

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Virgin Islanders Living In Houston Ask For Prayer As Hurricane Harvey Continues Deluge On City

Weather Updates / **Published On August 29, 2017 08:43 PM /**

Staff **August 29, 2017**



Houston, Texas, deluged by Hurricane Harvey after it made landfall and was downgraded to a tropical storm, is still expecting more rain, with the storm projected to leave the city, the fourth largest in the U.S., later this week.

The storm's full damage so far has yet to be estimated, but officials said about 30,000 people would seek emergency shelter, and 450,000 are likely to seek federal aid.

Among them are some U.S. Virgin Islanders who over the years have relocated to Houston and other parts of Texas. Today, one such person, Denise Williams from St. Croix, wrote to The Consortium, asking that Virgin Islanders still living in the territory and

those spread about the world pray for their fellowmen currently stricken by Harvey, which continues to batter Houston with rain.

"I am writing you because myself as well as thousands of Virgin Islanders reside all over the city of Houston. We need prayer badly. There's flooding in areas of Houston that have never been flooded before. The torrential rainfall is causing more and more areas to flood and its getting even more desperate out here. We are doing the best we can to make sure everyone is safe and by checking on one another. Some support of prayer will be greatly appreciated," wrote Ms. Williams.

This event is unprecedented & all impacts are unknown & beyond anything experienced. Follow orders from officials to ensure safety. [#Harvey pic.twitter.com/ljpWLey1h8](https://twitter.com/ljpWLey1h8)

— NWS (@NWS) [August 27, 2017](#)

An accurate count of Virgin Islanders living in Houston is not readily available, but the number is great. And while there have been many Virgin Islanders living in the city for decades, their numbers grew even stronger following the closure of HOVENSA, which caused thousands of people to leave St. Croix in search of better lives on the mainland. Houston alone has eight refineries, with about one-eighth of the nation's refining capacity -- all of which have been closed because of the storm.

Hurricane Harvey made landfall on Friday night as a Category 4, and though it has been downgraded to a tropical storm, it lingered over the coastal region. It was the most powerful storm to hit the U.S. in a decade.

By Monday, Harvey had doused the Houston region with more than 30 inches of rain in some places, and forecasters warned that the totals in some areas could top 50 inches before the storm moves on some time later this week.

It is expected to move to the northeast, toward far eastern Texas and Louisiana, and bands of heavy rain were already lashing those regions, according to the New York Times. In New Orleans, which faced flooding earlier this month after heavy rains overwhelmed its drainage system, news that the far-flung storm could bring up to 10 inches of rain raised tension levels. Mayor Mitch Landrieu advised residents to "stay off the streets" on Tuesday.

Mandatory evacuation orders were issued for parts of several coastal counties south of Houston, home to hundreds of thousands of people. Many more residents were covered by voluntary evacuation directives issued by counties and cities, according to The Times.

As the region's waterways spilled high over and far beyond their banks, several of them broke longstanding records for flood depths. Some were expected not to abate in the coming days — or even to continue rising — as the rain keeps falling and water makes its way downstream.

Early Monday, the Army Corps of Engineers began releasing water from the Addicks and Barker reservoirs, just west of Houston, which was likely to prolong flooding in the city. Water from the dams flows into the Buffalo Bayou, which runs west to east through the

heart of Houston, and had already reached record depths before the release.

The Corps began by releasing 5,000 cubic feet per second of water, and planned to increase that to 8,000, Mayor Sylvester Turner said.

“As they increase the water and it comes down, the water level along Buffalo Bayou, in all probability, it will increase,” he said. “It could create additional problems, additional flooding.”

Sources: The Times, Twitter, FEMA, National Weather Service.

Feature Image: Dusk in Houston’s Meyerland area on Sunday night. Credit: The New York Times