

[Press release: Hurricane Irma: More than 20 tonnes of UK aid on its way to the Caribbean](#)

PICTURES AND FOOTAGE:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B8mjosL6ucd7TkRhdTgwT2s4aXM>

More than 20 tonnes of UK aid shelter kits and solar lanterns are on their way to the Caribbean to provide immediate relief to people who have seen their homes destroyed by Hurricane Irma.

RFA Mounts Bay has already delivered six tonnes of emergency aid to Anguilla, the British Overseas Territory devastated by Hurricane Irma, and has now arrived in the British Virgin Islands to provide further support.

The ship has been deployed in the Caribbean since July in preparation for the hurricane season, ready to provide support at a moment's notice. Tasked by the Royal Navy, she was the UK's first military response to the Caribbean.

Today (Friday, 8 September):

- three trucks were loaded with 19 tonnes of UK aid buckets with lids for washing clothes, and solar lanterns at DFID's Disaster Response Centre at Kemble Airfield, Gloucestershire. This is a total of 10,000 UK aid buckets and 5,000 solar lanterns
- a C17 RAF flight heading for Barbados took off from RAF Brize Norton with a further 2.2 tonnes of UK aid shelter kits on board – a total of 192 kits.

The UK was the first to arrive in Anguilla and a team of British humanitarian experts have been in place since last week to work with authorities and direct the humanitarian response.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

More than 20 tonnes of urgently needed UK aid shelter kits, buckets and solar lamps are being sent to areas of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricane Irma.

Today, I have also doubled the number of UK aid experts deployed in the disaster zone and our expert humanitarian teams are working at pace to ensure the aid reaches those who need it.

UK aid is already on the ground, providing emergency relief, with

more on its way.

Three DFID humanitarian experts were sent to the region ahead of Hurricane Irma to assess needs on the ground and help prepare for the disaster. A fourth expert has also been sent, arriving yesterday, to provide vital expertise to help co-ordinate the response. An extra four are on their way to the region today.

These experts are working with the British Red Cross, and national and regional disaster management agencies, to urgently assess need and ensure that the UK's help reaches those whose lives have been torn apart by the destruction wrought by Hurricane Irma.

DFID has also been involved in important work ahead of this crisis to make sure this region is better prepared to deal with the effects of natural disasters.

Hurricane Irma continues to move through the Caribbean toward the Turks and Caicos, and it is expected that Hurricane Jose will reach the British Virgin Islands soon. Last night the Governor of the British Virgin Islands declared a state of emergency.

Yesterday the PM pledged £32m of disaster relief to the area. The UK Government deployed Royal Navy vessel, Mounts Bay ahead of the disaster in preparation.

On arrival in Anguilla, the crew worked to clear the airport runway and restore power and communication services. In the British Virgin Islands, Mounts Bay will assess the extent of the damage to the island and work to restore essential services.

All British nationals in the affected areas, which now includes Cuba and Florida, should refer to FCO travel advice and social media for updates.