

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Tim Duncan Donates \$250,000 To USVI In Wake Of Irma, Will Match Up To \$1 Million

Sports / **Published On September 09, 2017 12:08 PM /**

Staff **September 09, 2017**



SONY DSC

Tim Duncan, in a missive posted on The Players' Tribune, titled "Don't Forget About the Islands", announced a donation of \$250,000 to the U.S. Virgin Islands, the U.S. territory of his birth, following the destruction exacted upon the St. Thomas-St. John District by Hurricane Irma.

The storm has left 4 people dead so far in St. Thomas, with Governor Kenneth Mapp warning that the death toll could rise. Along with St. Thomas and St. John, Irma ravaged

through a swath of Caribbean islands, including St. Martin, Anguilla, Barbuda, and the British Virgin Islands, and is now on a collision course with Florida.

Yet, even after sustaining ruinous damage from Hurricane Irma, the northern Leeward Islands, having no chance to breathe, [is bracing for Hurricane Jose](#), whose core is projected to pass close to or just east of the northern Leeward Islands today, according to the National Hurricane Center's 5:00 a.m. advisory.

"Right now as I type this, the U.S. Virgin Islands — the place where I was born and where I grew up — has been badly damaged by Hurricane Irma. The people there, many of whom are old friends of mine, are suffering. Weather reports say that another Category 5 storm, Hurricane Jose, is close behind. No one knows what the place will look like when the rain stops," [wrote Mr. Duncan](#).

Mr. Duncan, a legendary NBA player who spent his years with the San Antonio Spurs and retired last year, also pledged to match up to the first \$1 million in donations. "Time is of the essence," he said. As of Saturday morning, [more than \\$450,000 had been raised](#).

"I know not everyone can give, and that's O.K. — after all, a lot of you just got done giving financial support to the victims of Hurricane Harvey and the fires on the West Coast. But if you're able, here's what I can promise: Every dollar donated will go directly to relief efforts on the ground. Starting as soon as the weather permits, I'll be chartering an airplane full of supplies from San Antonio to St. Croix, the biggest town in the Virgin Islands. And I'm already busy putting together a team — some from the Virgin Islands and some who will fly in from elsewhere — to help manage the relief effort," Mr. Duncan added.

The NBA star wrote passionately about the territory, and in depth about how Hurricane Hugo, considered the most destructive storm to affect the U.S.V.I., impacted him.

"Hugo hit at night. The first thing I remember is a loud boom from the windows blowing out of our house. My mother and sister burst into my bedroom and led me by the hand into another room. We spent the rest of the night sitting in a small bathroom, our eyes wide open. None of us could sleep. We heard the bangs and booms of debris. Once in a while, I'd peek down the hallway at my dad, who was watching our ceiling. One of the beams had a crack in it, and the crack slowly grew bigger throughout the night. I think my dad was praying.

"Our roof stayed on, but others were not so lucky. Some people died and many were injured. Those of us who survived woke up to find our neighborhood destroyed. Many houses on our block were missing roofs, or entire walls. Our next-door neighbors lost their house. They had spent the night hiding in their kitchen cabinets. They ended up moving in with us for a while after that.

"Hugo crippled the economy. People lost their businesses. Food prices went way, way up. For the next six months, parts of the island didn't have power, and school was canceled for almost two months. We had to boil water to drink or cook. I got good at showering with a bucket. Without electricity, we had to get crafty to keep food and drinks cold. I remember tying ropes to jugs of milk or orange juice and then lowering them down into a cistern, which collects rainwater. The water was a lot cooler in there. I learned to

adapt, like everyone else," Mr. Duncan wrote.

He noted the importance of getting help to those in need quickly, and how easily the islands can be forgotten. "I can't let that happen again," he said.

Mr. Duncan promised donors that their money would go wholly towards the intended purpose: Hurricane Irma victims in the St. Thomas-St. John District. "Every dollar donated will go directly to relief efforts on the ground," he said.

The five-time NBA champion will charter a plane full of supplies from San Antonio to St. Croix. "I'm already busy putting together a team — some from the Virgin Islands and some who will fly in from elsewhere — to help manage the relief effort," he said.