

Speech: Their ordeal is not over but UK is doing everything it can to help Hurricane Irma victims: article by Boris Johnson

On a screen in the Foreign Office Crisis Centre, Hurricanes Irma and Jose are being tracked across the Caribbean – mile by devastating mile.

Britain would help any human being caught up in these forces of nature. But we have a special responsibility today because Hurricane Irma inflicted its most powerful blows upon British Overseas Territories, inhabited by 75,000 British citizens.

First was Anguilla, where Irma knocked out the power and cast the island into darkness, then came the British Virgin Islands – which have borne the brunt of the storm – followed by the Turks and Caicos.

I watched the 2 hurricanes swirl across the screen in the Crisis Centre where dedicated staff from the Foreign Office and the Department for International Development have been working around the clock since Wednesday.

They've been dispatching emergency supplies, mobilising ships and planes and trying to second guess nature by anticipating exactly what help would be needed, where and when.

Their task is complicated by the fact that they are dealing with not 1 storm but 2. Following closely behind Irma is Hurricane Jose – the first time that 2 category 4 or above hurricanes have struck in such quick succession since records began in 1851. To all intents and purposes, this is an unprecedented situation.

The Crisis Centre got through to Tim Foy, the Governor of Anguilla, who briefed me in calm and measured tones. The power station on his island had survived, he said, but 70 or 80% of the transmission poles had been toppled, depriving everyone of electricity.

I thought of the 15,000 Brits living in darkness on Anguilla, with destroyed homes and schools all around them, having endured one hurricane and now in the path of another.

But the Governor was full of praise for the immediate help provided by the men and women on RFA Mounts Bay. The government dispatched this 16,000-ton naval supply ship to the Caribbean in July in preparation for the hurricane season. She carries her own floating dock, a Wildcat helicopter and a special disaster relief team.

And the Governor described how these skilled personnel had managed to restore power at Anguilla's hospital, rebuild the emergency operations centre and –

perhaps most valuable of all – clear the runway and make the island's airport serviceable.

RFA Mounts Bay has now been repositioned to do everything possible to help the British Virgin Islands. But we must be humble in the face of the power of nature. Whatever relief we are able to provide will not be enough for many who have lost so much – and their ordeal is not over.

A crisis like this brings out the best in Britain's public servants. We can all take pride in people like Tim Foy and the other Governors of the stricken islands, the staff of the Foreign Office Crisis Centre, and the crew of RFA Mounts Bay. All are striving tirelessly to help those in need.

And so they must because the people of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos are British. Our obligation to them does not depend on the happenstance of geography: we will help just as surely as if the hurricane had struck Inverness or Dover or St Ives.

It is precisely because of this overriding sense of obligation that the government has ordered the flagship of the Royal Navy, HMS Ocean, to head the Caribbean. Our biggest warship in service – carrying eight helicopters including 2 giant Chinooks – has left its NATO tasking in the Mediterranean and begun steaming westwards with all dispatch. HMS Ocean will cross the Atlantic and reach the Caribbean in about 10 days.

There is, of course, a desperate need for aid in the meantime. On Friday a giant C-17 transport aircraft from the RAF took off for the Caribbean, laden with enough emergency shelters for almost 1,000 people. In total, almost 20 tonnes of aid has already been sent by air, including rations, water purification kits and emergency lighting.

Expertise matters just as much as materiel, so 250 Royal Marines have been deployed in the region, including military engineers and medics.

They will reinforce the 40 personnel of the humanitarian and disaster relief team on board RFA Mounts Bay, whose excellent work has made such a difference in Anguilla.

In a situation where roads are blocked and communications disrupted, helicopters are essential assets. So a second C-17 left the UK on Friday carrying 2 Puma transport helicopters. They will join the Wildcat already deployed by RFA Mounts Bay.

We can be reassured that a great deal of aid has either arrived or is en route. But heartbreaking damage has been inflicted and no-one should assume that everything will go smoothly in the crucial days that lie ahead.

We are working alongside our friends, including France and the Netherlands, whose Caribbean territories have also suffered terribly, and the United States.

And the government has promised to match what I know will be the generous donations of the British public pound for pound.

We must now look ahead to where Irma will strike next. On Sunday the hurricane is expected to make landfall in Florida, where hundreds of thousands of Britons either live or go on holiday. Our Consul General in Miami is making every preparation.

In the coming days, our fellow Britons will be caught in the pathway of these forces of nature. We will not relent in our efforts to give them every possible help.

