



AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa

Roberto Figueroa Caballero sits Thursday on a small table in his home that was destroyed by Hurricane Maria in La Perla neighborhood on the coast of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Figueroa, who wanted to stay at home with his dog during the storm, said he was evicted by police and taken to a shelter for the night. When he returned the next day and saw what was left of his home, he decided to put his salvageable items back where they originally were, as if his home still had walls, saying that it frees his mind.

Hurricane mauled renowned Monkey Island

CAYO SANTIAGO, Puerto Rico (AP) — As thousands of troops and government workers struggle to restore normal life to Puerto Rico, a small group of scientists is racing to save more than 1,000 monkeys whose brains may contain clues to mysteries of the human mind.

One of the first places Hurricane Maria hit in the U.S. territory Sept. 20 was Cayo Santiago, known as Monkey Island, a 40-acre outcropping off the east coast that is one of the world's most important sites for research into how primates think, socialize and evolve.

The storm destroyed virtually everything on the island, stripping it of vegetation, wrecking the monkeys' metal drinking troughs and crushing the piers that University of Puerto Rico workers use to bring in bags of monkey chow — brown pellets of processed food that complete the primates' natural vegetation diet.

"All of our tools were destroyed," said Angelina Ruiz Lambides, the director of the Cayo Santiago facility. "Does FEMA cover this? Does the university's insurance cover this? I don't know."

Incredibly, as far as the scientists can tell so far, the monkeys survived the direct hit from the hurricane, perhaps by seeking high ground and clustering together at the base of trees.



AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa

Police lift the coffin on Sept. 29, of fellow officer Luis Angel Gonzalez Lorenzo, killed during the passage of Hurricane Maria when he tried to cross a river in his car, during his funeral at the cemetery in Aguada, Puerto Rico. With many of the U.S. territory's communities still waiting for power and clean water, there is concern about others reaching a breaking point.

No bodies have been found and a census is not detecting large numbers of missing macaques.

The island's history as a research center dates to 1938, when the man known as the father of American primate science brought a population of Indian rhesus macaques to the United States.

Clarence Ray Carpenter wanted a place with the perfect mix of isolation and free range, where the monkeys could be studied living much as they do in nature without the difficulties of tracking them through

the wild.

Since then the 400 or so macaques have reproduced and expanded their numbers, becoming the world's most studied free-ranging primate population and something of a living library.

Every animal born on the island is tattooed for easy identification, and the skeleton of every one that has died over nine generations has been saved for future reference. About 100 have had their entire genetic makeup sequenced, and hundreds more have had at least some of their DNA

analyzed.

Researchers from Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, New York University and others have been spending much of the year on the island studying everything from the monkeys' eye movements to the genes and behavior of socially aberrant individuals that may provide insight into the causes of autism.

"It's completely unprecedented in its breadth and size," said James Higham, a professor of biological anthropology at NYU who is studying the monkeys'

behavior, cognition and communication.

Now the university staff and local employees who keep Monkey Island running are frantically ferrying bags of chow in a tiny skiff, feeding the macaques a survival diet and trying to reassemble the rainwater collectors and drinking troughs that keep the animals alive in the tropical sun.

Mainland scientists are bringing in equipment from chain saws to a portable pier, funded by tens of thousands of dollars raised so far in university departments and online.

Complicating the effort, the monkeys all carry herpes B, a version of the virus that is harmless to macaques but can be fatal in humans. Anyone who comes into contact with monkey saliva or urine must undergo rigorous decontamination and treatment with antiretroviral drugs.

Humans also pose risks for the monkeys. Because the hurricane destroyed the island's chemical toilet, researchers and workers can stay only until they need a bathroom break: Human waste could start an epidemic that could wipe out the monkeys.

While the rescue effort is heroic, "it's not sustainable," said Higham, who is bringing in a container full of supplies. "They're doing the best they can do under very difficult conditions, but it needs help and attention."

BRIEFLY

Russian says North Korean missiles can reach U.S.

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian lawmaker says that he and colleagues who recently visited Pyongyang were shown North Korean calculations indicating that their missiles could reach the U.S. West Coast.

Anton Morozov of the nationalist Liberal-Democratic Party said in remarks carried by Russian state news agency RIA Novosti on Friday that North Korea is preparing to test-fire a long-range missile "in the nearest future."

Morozov, who visited North Korea with two fellow lawmakers earlier this week, said that their interlocutors told them that Pyongyang has the technology that would allow missile warheads to survive the heat while entering the atmosphere.

