**, [said at a midday news conference](#), adding that 100 percent of the island is without electricity. "The information we have received is not encouraging. It's a system that has destroyed everything it has had in its path."

The storm also ripped trees out of the ground and caused widespread flooding. "This is total devastation," said **Carlos Mercader**, a spokesman for Puerto Rico's governor. "Puerto Rico, in terms of the infrastructure, will not be the same. ... This is something of historic proportions."

Much of the island remained under a hurricane warning late Wednesday afternoon as Maria churned just 25 miles off the northeastern coast. "The wind threat has decreased," the National Hurricane Center said, but the threat of rain-gorged floods remains "devastating to catastrophic," it said. Airports in San Juan, Aguadilla and Ponce were ordered closed until Friday at the earliest because of flooding and debris, authorities said.


"This is just the beginning," **Governor Ricardo Rosselló** said in an interview with [El Nuevo Día](#), the largest daily newspaper in Puerto Rico. "We know there are severe damages along different rivers and reservoirs, and water has overflowed from riverbanks, causing flooding," he added.




Ricardo Rossello 
@ricardorossello 



El peligro continúa - hay aviso de INUNDACIONES para TODO Puerto Rico. Permanezcan en lugares seguros.

7:18 PM - Sep 20, 2017

 270  312 people are talking about this 




Rosselló also announced a 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew effective Wednesday until Saturday. "We find ourselves in a critical phase to help the thousands of Puerto Ricans who urgently need help and to determine the serious damages caused by Hurricane Maria," he [said in a statement](#).



Ricardo Rossello 
@ricardorossello 

Mantener el orden resulta fundamental para que autoridades puedan ejecutar apropiadamente. Por tanto, ordeno Toque de Queda efectivo hoy 6pm

7:56 PM - Sep 20, 2017

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La Orden Ejecutiva dispone las siguientes excepciones:

- Personal de los gobiernos estatal y federal que estén dedicados a tareas de recuperación y auxilio de ciudadanos.
- Personal de las agencias de seguridad federales y estatales.
- Profesionales de la salud y empleados de hospitales que laboren en el horario del Toque de Queda.
- Miembros de la Prensa y aquellos ciudadanos que se encuentren atendiendo una situación de emergencia.



Ricardo Rossello ✓
@ricardorossello



El [#ToqueDeQueda](#) será de 6pm a 6am, desde hoy miércoles hasta el sábado a las 6am. Las excepciones se detallan en declaraciones emitidas.

8:07 PM - Sep 20, 2017

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Intense flooding was reported across the territory, particularly in San Juan, the capital, where many residential streets looked like rivers. The authorities warned weary residents not to let down their guard, because flash flooding and mudslides could be more deadly than the initial winds from the storm, [now a Category 2](#) system.

Maria [was a Category 5 hurricane](#) — the strongest there is — when it [hit the Caribbean](#) on Monday night, killing at least seven people on the island of Dominica and one person on Guadeloupe. At least two people were injured. The Prime Minister of Dominica, **Roosevelt Skerrit**, reported "[widespread devastation,](#)" [including damages to his own house, which was shredded by the storm.](#)



Roosevelt Skerrit ✓
about 5 months ago



My roof is gone. I am at the complete mercy of the hurricane. House is flooding.

👍 738 💬 707 ➦ 3.6K

Hartley Henry, a senior adviser to Prime Minister Skerrit, said Wednesday that authorities on the island were only now getting a good picture of the destruction left in Maria's wake. "Until late last night, there was no means of

accessing, or even communicating with, Dominicans," [Hartley said](#).


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With daylight, he said, authorities found "tremendous loss of housing and public buildings," including severe damage to the island's main hospital, where "patient care has been compromised." In Dominica there's no electricity or running water, and landline and cellphone services have been compromised. "In summary, the island has been devastated," Hartley added.



Roosevelt Skerit 
about 5 months ago 

Initial reports are of widespread devastation. So far we have lost all what money can buy and replace. My greatest fear for the morning is that we will wake to news of serious physical injury and possible deaths as a result of likely landslides triggered by persistent rains.

So, far the winds have swept away the roofs of almost every person I have spoken to or otherwise made contact with. The roof to my own official residence was among the first to go and this apparently trig... [See More](#)

 3.7K  1.7K  8.2K

As the storm continued on its northwestward path, tropical storm conditions were expected to begin on the southern coast of the Dominican Republic Wednesday afternoon, worsening into hurricane conditions. The storm would move on to the Turks and Caicos Islands and to the southeastern Bahamas Thursday morning, forecasters said.

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Maria G. Valdez



Maria was born and raised in Dominican Republic, where she began her career in journalism covering human interest stories, entertainment, beauty and wellness for a national magazine. She moved to New York City to study Musical Theatre, but went back to journalism after graduating in an attempt of becoming the Latina Carrie Bradshaw. She has an unhealthy obsession with JLo and claims to be Sofia Vergara's long-lost daughter, and has tried a crazy amount of treatments to keep looking young. She became a Zumba instructor for fun.

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