[Press release: Hurricane Irma: UK government actions update, 10 September 2017](#)

1. RFA Mounts Bay, our first military response, patrols Caribbean waters for 6 months of the year during the Hurricane season (June to November). Its crew are in a high state of readiness to be able to swiftly provide humanitarian and disaster relief, which they have already delivered to Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands.
2. The Prime Minister announced a [£32 million relief fund](#) to support the humanitarian effort and the UK was the first country to arrive on the scene. In addition to this, the UK government is also [doubling all public donations made to the British Red Cross appeal](#).
3. A team of British humanitarian experts has been in the region for a week working with authorities and directing the humanitarian response.
4. In Anguilla, RFA Mounts Bay has:
 - delivered 6 tonnes of emergency aid
 - rebuilt and secured the Emergency Operations Centre
 - restored power to the hospital
 - reinforced shelters
 - cleared the runway at the airport (which is now serviceable)
 - cleared roads, including to the police station
 - provided further support in the British Virgin Islands
5. HMS Ocean is also being deployed and will help with the reconstruction after the hurricane. Additional UK government staff are on standby to provide assistance once the hurricane has passed.
6. There are just under 500 troops currently in the region, made up of marines, engineers, medics and specialists, including Army and RAF personnel.
7. A C17, Voyager and A400M aircraft carried over 200 Royal Marines, as well as

engineers and specialist personnel from all 3 Services. They have provided medical supplies and aid including 2.2 tonnes of UK aid shelter kits providing shelter for almost 1,000 people, rations and clean water. A total of 10,000 UK aid buckets and 5,000 solar lanterns have been dispatched.

8. Amongst those deployed were the 40 Commando Royal Marines and the 3 Commando Brigadiers, 8 DFID humanitarian experts, 10 FCO Rapid Deployment staff as well as humanitarian experts funded by UK aid.
9. Two members of the UK police cadre, who offer support to the military in times of international crisis, flew out on Friday and a further 53 British officers, from 14 police forces are due to fly out on Sunday.
10. Our Ambassador to the US has deployed teams of staff at airports in the affected areas of the USA. They are providing advice and support to British nationals in Florida and issuing emergency travel documents.
11. Our US Network is liaising closely with the US authorities to get British nationals to safety.
12. The Foreign Office has set up a hotline for those concerned about friends and relatives affected by the hurricane: +44 (0)20 7008 0000. At their request, we are taking all emergency calls for the British Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands on this number.

We continue to work flat out to help the people who have suffered so much in the Caribbean, particularly of course in our overseas territories, in Anguilla, in the Turks and Caicos, and above all in the British Virgin Islands where there's been massive devastation. We're following the path of Storm Jose now, we're sending 500 troops, they're already in the region, huge amount of supplies, all sorts of efforts to get fuel into the region, to get power generation started again to help with sanitation, getting the hospitals going and everything that you would expect from the UK government to support British people overseas.

And I just want to say to everybody watching this, if you want to give, if you want to support those who have suffered in the terrible disasters of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Jose, then we recommend giving to the Red Cross, and we in the UK government will match you pound for pound.

[Press release: 'Still Water' to become new national memorial to British](#)

victims of terrorism overseas

Tobias Ellwood, the Minister asked by David Cameron in 2015, to deliver the Memorial, is delighted to confirm that this work has been selected by an independent Panel, chaired by Baroness Lynda Chalker, following invited proposals by a number of artists, and based on a public consultation carried out in 2016.

The selection process included sharing two short-listed proposals with families who responded to the consultation saying that they had lost loved ones in terrorist incidents overseas, and were willing to be consulted further on the Memorial.

The Memorial is expected to be installed at the National Memorial Arboretum, in Staffordshire, by the end of this year, with a dedication event likely to follow in the Spring of 2018.

Mr Ellwood said:

My hope is that this memorial will become a peaceful and contemplative site, offering solace and comfort to those affected by the terrible terrorist events that we have seen taking place overseas, and impacting on British Citizens.

I am grateful to Baroness Lynda Chalker and the Panel that has taken time to select a thoughtful design, from an internationally renowned and respected artist. Alison Wilding and Adam Kershaw's design is simple, sensitive and beautiful.

This memorial shows our recognition, as a nation, of the loss that has been suffered by British families over a number of years, and will stand for those events that, sadly, are likely in future years.

The Chairman of the Panel that selected the Memorial, Baroness Lynda Chalker, a former Minister at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, said:

This has been a challenging commission to best reflect the many views we received from those who responded to the Government's consultation in 2016. It was clear then that David Cameron's proposal for a Memorial had public support, with a wide range of views of what the Memorial should be like.

