

Puerto Rico is officially named the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States and the inhabitants of this island have been citizens of the United States since 1917. A poll taken in 2017 reported that approximately 59% of the US population did not know that Puerto Ricans are US citizens. Puerto Rico is not a state, so they do not have Senators. They have a non-voting member in the house of representatives. During elections they are allowed to vote in primaries but cannot vote in the general elections. Puerto Rico is 74 billion dollars in debt and has an extremely impoverished population.

Almost a year and a half ago on August 25th 2017 hurricane Harvey was a category 4 hurricane which made landfall in Texas. Harvey stalled near the coastline, dropping torrential and unprecedented amounts of rainfall. Houston was particularly hard hit and recorded 50 inches of rain. Harvey inflicted damages estimated at \$125 billion dollars. Emergency response was rapid and well publicized in the media and social networks.

12 days later on September 6th Hurricane Irma. Irma was a massive, catastrophic storm. It was classified as a Category 5 hurricane. Class 5 hurricanes have sustained winds of greater than 157mph. Irma had sustained winds of 185 mph for 37 hours as it traveled through the Atlantic ocean. It is the strongest storm on record to exist in the open Atlantic.

Hurricane Irma passed 60 miles north of Puerto Rico. However, Irma caused significant damage to Puerto Rico. Sustained winds of 110mph and waves of 30 feet in height pummeled the island. Homes were destroyed and power to approximately 1million people was lost. Relief efforts of money and supplies were in short supply due to the huge response to Hurricane Harvey 12 days earlier. FEMA's Caribbean Distribution Center warehouse, its only emergency stockpile in the Caribbean, is located on Puerto Rico. They sent out 90% of the water,

food and emergency supplies along with all of the tarps and cots to the U.S. Virgin Islands which received a direct hit from Irma.

14 days later Hurricane Maria made a direct hit on Puerto Rico. Maria arrived before emergency supplies could be replenished. Maria made landfall as a category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of 155mph. 2mph below a category 5 hurricane. Puerto Rico is roughly in the shape of a rectangle. It is 110 miles long by 40 miles wide. When Maria hit, it had an eye of 32 miles wide and hurricane force winds 120 miles wide. As it traveled across the island it almost perfectly bisected it. It damaging or destroying everything in its path. They received over 3 feet of rain. Fearing dam failure they were forced to release massive amounts of water. Some residential areas below the dam were flooded with 15 feet of water.

Maria completely destroyed the islands power grid and knocked down 85% of the powerlines and poles, leaving all 3.4 million residents without electricity many for months. Ninety-five percent of cell networks were down. All of the islands roads were destroyed, damaged or covered with debris. The combination of these issues resulted in no way to communicate with the islanders on where and how to obtain supplies. Along with all of the structural damage, what was once a lush green tropical island, had most of its leaves and needles stripped from the trees leaving it brown and barren.

The island was devastated.