



A man stands on what is left of the roof of his neighbor following the passage of Hurricane Melissa, in Longwood, Saint Elizabeth, Jamaica on 29 October 2025. Hurricane Melissa ripped up trees and knocked out power after making landfall in Jamaica on 28 October 2025 as one of the most powerful hurricanes on record, inundating the island nation with rains that threaten flash floods and landslides. Ricardo MAKYN / AFP.

Appeal № ¹ : MDRJM005	IFRC Secretariat Funding requirements: CHF 19 million Federation-wide Funding requirements: TBD	
Glide №: N/A	People [affected/at risk]: 1.9 million	People to be assisted: 180,000 (60,000 households)
DREF allocation: CHF 1 million (including CHF 80,000 Imminent DREF)	Appeal launched: 29/10/2025	Appeal ends: 31/10/2027

¹ This Emergency Appeal may be revised in the coming days to include response operation activities in the Bahamas once the full impact of the hurricane is assessed there.



While clear data on structural damage is not yet available, local media describe Melissa as the strongest storm in Jamaica's history. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) has reported extensive infrastructural damage, power and communication outages, and isolated communities due to blocked roads caused by debris and landslides. It should be noted that this is the second large-scale hurricane to affect the country within the last 16 months, and that the livelihoods of southern coastal communities were still in the process of recovery.

As of 29 October, the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) remains on full activation status. According to figures from UNOSAT, an estimated 1.9 million people could be affected, though it is still too early to estimate the extent of the damage. Early reports from St Elizabeth, Manchester and Clarendon indicate that areas which are not flood-prone and communities that were not expecting flooding have also been impacted, and many people trapped. The Jamaica Red Cross headquarters has been unable to report on the situation in 8 of the Western parishes, due to ongoing communication and connectivity issues.

As of close of business on 28 October, 881 shelters were activated with 407 registering occupancy, amounting to around 6,124 people. This number is expected to increase, as voluntary evacuations were still ongoing. At this time, the Jamaica Red Cross is providing assistance to families in 31 shelters. Shelter population is expected to continue to grow in the coming hours and days, due to extensive housing infrastructure damage. However, fear of pillaging and the desire to quickly rebuild will bring many families back to the site of their home, even if the structures are destroyed and they must live in make-shift conditions. As part of its anticipatory actions, the Jamaica Red Cross had pre-positioned relief items throughout 8 pre-identified at-risk parishes,

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica on 28 October bringing hurricane-force winds of up to 280 km/h (175 mph) and torrential rains reaching 500 to 750 mm (15 to 30 inches) over different parts of the country. Storm surge and high waves reached up to 4 m (13 ft) above ground level alongside the southern coast. Starting as a Tropical Storm, Melissa was progressively upgraded from a Category 1 Hurricane on 25 October, rapidly increasing to a Category 4 Hurricane on 26 October, and then a Category 5 in the morning of 27 October. Widespread damage is being reported across southern, central and northern parishes. The storm's slow pace, recorded at 7 km/h (5 mph) on 26 October, resulted in a prolonged exposure of the country to wind and rain over 2 days before landfall, causing landslides in Saint Thomas and Portland. Torrential rainfall is expected to continue triggering additional catastrophic, life-threatening flash flooding and landslides.

and completed the distribution of 2,125 shelter items, 233 hygiene kits, 159 cleaning kits, and water for 547 people in high-risk communities. Finally, Red Cross volunteers supported government aid operations, notably helping to distribute food packages issued by the government.

Initial figures of 3 deaths and 13 injuries were reported by local media due to the tree-cutting accidents during storm preparations, but additional reports of deaths, injuries, and missing persons, are expected to emerge in the coming days.

It should be noted that the Jamaican government renewed a USD 150 million Catastrophe bond that provides financial protection to the country through 4 hurricane seasons. The bond is likely to be triggered, given the strength of Melissa and level of damage, qualifying the country for a maximum payout, which would support the government in financing the recovery process.

