

Caribbean – Hurricane Beryl

ETC Situation Report #01

Reporting period: 01/07/2024 to 04/07/2024

Hurricane Beryl—the strongest hurricane in the history of the Atlantic in the month of June—formed on 30 June as a Category-4 hurricane and swept across the Caribbean, impacting multiple island nations. The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is leading coordinated efforts, supported by National Emergency Management Coordinators, for the response which commenced with initial rapid needs assessments on 02 July. The ETC is coordinating with its partners globally and on the ground to assess and respond to ICT needs, through CDEMA.

Highlights

- The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is leading coordinated efforts, supported by National Emergency Management Coordinators—to response to the impact of Hurricane Beryl—commencing with initial rapid needs assessments on 02 July
- An inter-agency ICT coordinator deployed to Bridgetown, Barbados on 03 July and is expected to arrive to Saint Vincent on 05 July, to initiate coordination of ICT local actors and partners in the provision of shared communications services in support of CDEMA and the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs).
- Several global ETC partners, including the Government of Luxembourg and Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF) are mobilising personnel and ICT equipment in the most affected areas—following the impact of Hurricane Beryl—and in support of United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) efforts. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU)-led Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM) was activated to support responders with near real-time information on telecommunications connectivity status in Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



People walk through flooding from seawater after Hurricane Beryl passes in the parish of Saint James, near Bridgetown, Barbados, July 1, 2024. Photo: Chandan Khanna, AFP

Situation overview

Hurricane Beryl—the strongest hurricane in the history of the Atlantic in the month of June—formed on 30 June as a Category-4 hurricane and swept through the south-east Caribbean from the early hours of 01 July. Hurricane Beryl caused widespread damage, destruction, power outages and disruption to water supplies and telecommunications. After hitting Barbados with high winds and storm surge, on 01 July, the hurricane continued its path, causing further damage to Saint Lucia, and, more extensively, to Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. On 03 July Hurricane Beryl hit Jamaica as a deadly Category 5

storm, bringing over 12 hours of rain and extensive damage to infrastructure. As of 04 July, Hurricane Beryl is now moving through the western Caribbean with potentially devastating impact on the Cayman Islands.

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Telecommunications overview

Hurricane Beryl caused widespread damage, destruction, power outages and disruption to water supplies and telecommunications. The two major Caribbean region Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)—Digicel and Flow—who offer telecommunications services across the island nations were impacted in selected locations, causing connectivity downtime. Rapid assessments are ongoing to determine the areas which need priority focus for repairs to restore connectivity.

Activities

Coordination

Following the request from WFP Caribbean Multi Country Office (MCO) on 29 June for preparedness stand-by personnel in the region for the hurricane season and the expected landfall of Hurricane Beryl, the Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) deployed an inter-agency ICT coordinator, who arrived in Bridgetown, Barbados on 03 July. The ICT coordinator is expected to further deployed to St Vincent on 05 July to undertake initial rapid ICT needs assessments.

The ICT coordinator is engaging closely with CDEMA and the National Disaster Management Offices (NDMOs) of impacted islands to best support their response to Hurricane Beryl, initiate coordination with all local actors and other mobilising partners. Since his arrival, the ICT coordinator has initiated contact with CDEMA, UNDAC and global ETC partners being mobilized, and started initial ICT assessments.

Partners mobilization

United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)

UNDAC is mobilizing two teams: one to Barbados, to support Grenada and Saint Vincent & the Grenadines (six people), and one to Jamaica (10 people) to conduct initial rapid assessments to determine response needs.

emergency.lu / Government of Luxembourg

The Government of Luxembourg is mobilizing a team of two personnel with emergency.lu satellite communications equipment to support one of the UNDAC teams—tentatively arriving first in Barbados.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Since the alert of Hurricane Beryl, ITU has started collecting baseline data on the DCM. The campaign to collect near real time information on connectivity in the islands of St Vincent and the Grenadines, Grenada and Jamaica was requested on 04 July after confirmation of locations most impacted to date. The information will be shared with all CDEMA, NDMOs and partners deploying and will inform the ICT collective plan in the region.

Telecoms Sans Frontieres (TSF)

TSF has mobilised a team to Barbados to support the response in Grenada. A second team is on stand-by ready to support the UNDAC deployment to Jamaica.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP Caribbean MCO had prepositioned teams in Saint Lucia and Grenada prior to Hurricane Beryl making landfall. On 04 July, WFP Supply Chain team deployed to Carriacou (Hillsborough) by boat to undertake initial assessments for food assistance and logistical needs. The team will also relay information on any communications gaps.

In addition, **Ericsson Response** is on stand-by to support with personnel and networking equipment to extend access to safe internet services where needed.

Funding

The ICT Coordinator mission is supported on a no-regret basis by the Global ETC team. Global ETC partners have expressed readiness to deploy and provide in-kind support as needed.

A Flash Appeal is being drafted to cater for the collective humanitarian response to Hurricane Beryl's impact in Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Expected challenges

Islands that have severely been impacted are expected to experience damages to the telecommunications infrastructure and services as well as to the power grid.

As Hurricane Beryl passed through several islands and nations, responders will experience challenges in reaching all the impacted islands rapidly and will face logistical constraints due to the damages or debris on the national roads.

Contacts

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All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website:

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/caribbean-hurricane-beryl> For more information

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