

IOM Caribbean: Hurricane Melissa

Situation report	No. 2
Publication date	30 October 2025
Reporting period	24 October 2025 – 30 October 2025
Contact information	<p>Jamaica and The Bahamas:</p> <p>Natasha Greaves: Head of Office a.i. Jamaica ngreaves@iom.int</p> <p>Jean-Philippe Antolin Caribbean Emergency Coordinator: jantolin@iom.int</p> <p>Patrice Quesada, Chief of Country Office with Coordination Functions Barbados: pquesada@iom.int</p> <p>Jan-Willem Wegdam, Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM): jwegdam@iom.int</p> <p>Haiti:</p> <p>Gregoire Goodstein, Chief of Mission: ggoodstein@iom.int</p> <p>Angela Osti, Emergency Coordinator a.i.: aosti@iom.int</p> <p>Dominican Republic:</p> <p>Alba Goycochea, Chief of Mission: agoycochea@iom.int</p> <p>Cuba:</p> <p>Sonia Karakadze, Head of Office: skarakadze@iom.int</p> <p>Mariel Rodríguez, Emergency Surge Support, marierodrig@iom.int</p>

Executive Summary

Hurricane Melissa weakened after making historic landfall in Jamaica as a Category 5 storm before moving northeast past Cuba toward The Bahamas, causing extensive flooding, wind damage and power outages across parts of the Caribbean. Torrential rainfall, life-threatening storm surge and landslides have resulted in widespread flooding and multiple fatalities in Jamaica, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Cuba and The Bahamas.

As of midday 30 October, around **30,000 people are currently displaced in Jamaica**, with persons staying in upwards of 520 shelters (ODPEM Press conference 30 October). ODPEM also reports that makeshift shelters have emerged, and efforts have been made to deliver supplies, albeit limited. Haiti's southern departments remain under red alert, while Cuba is experiencing challenges in accessing affected areas and The Bahamas have launched large-scale evacuations in anticipation of severe impacts as the storm moves north.

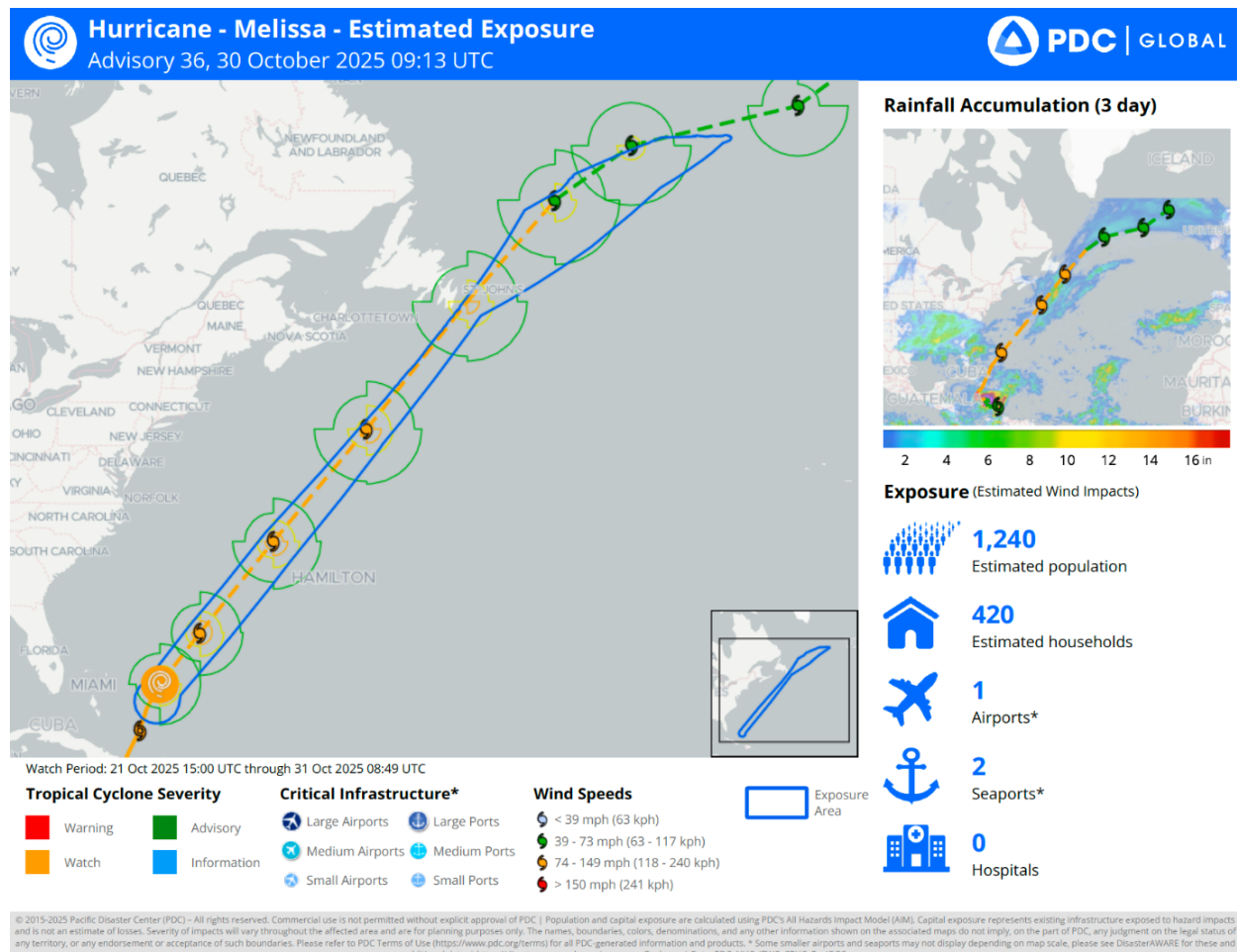
IOM, in coordination with CDEMA, UNETT and national authorities, based on country coordination mechanisms, has activated preparedness and response measures across the affected countries, including deployment of Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) tools, pre-positioning of Non-Food Items (NFIs) and emergency shelter supplies, and co-leadership of the Shelter Technical Working Group in Jamaica and Cuba.