At the time of writing, the Bahamas is being impacted by Melissa as a Category 2 hurricane after it crossed Cuba. Hurricane-force winds, storm surge, and heavy rainfall are expected across the southeastern islands. The Bahamas Department of Meteorology and National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) had

urged residents in low-lying areas to move to higher ground, and there were 3 shelters in Nassau registering 4,000 people from the islands of Inagua and Acklins as of the afternoon of 28 October. Given the country's dispersed geography, logistics constraints could delay immediate relief operations once conditions deteriorate. Based on the current path of the storm and the 2022 census data, it is expected that 1,800 people, living in Acklins, Inagua and Crooked Islands will be the most exposed, and that around 12,800 people from San Salvador, Rum Cay, Long Island, Ragged Island, Cat Island, Exuna, and Mayaguana, may also be affected. Anticipatory actions taken by the Bahamas Red Cross ahead of the disaster included assisting the government with sheltering efforts, through the deployment of trained shelter staff, and the pre-positioning and distribution of relief supplies (food, water and essential items).

As Hurricane Melissa is still tracking The Bahamas at this time, it is too early to estimate the extent of the damage. This Emergency Appeal may be revised in the coming days to include response operation activities in the Bahamas.

TARGETING

Based on an analysis of UNOSAT wind forecasts and demographic data, it is estimated that 1.9 million people may be at risk from the storm. While the effects of Hurricane Melissa will be felt throughout the whole country, this Emergency Appeal will focus on a preliminary basis, on the Parishes of Saint Elizabeth, Manchester, Clarendon, Saint Catherine, Saint Andrew, Kingston, Saint Ann, Westmoreland, Trelawny and Saint Mary, which were directly under the storm's path. Based on the population of these parishes, the Jamaica Red Cross is aiming to provide relief and recovery assistance to around 10% of the estimated affected population. The estimated reach per sector/thematic area is as follows:

- Emergency shelter – 7,500 households (22,500 people)
- Shelter recovery – 1,000 households (3,000 people)
- Multi-purpose cash – 7,500 households (22,500 people)
- Household livelihoods assistance – 2,500 households (7,500 people)
- Health and hygiene awareness – 60,000 households (180,000 people)

- Community engagement and accountability (CEA) – 60,000 households (180,000 people)

The breakdown at Parish level is not yet determined and may fluctuate based on the progression of the damage and needs assessment process.

To carry out the selection of households and communities to receive assistance, priority will be given to families that meet the following criteria:

- Households whose houses have been damaged or destroyed
- Households that have suffered heavy losses of livelihoods (particularly among those dependent on the agricultural, fishing and tourism sectors).
- Single-mother households
- Households with dependent older people
- Households with children under five years of age and/or pregnant women
- Households with people with disabilities

This selection process will be coordinated by branches of the National Society along with the national authorities and the Parish Disaster Committees. It is expected that the government will coordinate the collection and dissemination of a needs list, which will inform the communities for prioritization.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

Through this Emergency Appeal, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) aims to support the Jamaica Red Cross in assisting 180,000 people (60,000 households) affected by Hurricane Melissa in the following parishes: Saint Elizabeth, Manchester, Clarendon, Saint Catherine, Saint Andrew, Kingston, Saint Ann, Westmoreland, Trelawny and Saint Mary. Given disruptions to telecommunications, and the ongoing progress of Hurricane Melissa when it comes to the Bahamas, the process of assessing needs and damages will take time. A revised Emergency Appeal may be submitted in the coming days with further adjustments in the overall people and localities to be reached. The current response strategy will focus on Jamaica, within the following areas:

Integrated assistance

(Shelter, Livelihoods and Multi-purpose Cash)



Under this sector, the operation will deliver timely and flexible support to cover the most urgent basic needs of affected households. The National Society will assist people whose livelihoods or homes were destroyed or affected by the passage of Hurricane Melissa. In the immediate phase, efforts will focus on the rapid distribution of essential relief items, including temporary shelter solutions and household supplies to 7,500 households. As the response transitions, emphasis will shift toward cash and voucher assistance—both conditional and unconditional—to enable shelter reconstruction (1,000 households), livelihood recovery (2,500 households), and multi-purpose cash support (7,500 households). Recovery assessments will start alongside relief work to ensure a swift transition especially because the hurricane season is set to end within weeks. Medium- and longer-term interventions will aim to ensure dignified, safe, and resilient housing, guided by the ‘build back safer’ approach. Additionally, agricultural and tourism microprojects will be implemented in partnership with local authorities. Climate-smart and disaster resilient considerations will be pursued.



