

St. Lucia is reeling from Hurricane Tomas

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By [Kitty Bean Yancey](#), USA TODAY

While Americans were preoccupied with elections, football and the World Series, some residents of the Caribbean have been hit by another hurricane, trying to clean up and hoping that wind and rain from a storm named Tomas doesn't slam them.

St. Lucia took a big hit over the weekend. Its airports just reopened today, and reports say vacationers are being assisted if they want to go home early.

The United Kingdom's [Mail Online](#) reports that the death toll on St. Lucia stands at 14, with seven people missing. Some hotels were damaged. Barbados took a lesser beating, as did St. Vincent, where roofs flew off and power was affected.

A Huffington Post report by Amber DeGrace, who knows St. Lucia well, says the St. Lucia prime minister calls parts of the lush island "a war zone. She adds that the Soufriere area is still reeling and that she is still trying in vain to find a couple of residents that she knows. Here is [part of her report](#):

"The town of Soufriere is nearly impossible to reach except by boat. The roads leading into town are either washed away or covered by landslides or mudslides. There has been a road cleared to allow emergency personnel in and the French and British militaries are providing rations and medical supplies to the residents of Soufriere and Fond St. Jacques. There is no electricity and no fresh water. Entire homes have been covered by mountainsides collapsing, including Livity Arts Studio. I've been there. My husband and I have a wooden wall hanging from there and we bought our parents local gifts of coconut husk bird houses. I remember a young girl making beaded jewelry while we there. Now the house is gone, crushed by a landslide, with the family still in it. Livity Arts Studio is located above Crystals on the mountain, past a sharp switchback when heading out of Soufriere through Columbette.

"Are my friends okay? I have no idea. All day long I have been contacting as many people that I can find on this incredible world wide web. All I have learned is that Soufriere is indeed devastated. No word on Monica and Martin. I will continue trying to make contact with someone that knows something. I will not give up hope.

"The current situation is that areas in the South and West are still largely impassible by car and only reachable by boat. A national disaster has been declared. The John Compton Dam is not functioning due to a landslide, and as this is the main source of water for the people of St. Lucia there is strict water rationing in effect."

Related: [Read a Thursday update to this story with a reader photo of St. Lucia here.](#)

Tomas has been downgraded to a tropical storm, and the National Hurricane Center says a storm watch is on for Jamaica. There are fears Tomas is headed for -- oh, no -- Haiti, where thousands are still living in tent cities after the earthquake in January.

Photos are hard to come by, but here are [some posted from St. Lucia on the BBC website](#).

The good news is that St. Lucia's two airports opened today (American Eagle has added more flights to assist stranded travelers) and that cruise ships are due back Sunday, reports say. Tourism minister Allen Chastenet says in a new press release that there was no major damage to resorts and that the island will be ready to welcome visitors again Friday. If readers know of any storm-related developments or stranded vacationers, please share.

Posted Nov 3 2010 2:41PM