



# ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## Hurricane Beryl | Canouan Island

### Rapid Multi-Sectoral Assessment Report

Assessment Dates: 2024/07/22-24



*Photo credit: SVG RC & IFRC*

## OVERVIEW

A rapid multi-sectoral assessment on Canouan Island was conducted by a team from the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross (SVG RC) and the IFRC, complementary to ongoing damage and needs assessments of other responding organizations and the national government, including by the National Emergency Management Organization, Ministry of National Mobilization, and Social Development and Youth. The assessment focused on understanding the priority needs of the affected population in the evolving post-disaster context using short household surveys, in addition to key informant interviews and direct observations. The analysis was supplemented with secondary data review.

The team visited 78 households in several communities, including in Cherry Hill, Rilley Hill, Grand Bay, Balance, Retreat, as well as those residing at community shelters at the Canouan Primary School and at the SDA Church.

# KEY FINDINGS

- Majority of private homes and dwellings sustained significant damages, with 79% of respondents having indicated **construction/shelter materials** as their main priority.
- **Drinking water** and **food** remain a critical need for affected people, with water tank damages widely reported and limited availability of food supplies on the island.
- While some assistance was mentioned from government, other organizations, and private groups/ individuals, **71% of respondents** report having **received no assistance**.
- Other reported and observed needs include household items (bedding, mattresses, and other), clothing, mosquito nets and repellents, livelihoods, and psychosocial support services.

# CRISIS SEVERITY AND PRIORITIES

## 1. Humanitarian Conditions & People in Need

Clearing of debris and restoring critical infrastructure on Canouan Island including electricity and communications services is progressing, although partial at this stage. Salvaged materials are being utilized, alongside any emergency shelter materials, such as tarpaulins, provided to the affected households. Private investors are contributing notably to the ongoing relief and early recovery efforts. Detailed house damage inspections continue by the government and partner agencies, with the following preliminary numbers reported to-date:

Residential Buildings				
Destroyed	Damaged	Potentially Damaged	Total Affected	Total Pre-Hurricane
243	229	250	722	722

Sources: [IOM, 2024/07/24](#); [ACAPS, 2024/07/18](#).

Total number of affected persons on Canouan Island is estimated to be over 1,000 people, with over 100 individuals residing at three community shelters. The 2012 census tallied the total population of the island as 1,683 persons.

The following summarizes household demographics of the assessment participants:

- 78 total responses were surveyed during the SVG RC/ IFRC assessment on Canouan Island
- Respondents were 40% female, 60% male
- Average household size was 3.49
- 44% of households reported to have no children under 18

HH size (persons)	# of HH	% of HH	# children	# of HH	% of HH
1	16	21%	0	34	44%
2	14	18%	1	16	21%
3	8	10%	2	9	12%
4	19	24%	3	13	17%
5	9	12%	4+	6	8%
6	7	9%	<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>
7+	5	6%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>			

## 2. Identified priority needs/ sectors

Shelter	Food	WASH
---------	------	------

The top three concerns among the assessment respondents were shelter materials, food, and water.

Concern type	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Construction/shelter materials	38	6	18	62
Food	9	28	9	46
Water for drinking	15	12	9	36
None of the above/no other concerns	-	13	15	28
Household goods, kitchen items, bedding, etc.	4	8	5	17
Clothing	3	3	5	11
Other	4	5	2	11
Earning a livelihood	2	1	2	5
Water for washing, cleaning, etc.	-	2	-	2
Place to live/ residence	2	-	-	2
Sanitation facilities (for bathing and toilet)	1	-	-	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>221</b>

In addition, the respondents highlighted the need for replacement of household items, clothing, hygiene items (including baby diapers), and the loss of livelihoods.

### Shelter

The top concern among the affected respondents was “Construction/ shelter materials” with **79%** listing it as a concern and 49% listing it as their #1 highest concern. Most respondents (79%) live on their own property or the property of family or friends. Almost all respondents reported to have had their houses damaged to some extent, with roofs extensively damaged, as well as windows, doors, and structural elements. They expressed a continuing need for emergency shelter items, such as tarpaulins and repair materials. Frequent rains in the ongoing hurricane season are causing further impact to homes with water damage to interior floors and walls, and household items such as bedding. There is much evidence of urgent needs for emergency shelter and repair materials, as well as essential household items.



*Photo credit:* SVG RC & IFRC

## Food Security

The next overall concern of the assessment participants was “Food” with **59%** listing it as a concern. While there have been some food distributions (hot meals, food parcels) by different stakeholders, the respondents noted the limited supplies of food available. World Central Kitchen has set up two food points, with daily hot meals provided to the residents (approximately 1,000 meals per day), who are involved in cleaning of the island as well as to vulnerable residents, such as older persons. A few small local shops re-opened, with supplies resuming from the Mainland/ St. Vincent Island. Prices are reported to be almost the same as pre-hurricane, with some increase noticed for certain items (such as potatoes, onions). The boats are operational several times a week from Mainland to Canouan (Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays – Bequia Express, leaving the Mainland at 10:00 and reaching Canouan around 12:30-13:00, return leg available around 18:00). Banks started reopening, with the Bank of SVG Branch on Canouan operational half-day on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays as of 17 July 2024.

## Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

“Drinking water” was the next priority concern, with **46%** of respondents listing it as a concern, and 19% listing it as their #1 highest concern at the time of the assessments. Many residents indicated that their water tanks/ water storage facilities were damaged or destroyed, with water needs for cleaning, washing, bathing, sanitation, etc. existing. Issues of availability, access and quality are all reported. The affected families also reported the need for mosquito repellents and their concern about waterborne diseases. Given the likelihood of waterborne disease outbreaks in the affected areas, rapid rehabilitation and enhancement of the WASH facilities is likely to be high priority.



*Photo credit:* SVG RC & IFRC

### 3. Additional Sector Impacts

#### Livelihoods

Many respondents mentioned about the loss of livelihoods due to significant damages to tourism, fishery, agriculture, small shops (retail/ commodity), and services (car shops/ transportation). Crops have also sustained extensive damage. Several respondents reported the loss of the only source of their household's income (small shops). The Canouan tourism sector was one of the biggest contributors to the local economy and due to impact on jobs (at hotels, restaurants, and other), many workers are now in a vulnerable situation while awaiting recovery and looking for alternative sources of income. In SVG, tourism accounts for nearly 40% of employment in the country. Women and youth often work informally in the accommodation and tourism subsectors, which employed around 55% of women in the labor force in 2022 (UNDP, 2021-2022). It is observed that those employed in the informal sector rarely benefit from social security and have fewer protections from disruptions, including loss of jobs due to natural disasters and other external shocks.



*Photo credit:* SVG RC & IFRC

#### Health (Mental Health, Psychological Support Needs)

In addition to the risks of water borne diseases, several cases of COVID were mentioned by the respondents on the Canouan as a health risk. The Canouan Clinic sustained damage during the hurricane, with work on resumption of services underway. In general, 38 (78%) of the 49 health facilities across SVG remain operational, but the majority have sustained damage that requires immediate repair (PAHO, 2024/07/08). Prior to Hurricane Beryl, SVG had a relatively accessible and functional health system, providing free primary healthcare and mental health services. Hurricane-induced damage to health facilities will limit the capacity to cope with disease outbreaks and other health challenges in the coming months ([ACAPS, 2024/07/18](#)). In addition, affected people need psychological support to cope with the impact of the hurricane and reconstruct their lives.

## 4. Priority affected groups

Low-income families

Single-headed households with several children

Families with older persons, members with disabilities

Hurricane Beryl has had a significant impact on the lives of all residents of the affected islands of the SVG, and Canouan Island is no exception. The pre-existing vulnerabilities of some groups (such as low income, unemployment, informal employment, disabilities, and other), have exacerbated the impacts on their lives and livelihoods and may require more time and resources for recovery. Natural disasters have been found to decrease household incomes and increase poverty in affected areas. According to research, low-income families can require two to three times longer to recover from the negative effects of natural disasters ([Peacock, et al., 2014](#)).

According to the latest reports, 30% of people in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were living in poverty, with the country's poverty rate higher than the average of 23% for the Eastern Caribbean ([UNICEF, 2021](#)). Unemployment rate was reported to be over 20%, with young people facing more challenges in finding jobs compared to adults. On Canouan Island, households with low income or single income whose livelihoods were affected by the disaster, households with dependents (several children and/or members with disabilities), single-headed households with several children, and other vulnerable groups (including older persons living alone, etc.) are and will continue feeling the adverse effects of the Hurricane Beryl stronger and longer, requiring special attention to their situations.

## OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Logistics

Access to Affected Areas

Natural Hazards

The hurricane created extensive damage to the infrastructure of the Canouan Island which is hampering the logistics of the response and recovery efforts. Electricity and communication on the Canouan are gradually being restored (some streetlights and public buildings are restored), though still a long way to go. Generators are being used to ensure continuity of essential operations/ services and recovery works, though this requires a steady supply of fuel brought from the mainland. The island can be accessed by boats several times a week, requiring careful planning to align activities with the boat schedules. SVG still faces a risk of more storms and hurricanes during the coming months, based on the predictions of a very high (85%) probability of above-normal hurricane activity in the Atlantic Basin, including the Caribbean, during the 2024 June-November hurricane season.

### Contacts

#### At the St. Vincent and Grenadines Red Cross Society

Disaster Management Focal Point: Shaneika Laidlow; [moreknowledge@hotmail.com](mailto:moreknowledge@hotmail.com)

#### At the IFRC:

Operations Manager in St Vincent and the Grenadines: [OpsManager.SVG@ifrc.org](mailto:OpsManager.SVG@ifrc.org)

Information Management Coordinator, Hurricane Beryl: [IMCo.Beryl@ifrc.org](mailto:IMCo.Beryl@ifrc.org)

*The assessment was conducted during 22-24 July 2024 by the SVG RC & IFRC team members.*

*This report was consolidated by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross (SVG RC) and the IFRC on 25-26 July 2024.*