

Press release: PM statement following COBR meeting on Hurricane Irma: 8 Sept 2017

I've just chaired the government's emergency committee COBR, looking at the further support we can provide to the British Overseas Territories in the Caribbean with these terrible hurricanes and the devastating impact they're having.

I heard direct from Governors in the region including the Governor of the British Virgin Islands, where Hurricane Irma, the eye of the hurricane ran directly through the capital of the British Virgin Islands.

I also heard about the work that RFA Mounts Bay and the troops and military personnel on Mounts Bay have undertaken already and will be doing in the future.

In Anguilla they have made the airfield serviceable, they have restored power to the hospital, they have rebuilt emergency shelters. Our military personnel, our troops, have been working around the clock there and we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

Those troops from RFA Mounts Bay are now assisting the Governor of the British Virgin Islands who has declared a state of emergency there. They are also working to ensure that the airfield there is serviceable so that military aircraft can be flown in with further supplies.

Every effort is being made to ensure that as much as possible can be done in advance of Hurricane Jose which is the next hurricane reaching that area.

At the COBR, I also heard directly from our Consul-General in Miami about the support that is being given to British nationals living in Florida and also British tourists in Florida, and we are of course working with the US authorities to ensure that every support is available and everything can be done before Hurricane Irma reaches Florida.

And we are also working in the region, in the Caribbean, internationally with other partners – with the French and with the Dutch – and we are responding to a French request that we provide British military support to their efforts.

But I also know that many families are finding it very difficult to find information and hear from and contact loved ones in the region. The [Foreign Office has set up a specific hotline](#) that people can contact to get information and support. And I would encourage anybody who is worried about families in the region to contact that Foreign Office hotline.