Immediate priorities include life-saving assistance, support to emergency shelters, protection of displaced and stranded populations, and rapid post-impact assessments to inform early recovery.

1. Situation overview

Hurricane Melissa formed on 25 October 2025, in the Caribbean Sea. The system initially affected Haiti as a tropical storm as early as October 23, resulting in flooding, landslides and several deaths. The system rapidly intensified into a Category 5 storm on 27 October, affecting Jamaica on 28 October resulting in catastrophic flooding, landslides and infrastructural damage in the central and western parishes.

In the evening of October 29, Hurricane Melissa moved across the southeastern and central Bahamas later in the evening. Maximum sustained winds reached near 90 mph (150 km/h) with higher gusts (*Figure 1: DPC Global - Hurricane - Melissa - Estimated Exposure Advisory 36, 30 October 2025 09:13 UTC*).

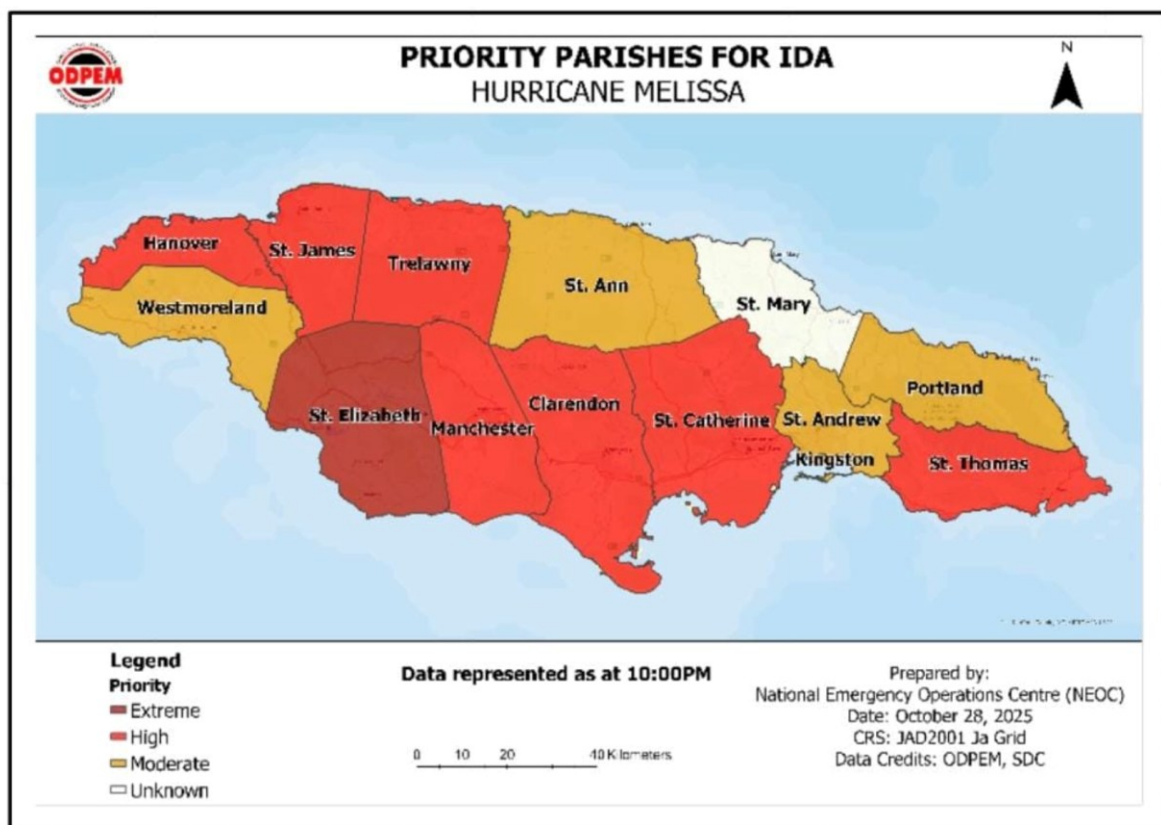


As of this report, Hurricane Melissa has now passed out of the affected region and continues to move away into the open Atlantic. While immediate life-threatening conditions associated with the storm have ceased, significant impacts remain across Haiti, Jamaica, and the Bahamas.

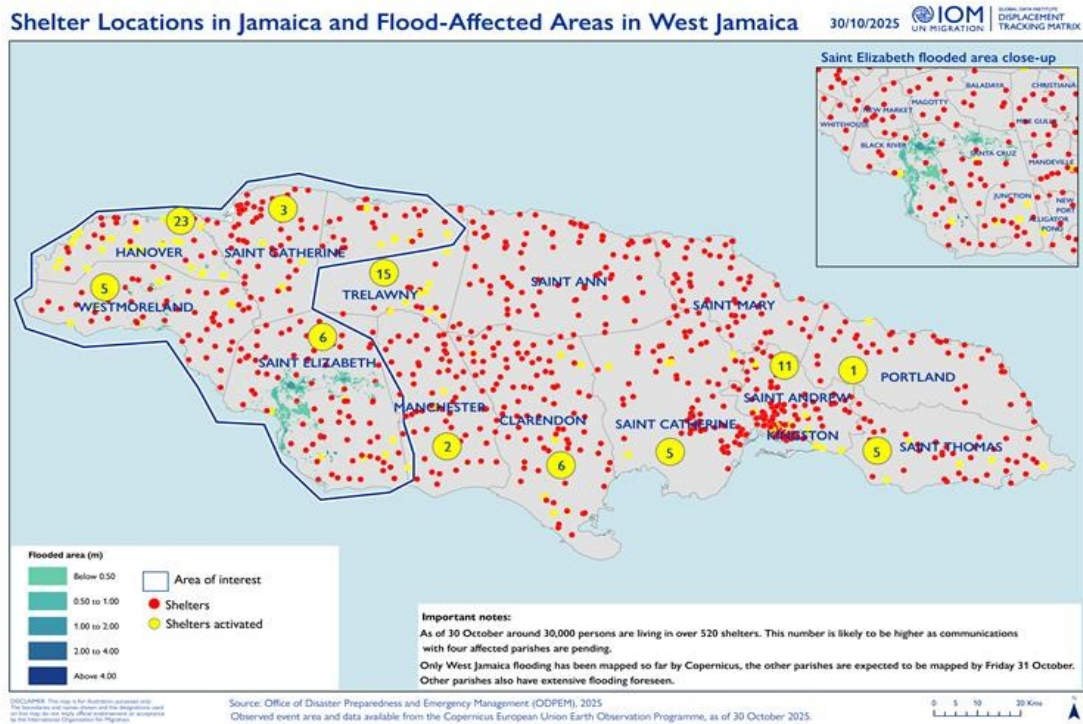
2. Situation updates by country

Jamaica

Melissa, the first Category 5 hurricane on record to directly strike Jamaica, crossed the western part of the country on 28 October, bringing catastrophic winds and rainfall with life-threatening storm surge along the south coast that are contributing to widespread flooding. St Elizabeth, St James, Trelawny and Westmoreland are the most affected parishes. The government has re-iterated that shelters will remain open as long as is needed. (Figure 2 ODPEM National Emergency Operations Centre 28 October 2025).