I am grateful to those artists that responded to the brief with sensitivity and creativity. I am delighted that we have chosen Alison and Adam's work because it represents calm and stillness, echoed in the title of the proposal. We have shown this design to a small number of the families who feel a connection to the Memorial,

and they have appreciated its openness and accessibility, and the generous seating, making it easier for visitors to approach.

Whilst there is no dominating symbolism, the families that we shared the design with appreciated imagery that represented the global reach of terrorism, but also the continuation of life.

Alison Wilding and Adam Kershaw said:

We are thrilled to have been chosen to make this memorial and have been encouraged by the positive feedback from the families and others who took part in the selection process.

Sue Dilley, whose brother, Gordon Cousland, was killed in a bomb attack at Moscow's Domodedovo airport in 2011 said:

I would like to thank the Panel for the supportive and sensitive manner in which they consulted with the families. I found it extremely poignant to meet others affected by acts of terrorism, taking place over the last 30 years. The innovative design of 'Still Life' will allow all its visitors to reflect on such tragic events and give families a memorial to remember their loved ones.

Sheelagh and Barry Alexander, whose son Nick was killed in the terrorist attack at the Bataclan Theatre in Paris in 2015 said:

We appreciate all the work and consideration that is being put in to complete this memorial, which will be very important to so many. We are very grateful.

Belinda Green, whose husband Stephen was killed in an attack on an Algerian gas plant in 2013, said:

Still Water represents the calm after a storm. For me it reflects how the trauma of the event for any person who suffers loss will eventually lessen but not be forgotten. I like the openness of this design very much, the ability to look out to the surroundings in any direction, and importantly that its openness will not exclude anyone.

The proposed memorial is sited a short distance within the copse so that it might gradually reveal itself, like coming across a hidden pool within a woodland glade.

The pathways leading to the memorial will be made of natural materials and

softened by the growth of the woodland floor so that this feeling of discovery is enhanced.

The memorial itself is composed of a concrete ellipse set just below ground level so that its perimeter becomes blurred and softened as nature takes its course.

Colour is added to the top layer of cement, which is hand-trowelled to give a ruffled effect, as if the dark waters of the hidden pool are being stirred by a gentle breeze. The concrete ellipse is crisscrossed with brass meridian lines that form a strong armature for the base of the work and also echo the lines encircling the globe.

The surface of the ellipse contains seven pale cast concrete shapes, which shift between figuration and landscape and reference a mountainous terrain.

Three elements: water, land and air, come together in the work which is titled 'Still Water'.

If sitting by a woodland pool offers a kind of balm, the artist hopes that so might this memorial. The seating comprises a two-tiered quarter section which follows the curve of the concrete ellipse, with slats of heat-treated ash providing the base and back between the armrests. It is turned away from the main pathway to allow for quiet contemplation.

The Memorial will clearly display the attribution: Still Water, 2017 Alison Wilding Adam Kershaw

Additionally, text will be engraved onto the external curve of the seating:

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY TERRORISM OVERSEAS"

The then Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced in July 2015 that the Government would create a National Memorial to British Victims of Terrorism Overseas.

Tobias Ellwood MP, then Minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, launched a consultation to help the Government to understand what would be important to people in a National Memorial.

The responses to the consultation provided a rich insight into what matters to people. Fundamentally, it showed that the vast majority of respondents were wholly supportive of the proposal to create this important Memorial.

In July 2016, the Government published a document summarising the responses, and capturing the detail of what people think.

The Government hopes to create a Memorial that provides meaning for the optimum number of those who feel a connection with it, with particular emphasis on those most directly affected.

Overall, the consultation has shown strong support from the public. There was a clear sense that the Memorial should be a place of remembrance for the

families, and for the public and society as a whole to pay their respects to the victims of terrorism overseas. Respondents felt that it was right and fitting to create this Memorial.

Biographical details of Artists

Alison Wilding makes abstract sculpture. She is known for the wide range of both materials and processes she employs, as well as her capacity to work at the extremes of scale: from the hand held object to all but monumental sculpture.

Born in Blackburn, Lancashire, in 1948, Wilding graduated from the RCA in 1973. She came to prominence in the 1980s as one of a group of sculptors including Richard Deacon and Antony Gormley. Wilding's first major solo exhibition was at the Serpentine Gallery in 1985. Since then she has shown extensively throughout the UK and abroad, and has been acquired into major public collections in the UK. Public commissioned works include Migrant, 2004 for Snape Maltings, Shimmy, 2013 at 10 New Burlington St, London and Herm 2017- a drinking fountain for a new garden in Rathbone Place. Wilding was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1988 and 1992 and elected to the Royal Academy in 1999. Awards include a Henry Moore Fellowship at the British School at Rome (1998), Joanna Drew Travel Bursary (2007), Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award (2008) and Bryan Robertson Award (2012). Wilding lives and works in London and has been represented by Karsten Schubert since 1987.