He said North Koreans also showed them "mathematical calculations which they say prove that their missile is capable of reaching the U.S. West Coast."

Canada pays indigenous people taken from homes

TORONTO (AP) — The Canadian government has agreed to pay compensation to indigenous people who were taken from their homes and adopted into non-indigenous families.

Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett announced the settlement Friday in what's known as the "Sixties Scoop." Indigenous children were robbed of their cultural identities by being placed with non-native families by child welfare services during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Many lost touch with their culture and language.

The settlement for an estimated 20,000 people is aimed at resolving numerous related lawsuits. The victims will share 750 million Canadian dollars (\$596 million), with individual amounts to be determined later. Many said they expected a settlement of around 50,000 Canadian dollars each.

Lead plaintiff Marcia Brown Martel, who was taken by child welfare officials and adopted by a non-native family, called events the "stealing of children."

"I have great hope that because we've reached this plateau that this will never, ever happen in Canada again," said Brown Martel.

Mexico's ex-first lady leaves party, hints at run

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's former first lady Margarita Zavala announced she is resigning from the conservative National Action Party, known as the PAN.

Zavala is the wife of ex-President Felipe Calderon, who governed from 2006 to 2012. She had announced her intention to run for the party's presidential nomination, but found herself in open conflict with party leader Ricardo Anaya, who also wants the nomination.

In a video, Zavala accused the leadership of cancelling internal elections and said they "handed the party's most important decision to others."

That was an apparent reference to last month's announcement of an alliance between the PAN and center-left Democratic Revolution Party for the July 2018 presidential elections.

Zavala did not mention Anaya by name, but the two have had public, heated exchanges recently. In the video, she said PAN leaders "have imposed anti-democratic conditions that we criticized for so long in the PRI," referring to the long-ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party. Zavala hinted she might run for the presidency outside her party but was not clear, saying she does not resign "from my duty to participate in politics."

Myanmar claims success in stopping exodus; refugees disagree

BANGKOK (AP) — More Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in Myanmar streamed toward the border Friday, despite government assurances that it was stopping the massive exodus of refugees to Bangladesh.

A video obtained by The Associated Press that villagers said was shot Thursday in northern Rakhine state shows dozens of Rohingya attempting to swim across the currents of a muddy river, from where it is a more than a 12-mile walk through jungles to the border. Many more people, from young children to old men, stand huddled with their belongings on the riverbank.

Myanmar has come under international criticism for failing to stop the violence, and in turn the tide of more than half a million Rohingya who have made the often perilous journey to Bangladesh since late August, the largest refugee crisis to hit Asia in decades. The Myanmar government's information committee said in a statement late Thursday that it had stopped 17,000 Rohingya from fleeing in just four days last week.

"The Myanmar authori-

ties in northern Rakhine went to the border areas where thousands of Bengalis await to flee and talked to them," it said. "The local authorities told the Bengalis if they have difficulties with their livelihood, they will provide food and security and to return to their villages. The Bengalis agreed to stay."

Myanmar doesn't recognize Rohingya as an ethnic group, instead insisting they are Bengali migrants from Bangladesh living illegally in the country.

The government may have had some success in keeping Rohingya in Myanmar in recent days, but villagers say Rohingya are still attempting to leave and many are gathered on the beaches just across the water from Bangladesh waiting for a chance to leave the country.

"There are more than a thousand villagers at the beach in Alel Than Kyaw village off the shore trying to flee but the authorities are not letting them go," one villager told the AP by phone on Friday. The villager spoke on condition of anonymity due to security concerns.

Bangladesh in particular

has been pushing Myanmar to stem the tide of refugees, who are straining resources in the already poor nation. The current exodus is in addition to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya who fled prior violence in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, where the Muslim ethnic group has faced decades of persecution and discrimination.

The latest violence began when a Rohingya

insurgent group launched deadly attacks on security posts Aug. 25, prompting Myanmar's military to launch "clearance operations." Those fleeing have described indiscriminate attacks by security forces and Buddhist mobs. The government has blamed the Rohingya, saying they set fire to their own homes, but the U.N. and others accuse it of ethnic cleansing.

Though Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi has said that the security forces have ceased clearance operation since early September, witnesses say Rohingya villages continue to be burned in the region.

In a statement Friday, Amnesty International said Myanmar's security forces have engaged in an unlawful and disproportionate campaign of violence.



AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe, File

Newly arrived Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar look out from a madrasa window Monday that they used as a shelter in Shahparirdwip, Bangladesh.