

# Puerto Rico Continues to Struggle After Hurricane Maria

Volunteers have been preparing and transporting supplies for those affected by Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. (Carlos Giusti/AP)

Despite assistance from the U.S. military, the island is still in desperate need after the storm caused mass destruction.

Almost two weeks after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico as a Category 4 storm, the U.S. troops have arrived on the island and a three-star general is in command, but the situation is still dire for U.S. citizens there, with limited electricity, water, fuel, and food. Vital medications and cash are also hard to come by, and hospitals and food banks are beginning to run low on supplies.

Hundreds of containers with badly-needed supplies, however, are sitting in the port of San Juan because there aren't enough truck drivers to deliver the goods, according to CNN. At the same time, limited fuel and debris-covered roadways would make driving to some parts of the island almost impossible, and very dangerous.

Following the hurricane, there has been widespread criticism of President Donald Trump and his administration's slow response.

"It's not nearly as fast as any of us want," John Rabin, acting regional administrator for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said at a press conference, CNN reported. Rabin describes the damage on the island as "catastrophic."

The president assigned Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Buchanan earlier this week to spearhead recovery efforts. There are more than 10,000 federal workers in Puerto Rico from dozens of federal departments and agencies. FEMA reported it reached all 78 of the island's municipalities and has delivered one million meals and two million liters of water to 11 distribution centers on the island, according to CNN.

However, Puerto Rican officials tell a different story.

Betito Marquez, the mayor of Toa Baja, an impoverished town near San Juan went

to a FEMA distribution center Friday afternoon only to find it closed. He was unable to pick up supplies. Carlos Mendez, the mayor of Aguadilla, told CNN he drives back and forth across the island — two hours each way — to pick up supplies from FEMA in San Juan.

“They’re not coming here, I’m going there,” Mendez said.

President Trump dismisses problems in his administration’s response as “Fake News,” and tweeted that the people Puerto Rico should “not believe the #FakeNews.” He asserts he is working with officials to “help the people of Puerto Rico in every way.”

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