

# [News story: Hurricane Irma: UK government response in numbers, 15 September 2017](#)

From:

[Foreign & Commonwealth Office](#), [Department for International Development](#), [Home Office](#), [Ministry of Defence](#), and [Public Health England](#)

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[British nationals overseas](#), [UK Overseas Territories](#), [Humanitarian emergencies](#), [Anguilla](#), [Barbados](#)

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Facts and figures on the UK government's relief work in the Caribbean and the British Overseas Territories in response to Hurricane Irma.

## **Military**

### **Naval**

- RFA Mounts Bay, pre-stationed in the region, provided initial assistance to Anguilla to clear the runway. It then continued to British Virgin Islands to establish security of supplies, and fix basic infrastructure and shelter to people. After travelling to US Virgin Islands to resupply, she returned to Anguilla to deliver reconstruction materials and arrived in the British Virgin Islands on Tuesday with further supplies and delivered humanitarian aid and disaster relief on Wednesday.
- On Tuesday night, HMS Ocean embarked on the 10-day journey to the Caribbean to provide further support to those affected by the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma. She is carrying 60 pallets of emergency relief stores to assist with the longer term recovery effort, including plywood, timber and construction equipment, as well as 200 pallets of Department for International Development (DFID) aid. This includes 5,000 hygiene kits containing essential items such as soap and a torch, 10,000 buckets and 504,000 aquatabs.

## **Aircraft**

- Over 200 personnel arrived on Tuesday 12 September, including stabilisation advisers, medical support and military.
- Over 200 military personnel arrived in Barbados on Wednesday 13 September
- We have 1 Wildcat Helicopter with Mounts Bay and 2 RAF Puma aircraft currently operating in the region.
- A third Puma helicopter has arrived in the Caribbean ready to assist in transporting personnel and aid, as well as a Voyager plane which transported 80 personnel from the Lead Commando Group.
- A C-130J and A400M has been making shuttles from Barbados to required destinations across the region to deliver key support, including British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos and Anguilla.
- One Antonov cargo plane with supplies arrived on Tuesday 12 September.
- The UK continues to work closely alongside international partners. Following a request for assistance from French President Emmanuel Macron, an RAF C-17 arrived in France to provide heavy-lift support to French aid efforts in the Caribbean. Equipment and vehicles including a tipper truck, digger and a specialist bulldozer were loaded aboard for transportation to Guadeloupe, and the aircraft arrived yesterday

## **Personnel**

- There are now over 1,100 UK military personnel in the Caribbean region.

## **Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff and consular expertise**

- FCO Rapid Deployment Teams (including Red Cross support) are in the region in 8 locations (British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Turks and Caicos Islands, Curacao, Puerto Rico, St Maarten, Guadalupe, Barbados).
- Consular staff have been deployed to Curacao and Guadeloupe to help British nationals evacuated there and we now have a Rapid Deployment Team in Sint Maarten to provide further assistance.
- Consular teams in Cuba and the US are working closely with tour operators and local authorities to ensure British nationals are getting the support they need.
- The dedicated crisis hotline has so far taken almost 2,700 calls.
- Public Health England is sending 3 specialist staff to work with the Chief Medical Officers of the territories to help assess the risks to public health from the damaged infrastructure and disruption to health and social services.
- Lord Ahmad, Minister for the Caribbean, Overseas Territories and the Commonwealth, arrived in the Turks and Caicos Islands on Thursday 14 September. He met the Governor, Premier, and Deputy Premier.
- On Thursday 14 September the Foreign Secretary hosted discussions with the US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and the French Deputy Foreign Minister Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne on the response to Hurricane Irma.
- The Foreign and Development Secretaries will be leading an event at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Monday to discuss the impact

of Hurricane Irma on the Caribbean, the response, and to discuss present and future support.

- Throughout we are working closely with the governments in the Overseas Territories, who are leading most areas of restoration. We are working closely with commercial partners in seeking local and regional solutions.

