

Press release: Update on Government response to Hurricane Irma and Maria

We remain concerned that Hurricane Maria, which is strengthening as it approaches the Leeward Islands, could hit the UK's Overseas Territories in the Caribbean already affected as well as Montserrat.

FCO, DFID and military teams are working closely with the Governors in the Overseas Territories to ensure we are doing all we can to support the Governments of the islands affected.

Ministers discussed the preparations that have been put in place:

- Over 1300 military troops are staying put in the region – either on the islands already affected or in locations from where they will be able to readily deploy once Maria has passed.
- An additional 42 strong military resilience team has been deployed forward to British Virgin Islands prior to Hurricane Maria ready to support additional needs there.
- A military reconnaissance team has been put on standby to go to Montserrat to assess need if it is hit by Hurricane Maria.
- DFID has established logistics hubs in the Dominican Republic, Barbados and Antigua & Barbuda to ensure swift supply of relief items if required and is procuring additional supplies from Miami and Panama.
- HMs Ocean, which is due to arrive in the region at the end of the week, with 60 tonnes of DFID supplies on board will be deployed according to need once Hurricane Maria has passed.
- On the basis of the latest weather forecast, we are advising against all but essential travel to Montserrat and Anguilla and against all travel to the British Virgin Islands.
- All those in the region are urged to follow the advice of the local authorities.

To date, the UK government has allocated £57 million to the immediate response effort and agreed to match up to £3 million of public donations to the Red Cross appeal.

75 tonnes of DFID relief items have either arrived or been procured in the region including much needed food, water, nearly 3,000 shelter kits, 5,000 hygiene kits and 10,000 buckets.

40 tonnes of humanitarian aid has been distributed including over 4 tonnes of food and water on the British Virgin Islands; 720 litres of water to the Turks and Caicos Islands; and over 2 tonnes of building materials to Anguilla.