Health & Care including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health)



Given the nature of the disaster, the Jamaica Red Cross health activities will focus primarily on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) and community health. In terms of WASH, the response will ensure that 7,500 affected households have access to safe water and hygiene supplies, mainly through the delivery of household drinking water, cleaning kits, hygiene and menstrual hygiene kits. These actions will be complemented by health and hygiene promotion activities that aim to reach 60,000 households. Community clean-up campaigns, facilitated by Community Disaster Response Teams, will support removal of debris and flood deposits from the roadway. The National Society will also support the rehabilitation of rural health facilities that have been severely impacted.

Protection and Prevention

(Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), Community Engagement and Accountability, Migration, Environmental Sustainability, Risk Reduction, Climate adaptation and recovery, Education)



The operation will mainstream Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) across all sectors. PGI efforts will ensure that the response is inclusive and equitable, with a focus on addressing the specific needs of at least 180,000 people, including women, children, older people, persons with disabilities, and other at-risk groups—safeguarding their rights and reducing exposure to harm. Mobile kits will enable the rapid establishment of safe and supportive Child Friendly Spaces within shelters. In parallel, CEA approaches will amplify community voices and participation, strengthening trust, transparency, and accountability through active feedback mechanisms and two-way communication channels that guide decision-making and ensure assistance reaches those most in need.



The National Societies intend to work through existing and newly established Community Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) to carry out community-level microprojects aiming to reinforce public awareness for disaster risk reduction, early warning systems and nature-based solutions as part of the recovery interventions. Resilience-building activities at the community level will be informed by community-led assessments and will aim to support areas affected by Hurricane Melissa as well as other previous emergencies in the last two years. Communities will lead in identifying their risks and creating mitigation plans. Finally, climate smart livelihood training targeting impacted communities will be organized, as well as broader public education activities, focusing on climate adaptation and recovery.

Enabling approaches

The sectors outlined above will be supported and enhanced by the following enabling approaches:



Coordination and partnerships

The IFRC Secretariat will coordinate inputs and support information sharing, analysis and coordination with relevant partners including participating National Societies (PNS), to support the actions under this Emergency Appeal. Streamlined communication with donors will enable a more holistic approach.

To this end, during the first months of the emergency a Membership Coordinator will be engaged to support Jamaica Red Cross in streamlining coordination of support from various PNS. Efforts will also be made to support resource mobilization and ensure that the operation is aligned with the long-term vision and sustainability of the National Society.



IFRC Secretariat services

The IFRC Secretariat will provide tailored technical and coordination support to ensure the effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of the operation, and compliance with IFRC policies, guidelines, and procedures.

To this end, during the first months of the emergency, an organizational structure will be implemented with rapid response personnel. The type of personnel to be deployed and hired will depend on needs and capacity gaps identified jointly with the Jamaica Red Cross. Those already requested for immediate deployment include Operations Leadership, Cash and Voucher Assistance, Communications, Finance, Information Management, MHPSS, PMER, Security, Shelter, Supply Chain Management, and Welcome Services.

The possibility of mobilizing Emergency Response Units (ERUs), specifically Relief ERU(s) and Logistics ERU(s), has not been excluded. However, this will depend on the results of rapid needs assessments.

The Secretariat will work collaboratively with the National Society to adapt the operational set-up as needed. An IFRC sub-delegation will be established to enable closer accompaniment and support to the Jamaica Red Cross.



National Society Strengthening

This Emergency Appeal includes actions that will address some National Society capacity strengthening measures based on existing gaps. Priority will be given to branch development, digital transformation, finance and risk management, HR and volunteer management capacity, and Safeguarding. Importantly, ensuring accountability will be the cornerstone of the operation. Actions will be built on the advances made under the Hurricane Beryl operation to allow continuity and standardization of processes. Systems and structures will be put in place to ensure operations are as seamless and transparent as possible, with the highest adherence to Red Cross standards in service to those most affected.