## **Police**

- Over 60 UK police deployed to the region, in addition to 16 Caymanian police and 6 Bermudian Police

## **Aid**

- £32 million already announced for disaster relief with a further £25million committed.
  - The government has made £2.5 million available to the Pan American Health Organisation to ensure critical health services are provided in the region, and to reduce the risk of disease spreading. This is part of the initial £32 million pledged.
- UK government will aid match public donations to the Red Cross appeal up to £3 million, and so far the British public have helped raise £1.3million, with the UK government matching the £650,000 of private donations.
- DFID Field Teams have been sent to British Virgin Islands, Anguilla, Turks and Caicos, Antigua, Barbados and the Dominican Republic.
- Over 60 metric tonnes of DFID aid has now arrived and is being distributed across the region, including nearly 3,000 shelter kits, which can provide shelter for over 13,000 people and 4,990 solar lanterns (which can provide light and power for over 20,000 people), and over 8,000 buckets.
- HMS Ocean has been loaded with 5,000 hygiene kits, 10,000 buckets and 500,000 Aquatabs, all UK aid funded.
- 9 tonnes of food and water procured locally on Monday 11 September for onward delivery. Thousands more shelter kits and buckets are on the way from UK shortly.
- The UK has helped to distribute water bottles to 700 of the most vulnerable households affected by Hurricane Irma on the British Virgin Islands.
- The UK government is being supported by companies in the private sector, including:
  - Thomson and Thomas Cook who have delivered over 8,000 buckets on commercial flights
  - Virgin, who offered free transport to dispatch relief items including nearly 2,000 shelter kits, to Antigua on Tuesday.

## **Assisted departure**

- The UK is working hard to provide support in every way it can. We are now making urgent arrangements to help the most vulnerable people

affected in this crisis to leave the islands of British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos Islands, Anguilla and St Martin as soon as possible. FCO staff both in London and in the region are working with the governments of the territories and putting every effort into identifying and locating vulnerable people, both British and foreign nationals.

- We have arranged military-assisted departures for a number of eligible persons from the British Virgin Islands and are planning military-assisted departures for further vulnerable eligible persons in the other affected Overseas Territories.
- Military flights will then transfer these people to Barbados from where they will be able to access urgent medical treatment, if needed, and make arrangements for onward travel. To help those most vulnerable people, we are exceptionally waiving the fees for replacing emergency travel documents.
- We continue to identify and contact the most vulnerable affected persons, ahead of military flights from Grand Turk, Providenciales, Tortola, and St Martin on 15 September

## **Breakdown by Islands**

### **British Virgin Islands**

#### **Military**

- Royal Marines from RFA Mounts Bay have got the airfield operating so we can get more aid and personnel in.
- Over 200 troops are on the ground – including engineers, medics and marines who are working with the local police to provide security

#### **Police**

- 16 Caymanian police and 6 Bermudian deployed to assist with security.
- There are currently 54 UK police officers on BVI to support law and order.
- An operation run by British Virgin Island and Cayman Island police officers, alongside the British Royal Marines and police, resulted in the capture of over 100 escaped criminals from Balsam Ghut prison.

#### **Aid**

- 5 tonnes of food and water has been transferred to the British Virgin Islands. A flight carrying 3 tonnes of food and water arrived in the British Virgin Islands. This much-needed aid has already been distributed on Tortola alongside 40 shelters in Road Town.
- 640 shelter kits are in transit via the RAF

#### **FCO and consular support**

- The UK is assisting the British Virgin Islands government in providing support to affected people of all nationalities.
- FCO media officer on the ground to support the Governor's office. Additional 4 consular officers and 1 IT support officer have been

deployed.

## **Anguilla**

### **Military**

- RFA Mounts Bay delivered 6 tonnes of emergency aid; rebuilt and secured the Emergency Operations Centre; restored power to the hospital. Over 70 military personnel and 4 police officers are on the ground. Aid
- We have delivered an initial 9 tonnes of relief aid, food and water.
- We have procured a generator to restore the water treatment plant and further generators are being procured to return power to public buildings.
- DFID has deployed a team that includes 2 humanitarian advisors to support relief efforts, working alongside 3 FCO officers.

### **Consular support**

- Anguilla has not requested UK consular support. The local government is leading on this. One IT support officer on the ground.
- Cayman Islands government is arranging a 736-100 aircraft to deliver personnel and equipment (including medical equipment) to Anguilla.

## **Turks and Caicos**

### **Military**

- Over 120 military personnel are on the ground.
- 30 troops from the Bermudian regiment will arrive by Saturday.

### **Aid**

- DFID has deployed a field team to support relief efforts. Two humanitarian advisors are already on the island.
- On Thursday 15 September a flight carrying aid reached Turks and Caicos Islands delivering over 150 shelter kits and 720 litres of water

### **Consular support**

## **St Martin**

### **Consular support**

- We have over 60 British nationals on both Dutch and French St Maarten including some requiring urgent medical attention. Over 50 British nationals have been assisted to leave.

## **USA**

## **Consular support**

- We are regularly updating our travel advice.
- The Foreign Secretary has spoken to Governor of Florida Rick Scott.

## **Document information**

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