

Tropical storm Nicole creates havoc in Jamaica

Tropical storm Nicole has created havoc in Jamaica, killing at least five people, and destroying infrastructure, property, and crops to the tune of tens of millions of dollars.

Local reports state that flood waters killed five, and washed away fourteen, who are also feared dead, as tropical storm Nicole drenched the island. Two of the confirmed deaths are a teenager and a 73-year-old man in the Spanish Town area,

Extensive damage has been reported in the rural areas, with infrastructure damaged and crops destroyed. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) reported that at least 49 primary and secondary roads have been affected by landslides and flooding.

Damage to dwellings and infrastructure has been reported in 78 communities in Kingston, St Catherine, Clarendon, Westmoreland, Manchester, Ocho Rios, St Ann, and Trelawny.

The Jamaica Public Service Company (JPS) reported that approximately 170, 000 customers islandwide are without power, while a number of National Water Commission (NWC) customers are experiencing low pressure or no water as a result of the loss of electricity to NWC pumps.

Meteorologists warned that there would be more heavy rains until the weekend and a flash flood warning remains in effect for low-lying and flood-prone areas across the island.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Bruce Golding flew over the entire island to have a glimpse at the damage and he told reporters that a careful assessment will have to be conducted, but said that from what he has seen the damage would be substantial and his government will have to readjust its national budget to repair the damage.