



OFFICE OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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JAMAICA IS HOSTING CDEMA'S REGIONAL REVIEW OF HURRICANE MELISSA RESPONSE

Three-Day After-Action Review in Kingston to Strengthen the Caribbean's Regional Response Mechanism

KINGSTON, JAMAICA – The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), in partnership with Jamaica through the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) and Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) partners, have begun a three-day Regional After-Action Review (AAR) examining the Caribbean's coordinated response to Hurricane Melissa, one of the most powerful tropical cyclones to strike the region in recorded history.

The review, running from March 10 to 12, 2026, at the S Hotel in Kingston, brings together national disaster management authorities, regional institutions, United Nations agencies, defence forces, civil society organisations, and international development partners to assess what worked, the gaps and what must change before the next major event.

A Storm of Historic Proportions

Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica on October 28, 2025, with maximum sustained winds of approximately 280 km/h (175 mph) and gusts reported in excess of 250 mph, and a central pressure of approximately 920 mb. The system had rapidly intensified to Category 5 status between October 24 and 28 as it tracked across the northwestern Caribbean, leaving a trail of destruction across five CDEMA Participating States: Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, Haiti, The Bahamas, and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Jamaica bore the most direct and severe impact, with loss of life, extensive damage to housing, infrastructure, utilities, and critical services — particularly across the western parishes. Other affected states experienced heavy rainfall, hazardous marine conditions, localised flooding, and elevated landslide risk.

A Coordinated Regional Response

CDEMA activated the Regional Coordination Plan (RCP) on 21 October 2025, prior to landfall, and pre-deployed a two-person CARICOM Operations Support Team (COST) to Jamaica on 24 October. The Regional Coordination Centre (RCC) was activated at landfall on 28 October and officially deactivated on 19 December 2025, with the RCP continuing to support early recovery through 31 January 2026. Throughout the activation, CDEMA issued five Information Notes and nineteen Situation Reports to direct regional decision-making.

Purpose of the After-Action Review

The AAR will examine five critical areas: the performance of anticipatory action and early warning systems; coordination across the Caribbean Development Partners Group (CDPG), the Regional Coordination Centre, and National Emergency Operations Centres; the effectiveness of thematic response sectors including health, shelter, logistics, WASH, telecommunications, and early recovery; the adequacy of RRM financing; and the transition from response to recovery, including the application of Jamaica's National Recovery Framework.

The ODPEM's Director General, Commander Alvin Gayle, highlights the importance of the AAR for the region and welcomes the insights.

Commander Gayle stated that "The Regional After-Action Review for Hurricane Melissa represents an important opportunity for the Caribbean to collectively reflect on the response to one of the most significant hazard events to affect the region in recent years. Over the three days, we expect robust discussions, honest assessments, and the identification of practical actions that will strengthen the Regional Response Mechanism and enhance coordination among participating states, regional institutions, and development partners. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management look forward to the valuable insights that will emerge from this workshop and to the continued collaboration that will further advance disaster preparedness and resilience across the Caribbean."

Executive Director of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Elizabeth Riley, praised the coordinated response of the region but acknowledged that there are gaps to be addressed.

"While we celebrate a successful response, Melissa highlighted areas requiring strengthening: bolstering logistics capacity, expanding surge personnel, strengthening alignment between needs lists and relief supplies, and improving deployment efficiency. This After-Action Review, therefore, provides an opportunity to reflect: What worked well? What challenges and gaps did we face? And how do we position ourselves to build the Next Level Regional Response Mechanism that reduces our collective risk exposure? Technical

expertise, community engagement, and effective coordination remain critical. However, sustained resilience also requires strong political will and policy-level support.” She added.

Findings from the review will be compiled and presented at the Seventeenth Meeting of the CDEMA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), scheduled for 13–17 April 2026, in the British Virgin Islands. The outcomes will directly inform the development of CDEMA's Next Level Regional Response Mechanism — a strategic initiative to strengthen the Caribbean's collective disaster response architecture.

Notes to Editors

What: RRM After-Action Review — 2025 Hurricane Melissa Response

When: March 10–12, 2026

Where: Kingston, Jamaica

Who: CDEMA, Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management, National Disaster Organisations from affected Participating States, CARICOM Institutions, UN Agencies, Donor Partners, Defence Forces, NGOs, Private Sector and Civil Society Representatives

Format: Hybrid (in-person and virtual)

About CDEMA

The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) is the regional intergovernmental agency responsible for disaster management in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CDEMA's mandate is to reduce the risk and impact of disasters across its Participating States through a Comprehensive Disaster Management approach, guided by its mission of Resilient States, Safer Lives.

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