

UK Government continues to support The Bahamas relief effort

RFA Mounts Bay, working closely alongside disaster relief experts from the Department of International Development and a Foreign Office consular team in Nassau, has been providing life-saving aid and care to the people of The Bahamas since 1st September.

The UK has committed up to £1.5 million towards the immediate humanitarian response. This funding has enabled the delivery of critical aid supplies and supported the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency in its work to coordinate the international response.

With aid stores empty and the ship running low on fuel, RFA Mounts Bay will depart Great Abaco this evening to resupply. A Dutch task force is on its way to the Bahamas to continue providing aid, with HMNLS Johan de Witt due to arrive tomorrow morning.

RFA Mounts Bay was the first ship to provide assistance from any nation, with her arrival in the Bahamas early last week proving crucial to the effective and swift delivery of aid to those most in need. She has now distributed all of her stores which included 3,000 ration packs, nearly 100 tonnes of water, over 900 emergency shelter kits, and 1,000 hygiene kits.

DFID humanitarian experts will remain in the Bahamas after RFA Mounts Bay departs. This is part of DFID's ongoing support to the local authorities to help get aid to those in need and support the co-ordination of the international response.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

I would like to thank RFA Mounts Bay and her crew for their tireless work. Their dedication to providing immediate and life-saving support to the Bahamian people has laid the vital ground work for other nations to join the relief effort.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

My thoughts are with all those people in desperate need following this devastating hurricane. DFID humanitarian experts will stay on the island and work with international partners to continue to support the people of Bahamas.

The crew of RFA Mounts Bay have set the important ground work for the Bahamian government, other nations such as United States, the Netherlands, Jamaica, Turks & Cacaos Islands, and international aid agencies to continue

providing relief. The ship has played a vital role in enabling support to reach some of the worst hit areas by clearing roads and access routes to allow aid to flow.

After replenishing aid, RFA Mounts Bay's next task is to return to the Caribbean region in anticipation of subsequent weather systems. She will be on standby to support the over 200,000 British citizens resident in the Overseas Territories as well as other regional partners for the duration of the hurricane season.

RFA Mounts Bay has been stationed in the region since June to provide humanitarian assistance during the hurricane season.

Her crew have worked tirelessly to ensure the communities on Great Abaco Island have had access to the most basic needs such as food, water, and shelter in the immediate aftermath of the worst storm the islands have ever seen.

HMS Protector has also been used as part of the relief effort in the region and is en route to the region with 23 tonnes of Bermudan aid for further distribution around the Bahamas.

The UK is continuing to assist British Nationals in The Bahamas, and their families in the UK. A consular team have been deployed to help British who are facing difficulties in the wake of the hurricane.