Adam Kershaw is a sculptor/maker of objects and furniture, he has spent the years since leaving the Royal College of Art collaborating with, and working for clients to find solutions to the challenges of designing and making both complex and beautiful pieces. Whilst always attuned to his clients' and collaborators' ambitions, his own vision about the pursuit of quality and feel of workmanship informs the handling of the work. His specialist knowledge in the use of materials combined with years of experience, passion and exploration is evident in everything he produces.

Of their collaboration on this memorial Alison Wilding said:

Adam Kershaw was my assistant in the 1990s and over the years he has continued to make some of my work and solve intractable problems for me. We have often talked of collaborating on a project and are both delighted to be working on this memorial together.

Notes to Editors

Baroness Lynda Chalker of Wallasey has been a member of the Lower and Upper Houses of the UK Parliament for over forty years. Between 1986 and 1997 she was Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, holding responsibility for Africa and the Commonwealth and for Overseas Development. Lynda was made a Life Peer in 1992.

The other members of the Panel are:

- Aaron Cezar, Director, Delfina Foundation
 - Caroline Douglas, Director, Contemporary Art Society
 - Penny Johnson CBE, Director, Government Art Collection
 - Keith Lane, previously medical planner with the Royal Air Force and project manager with Cruse Bereavement Care
 - Sandy Nairne CBE FSA, writer and curator, former Director of the National Portrait Gallery
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News story: Home Secretary's statement on the re-opening of Manchester Arena

The Manchester Arena attack was an evil and callous act perpetrated by those who despise our way of life. Those responsible chose innocent people, including children, who were simply enjoying themselves in a bid to cause the maximum amount of suffering. But we were clear then and we are clear now – they will not succeed.

We have seen the spirit of generosity that has been building in Manchester over the last few months and it is heartening to see the community spirit and resilience of the people of Manchester. I was at Albert Square when the whole of the city came together, and poet Tony Walsh gave an emotional performance that demonstrated their defiance against the threat of terror. If the terrorists aim is not only to murder, but to sow discord and hatred in this country – then they again did not succeed.

Importantly, we will never forget those who lost their lives, and will continue to support the victims' families. I want to thank the police, and emergency services, who helped not only in the aftermath of the attack but are still working, day and night, to keep us safe.

And for the people of Manchester I want to pay tribute to your show of strength in these past months, and wish everyone attending the re-opening well.

News story: Hurricane Irma: UK military provides relief to the

Caribbean

Named Operation Ruman, on Friday nearly 300 UK military personnel equipped with aid supplies left the UK to provide immediate relief to people who have seen their homes destroyed.

Departing from RAF Brize Norton, a C17, Voyager and A400M aircraft carried over 200 Royal Marines, as well as Engineers and specialist personnel from all three Services, medical supplies and aid including emergency shelter kits, rations and clean water. Amongst those deployed were the 40 Commando Royal Marines and 3 Commando Brigade.

The aircraft have now landed in Barbados, as part of the UK Joint Taskforce in Barbados. The taskforce will use Barbados as a hub to distribute aid. The C17 continued its journey onto the US Virgin Islands – the island with the only usable runway in the region – with 85 personnel on board.

On Saturday, another C17 left from Brize Norton carrying a Puma helicopter and the UK is planning to send another Puma to the Caribbean tomorrow.

In addition to the arrival of the aircraft, RFA Mounts Bay has also reached the British Virgin Islands, with a Wildcat Helicopter embarked conducting reconnaissance flights and a helicopter to help deliver supplies and aid. Her crew will help with structural repairs and restabilising communication.

The 16 Royal Engineer Commandos, deployed from Mounts Bay, are also providing key support to the British Virgin Islands including to the Governor who has made clear that his priority to restore law and order and to put vital communications are in place. They are also working hard to clear runway, making it serviceable and allowing for further aid to reach the islands.

In addition to the support offered by RFA Mounts Bay in the Caribbean, HMS Ocean was also diverted from her tasking in the Mediterranean to the Caribbean in order to bring the help the islanders get back up on their feet after the hurricanes have passed. HMS Ocean will embark equipment and aid at Gibraltar on passage to the Caribbean on Monday.

Aid has also been supplied from DFID's disaster response centre at Kemble Airfield in Gloucestershire, including 10,000 UK aid buckets and 5,000 UK solar lanterns. This aid is will reach those in need in the next few days by the quickest and most effective route possible.