

# UK must pledge long-term support for Barbuda after Hurricane Irma

The UK Government must do more to help Barbuda rebuild for the long term after Hurricane Irma, Labour says after a meeting with the Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn, Shadow International Development Secretary Kate Osamor and Shadow Home Secretary Diane Abbott MP met Prime Minister Browne and High Commissioner Karen-Mae Hill today to get an update on the latest situation on the island.

Barbuda was entirely evacuated after the hurricane in September and requires \$250 million to rebuild its infrastructure. In the longer term, it needs support to develop resilience to the impact of climate change.

The meeting comes after Kate Osamor visited the island and met Prime Minister Browne last month.

**Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, said:**

“Barbuda was devastated by Hurricane Irma but the response from our Government was painfully slow. I was pleased to welcome the Prime Minister and High Commissioner to discuss what more needs to be done.

“The UK must provide the help Barbuda needs to rebuild now and for the long term. And we must face up to the reality of climate change and the impact it is having around the world, particularly on small island states.”

**Kate Osamor, Shadow International Development Secretary, said:**

“When I met with Prime Minister Browne last month and saw the devastation from Hurricane Irma in Barbuda with my own eyes, it was obvious the world must do much more to help those worst hit by climate disaster, who are often the least of the polluters.

“The UK’s international development policy must do more to level the playing field, and tackle the root causes of inequality, poverty and climate change.”

**Diane Abbott, Shadow Home Secretary, said:**

“The effects of climate change and rising sea levels have only worsened after the hurricanes we have seen in the past months. The Caribbean produces only a fraction of the world’s carbon emissions, so there is a responsibility on the part of big industrial countries to help those regions most at risk.

“Simple aid packages and building projects are not good enough. Those Caribbean islands most affected need support in creating sustainable defences and structures against the hurricanes to come.”