As of 30 October over 800 shelters remain activated across the island, with over 520 currently open, hosting an estimated 30,000 displaced persons (ODPEM Press Conference 30 October) (Figure 3, Source: [IOM/Displacement Tracking Matrix \(DTM\) 2025](#) using source data: ODPEM as of 30 October 2025. Observed event area and data available from the Copernicus European Union Earth Observation Programme, as of 30 October 2025).



Haiti

As of 29 October 2025, the Ouest, Sud, Nippes and Grand'Anse departments remain under red alert for cyclones, while the Artibonite and Nord-Ouest department remains under orange alert. Following the Direction Générale de la Protection Civile (DGPC, in English) press release issued at 12:00 p.m., the Artibonite and Nord-Ouest departments have also been placed under orange alert. The Sud-Est is under a red alert for heavy rainfall and an orange alert for waves threatening the Sud-Est coast.

Dominican Republic

Since 28 October 2025, the National Emergency Operations Center (COE) maintains red alerts in four southern provinces of Barahona, Pedernales, Independencia, and Bahoruco due to continued heavy rainfall, flooding, and landslides linked to Hurricane Melissa.

According to COE Situation Report No. 16, more than 3,700 people are displaced, 757 houses affected, and over 500,000 people lack access to safe water following damage to 52 aqueducts.

The Ministry of Public Health (MSP) has activated epidemiological surveillance and WASH coordination (GASH), while MOPC, INAPA, and CAASD are leading drainage, debris removal, and emergency water supply efforts. The Ministry of Environment (MARENA) continues riverbank restoration and erosion control.

The Government, through the COE and the Ministry of the Presidency, is assessing whether to request the declaration of a national state of emergency, depending on the evolution of weather conditions and the cumulative impacts in the whole country.

The COE, Civil Protection, and UN partners, including IOM, remain in close coordination to monitor impacts, support early recovery, and address protection and humanitarian needs.

Cuba

Melissa made landfall on October 29, at 3:05 a.m. in Guamá, Santiago de Cuba province, and exited through Banes, Holguín, around 9 a.m. Its six-hour stay in Cuban territory left devastating impacts, including isolated communities, severe flooding and river overflows, serious damage to homes and infrastructure, as well as to electricity and telephone services. **Authorities estimate that approximately 715,000 people were evacuated ahead of the storm**, helping to prevent an even greater loss of life.

Severe damage to telecommunications is hampering access to information about the initial impact in the affected provinces, including Guantánamo, several municipalities in Santiago de Cuba and Granma, as well as towns in Holguín. Many radio stations that provide this service are offline due to power outages and connectivity issues. Challenges in accessing the affected area by IOM and humanitarian actors is preventing deployment and assistance.

Even before the storm hit, authorities in Santiago warned of people trapped in their homes by landslides, including children and the elderly, as well as flooding in urban and rural areas. In Granma, the municipalities of Buey Arriba, Guisa, Bartolomé Masó, Jiguaní, and Bayamo have been particularly affected by river flooding. Hundreds of communities were cut off by blocked roads, 241 of them in Santiago de Cuba, affecting 140,000 people, a number that could increase significantly due to landslides and flooding. From Granma, there are reports of the Jiguaní and Bayamo rivers overflowing, a scenario that, according to residents, exceeds the devastation caused by the catastrophic cyclone Flora in 1963.

Significant damage to healthcare infrastructure, especially in Santiago de Cuba and Holguín. Serious repercussions at the Juan Bruno Zayas Alfonso Hospital, which is responsible for caring for seriously ill mothers in Santiago de Cuba. The force of Hurricane Melissa has created an unprecedented and particularly difficult scenario for the eastern region, characterized by intense and widespread rainfall in five provinces, soil saturated by previous rains, an epidemiological situation complicated by a high incidence of arboviruses, and an electrical system with low generation capacity following the closure of several thermoelectric power plants in eastern Cuba.

