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HURRICANE MILTON

MILLIONS LEFT

WITHOUT POWER



MIKE STEWART, ASSOCIATED PRESS

A water rescue boat moves in floodwaters Thursday at an apartment complex in the aftermath of Hurricane Milton in Clearwater, Fla.

Latest storm spawns tornadoes, kills at least 8 people

**JULIO CORTEZ, KATE PAYNE AND HAVEN DALEY**  
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Rescue teams plucked Florida residents from the flotsam of Hurricane Milton on Thursday after the storm smashed through coastal communities where it tore homes into pieces, filled streets with mud and spawned deadly tornadoes.

At least eight people were dead.

Arriving just two weeks after the misery wrought by Hurricane Helene, Milton also knocked out power to more than 3 million customers, flooded barrier islands, tore the roof off a baseball stadium and toppled a construction crane.

Among the most dramatic rescues, Hillsborough County officers found a 14-year-old boy floating on a piece of fence and pulled him onto a boat. A Coast Guard helicopter crew rescued a man who was left clinging to an ice chest in the Gulf of Mexico after his fishing boat was stranded in waters roiled by the hurricane. The agency estimated the man survived winds of 75 to 90 mph and waves up to 25 feet high during his night on the water.

“This man survived in a nightmare scenario for even the most experienced mar-

iner,” Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Dana Grady said.

Despite the destruction, many people expressed relief that Milton wasn’t worse. The hurricane spared Tampa a direct hit, and the lethal storm surge that scientists feared never materialized.

The storm tracked to the south in the final hours and made landfall late Wednesday as a Category 3 hurricane in Siesta Key, about 70 miles south of Tampa. Damage was widespread, and water levels may continue to rise for days, but Gov. Ron DeSantis said it was not “the worst-case scenario.”

“You face two hurricanes in a couple of weeks — not easy to go through — but I’ve seen a lot of resilience throughout this state,” the governor told a briefing in Sarasota. He said he was “very confident that this area is going to bounce back very, very quickly.”

Five people were killed in tornadoes in the Spanish Lakes Country Club near Fort Pierce, on Florida’s Atlantic Coast, where homes were destroyed, authorities said. Police also found a woman dead under a fallen tree branch. In Volusia County, authorities said two people, a 79-year-old

woman in Ormond Beach and a 54-year-old woman in Port Orange, also were killed when trees fell on homes.

At a White House briefing, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said there were reports of as many as 10 fatalities from tornadoes, but he cautioned that the number was tentative.

At least 340 individuals and 49 pets were rescued in ongoing efforts, DeSantis said Thursday afternoon.

The worst storm surge appeared to be in Sarasota County, where it was 8 to 10 feet — lower than in the worst place during Helene. Milton also dumped up to 18 inches of rain in some areas.

Officials in the hard-hit Florida counties of Hillsborough, Pinellas, Sarasota and Lee urged people to stay home, warning of downed power lines, trees in roads, blocked bridges and flooding.

Among the dozens of tornadoes was a twister that hit the tiny barrier island of Matlacha, just off Fort Myers. The fishing-and-tourism village also endured a surge, with many of the colorful buildings sustaining serious damage.

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Harris faces comparisons to

Biden as Election Day nears

VP being forced to reassess how to present herself as candidate of change to voters

**ZEKE MILLER**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With less than four weeks until Election Day, Vice President Kamala Harris faces new urgency to define how her potential presidency would be different from that of President Joe Biden.

Her struggle to present herself both as a candidate of change while demonstrating a loyalty to the politician she serves under was made clear Tuesday when she was asked on ABC’s “The View” how she would

lead differently than Biden.

Harris said, “We’re obviously two different people” and “I will bring those sensibilities to how I lead.” But when pressed to identify a decision made by Biden that she would have taken another way, she demurred. “There is not a thing that comes to mind,” she said. She followed up later in the show by saying she would put a Republican in her Cabinet.

Two and a half months into her unexpected candidacy, Harris has so far largely relied on her age and biography to signal a break from the 82-year-old Biden and her 78-year-old Republican opponent, former President Donald Trump.

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BEN CURTIS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris speaks Monday before planting a memorial tree on the grounds of the vice president’s residence in Washington to honor the victims and mark one year since the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel.