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## **PUERTO RICO AND HURRICANE MARIA'S DEATH STATISTICS**

By Steve Bakke  September 17, 2018



*Here's what provoked me:*

*Hurricane Maria is now in Trump's bundle of transgressions. That's the hurricane that did so much devastation to Puerto Rico in September of 2017. Being skeptical, I dug into the information and statistics that are being used as the basis for making measurements and blaming the administration.*

*Here's my response:*

### **Puerto Rico And Hurricane Maria's Death Statistics**

George Washington University recently published an analysis of hurricane Maria death statistics, assigning 2,975 as the total. The public impression is that dead bodies were being discovered months after Maria. However, this was basically a statistical and modeling analysis, not a body count.

The "excess" deaths (i.e. over what would normally be expected for a period of 6 months after the hurricane) was declared to be 2,975. It included deaths from auto and other accidents, stress, heart attacks, and also deaths related to clean-up work.

Trump is being blamed for these deaths, but as a basis for assigning blame to him, this study is irrelevant. If these deaths are legitimately the result of Maria, they must also be characterized as relating to basic infrastructure and service deficiencies which were existing prior to the hurricane – e.g. roads, health facilities, quality of existing construction, etc.

And here's a curious statistic: The overall Puerto Rico death rate rose over the last decade through 2016. It actually fell in 2017, the year of hurricane Maria. Repeating: It actually fell in 2017.

Foolish, unfounded blame should cease, and Mr. President, it would also help if you'd keep your twitter finger out of this debate.