

The Trump Administration Just Shut Off All Food and Water Aid to Puerto Rico

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When Hurricane Maria struck Puerto Rico last September no one could anticipate that four months later the island would still be needing food and water aid from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), but with a quarter of the island still without reliable access to electricity and with clean running water still unavailable in many rural areas, some island residents are still reliant on FEMA to stay alive.

Their lifeline will be disappearing shortly, however, as [NPR](#) reports that FEMA will be ceasing humanitarian aid in just two days at the end of January. FEMA has announced that it will “officially shut off” its mission after providing more than 30 million gallons of drinking water and nearly 60 million meals across the island since the disaster began. Any remaining food and water supplies will be given to the Puerto Rican government for distribution.

The agency reached its decision after its internal analyses concluded that only about one percent of Puerto Rican residents still need its help, but that still leaves about 34 thousand people in desperate circumstances primarily in isolated rural areas.

FEMA claims that between the island government-run Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency (PREMA) and non-profits such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army those people will still receive aid, but local residents place little trust in PREMA to deliver the aid as reliably and efficiently as the federal agency.

Another reason that FEMA has given for the cessation of humanitarian aid is the fact that people getting free food and water are not going to supermarkets to buy groceries, preventing the local economy from returning to normal. The agency will be continuing to provide financial assistance with the aim of boosting the troubled island’s economy.

The question remains, if this was Texas, Louisiana, or Florida rather than Puerto Rico, would FEMA be withdrawing food aid with so many people still affected? With a President who has repeatedly demonstrated his contempt for anyone but English speaking white people, it hard not to harbor suspicions that this is just another racist decision by Trump.

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