



**Parliament Statement on Hurricane Melissa  
and Support for Jamaica  
The Premier, the Hon. André M. Ebanks MP**

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**Thursday, 6 November 2025**

**Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament:**

A little over a week ago Hurricane Melissa, the most powerful storm ever recorded to strike Jamaica, tore through western Jamaica with catastrophic force before moving toward eastern Cuba as a weakened, but still powerful, Category 3 hurricane. Heavy rains associated with the system also caused devastating flooding in Haiti. The images we have seen are heart breaking: entire communities flattened, families displaced, infrastructure destroyed and tragically, lives lost.

To the people of Jamaica, Cuba, and Haiti: Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

**Jamaica: Our Shared History, Our Shared Future**

The bonds, however, between the Cayman Islands and Jamaica run deeper than geography. They are woven into our families, our culture, our history.



Many of us in this Chamber, and many Caymanians across our Islands, have spent the past several days desperately trying to reach loved ones in Jamaica. The anxiety, the fear, the relief when a call finally connects—these are the human dimensions of disaster that statistics can never capture.

### **Immediate Response and Ongoing Commitment**

Mr Speaker, this is why in the early morning of Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October, within hours of the all-clear being sounded in Kingston, our Cayman Airways relief flight was the first international aircraft to land at Norman Manley International Airport, delivering US \$200,000 in essential supplies. And Mr Speaker, that relief flight was followed shortly after by **another** Cayman Airways jet, which was the first **commercial** flight to return to Jamaica after the airport's reopening.

I will never forget the incredible image of seeing two Cayman Airways planes on the ground at Norman Manley - the first two at the stands - sending a powerful message to the world of the deep and meaningful fraternal bonds between the peoples of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.



Mr Speaker, I led that delegation alongside National Coalition For Caymanians Ministers the Hon. Jay Ebanks and the Hon. Nickolas DaCosta, and Opposition Leader the Hon. Joey Hew – demonstrating again a Cayman Islands that is unified in purpose.

I thank the Deputy Premier the Hon. Gary Ruddy and his Ministry of Tourism, and our team at Cayman Airways, for stepping up to the plate not only with the initial relief and commercial flights, but for also continuing to add extra flights to Kingston to deliver relief supplies and to bring back passengers.

I also extend special thanks to Dr Joe Marzouca, Honorary Consul for Jamaica in the Cayman Islands, whose invaluable assistance in organising the trip ensured we could respond swiftly and effectively. His dedication to Jamaica, the land of his birth; and to Cayman, his current longstanding home, exemplifies the spirit of service we all aspire to.



But that first response was only the beginning. Today I am confirming for the parliamentary record that the Government of the Cayman Islands has committed a total of US\$1.2 million in relief supplies that shall be shipped directly to the Jamaican authorities. In addition to this, I place on record that across our Islands, our community has mobilised with extraordinary compassion and efficiency.

To every single person and organisation involved in this effort, from Parliamentarians, to civil and public servants, and our wider community: You are showing the spirit and heart of our people. Thank you for showing Jamaica, the Caribbean and the world what "Caymankind" truly means.

Mister Speaker, what we are providing is not so much charity; it's solidarity. It is family helping family. While government action is essential, what truly defines us as a country is how our people respond when disasters strike – whether we're the ones taking the hit, or whether someone else is receiving the blow.



## **Innovation in Resilience: The Catastrophe Bond**

And yet Mr Speaker, even in the midst of devastation, there are lessons to be learned and innovations to be acknowledged. Case in point: Jamaica's forward-thinking approach to disaster risk management deserves special recognition.

Through a World Bank-facilitated catastrophe bond that was announced in April last year, Jamaica secured US\$150 million in parametric insurance coverage—a financial instrument specifically designed to deliver rapid, transparent relief when disaster strikes.

I commend Jamaica's Prime Minister the Hon. Andrew Holness and his Government, and Jamaica's former Minister of Finance the Hon. Dr Nigel Clarke who led these innovations during his time in office, for their foresight in building these layers of financial resilience. It is precisely this kind of preparation that will enable Jamaica to rebuild stronger than before.

Dr Clarke, whom I have worked with on FATF matters and whom I've had the pleasure of meeting socially, is a wonderful example of the heights Caribbean people can achieve if we set our minds to our goals, as Dr Clarke is now a Deputy Managing Director of the IMF (the International Monetary Fund).



## **A Lesson for the Cayman Islands**

The sobering truth is, Mr Speaker, that Hurricane Melissa could have easily tracked to the west and wreaked unthinkable damage upon the Cayman Islands. The devastation we witnessed in Jamaica could have easily been our own.

This near-miss must serve as a clarion call for our own preparedness. Like Jamaica, the Cayman Islands must develop and maintain layers of risk protection—comprehensive insurance mechanisms, emergency response systems, and innovative financial instruments like catastrophe bonds.

We cannot afford complacency. So, heaven forbid, if a disaster day comes, we must be ready to respond, to recover and to rebuild, swiftly.

Our Government readily learns from every example of disaster preparedness and recovery in our region and among neighbours farther afield, to ensure that the Cayman Islands has the resilient infrastructure necessary to protect our people, our economy, and our way of life.



## **Looking Forward: Sustained Commitment**

Mr Speaker, recovery from a disaster of this magnitude is not measured in days or weeks, but in months and years. Homes must be reconstructed. Livelihoods must be restored. Roads and vital facilities must be rebuilt. And communities must heal.

The Cayman Islands' commitment to Jamaica and to our other affected Caribbean neighbours will not end with this initial response. We will continue to assess needs and, as much as feasible, provide support through the long process of recovery and reconstruction.

We will also engage with regional partners, including CARICOM and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency to ensure coordinated, effective assistance.

And we will continue to advocate at international fora for increased climate finance, disaster risk reduction, and support for small-island developing states that face disproportionate risks from global warming.



## Conclusion

When Hurricane Ivan devastated **us** 21 years ago, we learned what it means to lose everything and what it means to have neighbours who refuse to let you face that loss alone.

Today, the Cayman Islands are privileged to be that neighbour for Jamaica, for Cuba, and for any country in our region facing the wrath of nature.

In the Caribbean region we are small islands, but we are large in spirit. Larger still in compassion. Gigantic in our commitment to one another.

To our Jamaican family and friends suffering at this time: remember the word of God in **Isaiah 41:10**: *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

We in the Cayman Islands know your strength and courage. And we will walk beside you on the long road to recovery.

Cayman stands with Jamaica. Today, tomorrow, and for as long as it takes.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

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