The planned response reflects the current situation and is based on the information available at the time of this Emergency Appeal launch. Details of the operation will be updated through the Operational Strategy to be released in the upcoming days. The Operational Strategy will also provide further details on the Federation-wide approach which includes response activities of all IFRC Network members contributing, and the Federation-wide funding requirements.

RED CROSS RED CRESCENT FOOTPRINT IN COUNTRY

Jamaica Red Cross



Core areas of operation	
Number of staff:	25
Number of volunteers:	2,000
Number of branches	13

The Jamaica Red Cross is a unique non-profit, humanitarian entity, auxiliary to the government incorporated by an Act of Parliament in 1964. The organization has a leadership structure comprised of a governance component and a management structure composed of 25 staff and 2,000 volunteers/members. The national spread of

volunteers enables the National Society to obtain real-time information on the status of the disaster in each locality. Additionally, the Jamaica Red Cross has a functional warehouse at the national headquarters office in Kingston, as well as 8 functional vehicles on standby (including 3 ambulances) that can provide essential goods and services to affected persons in less than 24 hours.

The key services offered by the Jamaica Red Cross have expanded over the years from primarily First Aid, youth, meals on wheels and disaster relief in 1948 to numerous others, the need for which have been triggered by global conditions as well as local situations. At this time new and emerging needs as well as the traditional ones have led to new patterns of operation and as a consequence there now exist five major themes around which our work pivots: Disaster Risk Reduction and Response, Health Care in the Community, Youth Development, Volunteer Management and Capacity Building.

IFRC Membership coordination

The IFRC has played a critical role in coordinating preparedness and response actions ahead of the impact of Hurricane Melissa and following landfall. Since the initial formation of the system leading to Hurricane Melissa, the English and Dutch-speaking Country Cluster Delegation closely monitored the situation and communication lines were established to ensure readiness for any required actions, as well as to provide the necessary human resources to support initial response efforts. An Imminent DREF request was made by the National Society on 22 October and was formally approved on 23 October, giving the Jamaica Red Cross the resources to conduct early actions and early response

activities. Fellow Caribbean Red Cross Societies have reached out to express their solidarity and offer assistance.

Since the outset of the event, the IFRC Country Cluster Delegations and the Regional Office have maintained continuous communication and coordination with Participating National Societies (PNS), which have expressed interest in contributing rapid response personnel, household items (NFIs), financial resources and assets. Engagement to date includes the American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Canadian Red Cross, French Red Cross, German Red Cross, Italian Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross, and Spanish Red Cross. The French Red Cross will utilize assets of the French military to deploy stocks from its warehouse in Guadeloupe to Jamaica.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement coordination

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), from its Delegation in Venezuela, provides accompaniment and technical support to Restoring Family Links (RFL) activities based on technical guidance and needs in emergency situations and response, facilitating tools, protocols, and activating the Movement's Global Family Links Network. Timely technical assistance will be provided as per the needs on the ground.

External coordination

Since the days leading up to the Hurricane's passing, the Jamaica Red Cross has been working closely with the National Humanitarian Assistance Committee, which is led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, as well as the Parish Disaster Committees, which are chaired by Municipal Corporations, to ensure a full coverage of high-risk populations with distributions.

Red Cross volunteers have helped to distribute government-issued assistance, namely food packages, to areas within the government's list of high-risk communities. Daily coordination has been ongoing to ensure that all communities are reached, while avoiding overlaps between the different parties involved in distributions, and this coordination is expected to continue throughout the recovery phase.

Red Cross representatives and technical teams are present within the National Emergency Operations Centres (NEOCs), ensuring timely access to information and effective coordination at country level.

CDEMA is leading coordination efforts, including coordinating relief and response activities across the impacted countries in the region. OCHA is supporting these efforts through coordination mechanisms, including the Caribbean Development Partners Group for Disaster Management (CDPG) and the UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETT).

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