Southeastern and Central Bahamas

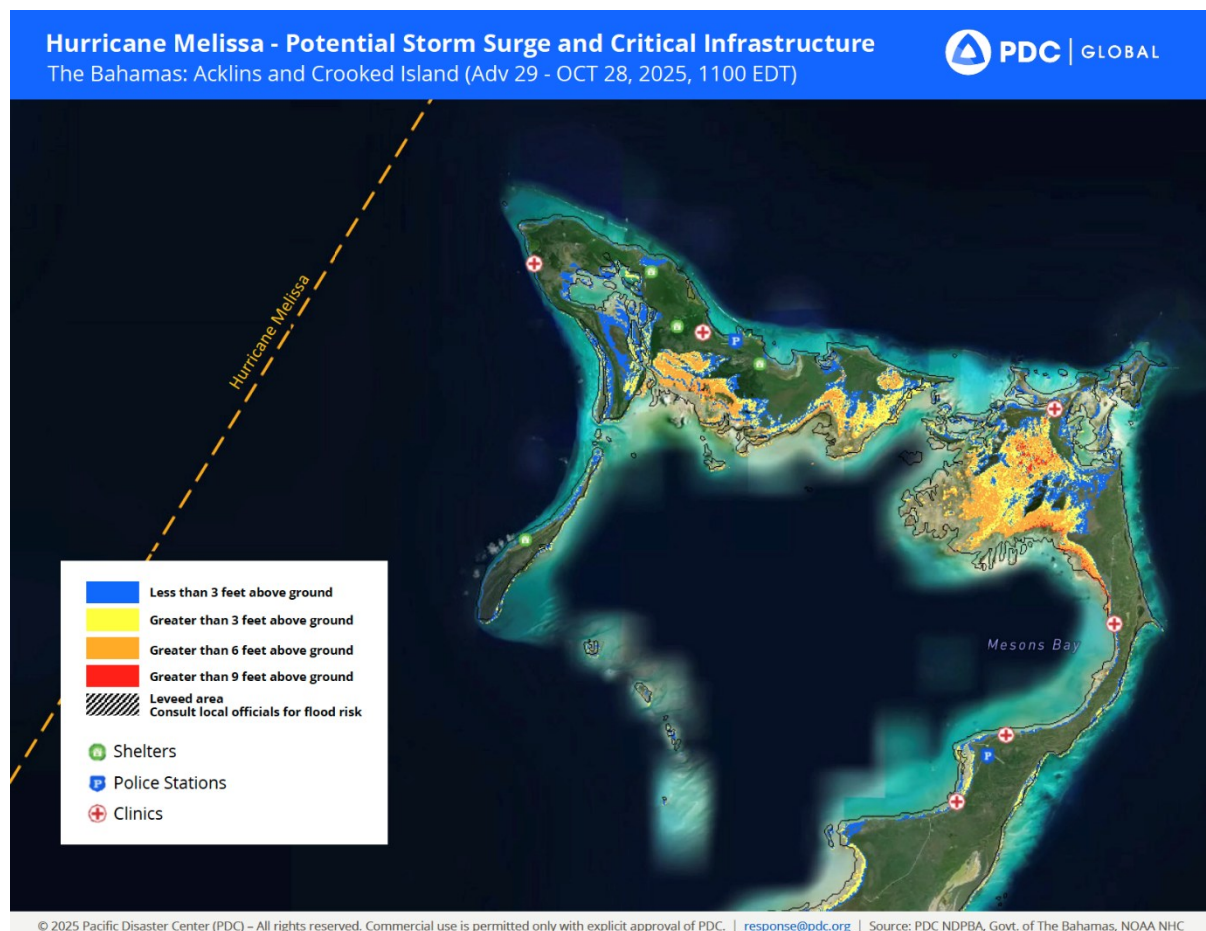
Hurricane Melissa has now moved north of The Bahamas. It crossed the southeastern and central Bahamas overnight on October 29, bringing destructive winds, torrential rainfall, and dangerous storm surge conditions to the islands of Acklins, Crooked Island, Long Cay, Mayaguana, Inagua, Ragged Island, Rum Cay, Long Island, and Exuma and its Cays. The Bahamas Department of Meteorology confirmed that the eye of the Hurricane passed near the Crooked Island passage, with hurricane-force winds and severe coastal flooding. Rainfall totals of 5 to 10 inches (125-250 mm) and storm surge of 4 to 7 feet were reported across the southern islands, resulting in widespread flooding in low-lying communities and coastal settlements.

Although Hurricane Melissa has since moved away from The Bahamas, the trailing end of the storm continued to bring heavy rain into the morning of October 30, adding to flooding and access challenges. While all hurricane warnings have ended, the national all-clear has not yet been issued as authorities continue to assess widespread flooding, infrastructure damage and hazardous marine conditions across the affected islands.

As of October 30, the DRM remains fully activated under the National Disaster Framework, coordinating initial impact and needs assessments in collaboration with CDEMA, the Royal Bahamas Defence Force, and the Bahamas Red Cross. Initial reports indicate significant impacts across several islands, particularly Long Island, where extensive flooding, roof damage, and debris-blocked roads have been reported. Power, water,

and telecommunications remain disrupted in parts of Long Island, Exuma, and Cat Island, with restoration crews prioritizing essential services such as clinics and shelters.

Mandatory evacuation orders previously issued for Acklins, Crooked Island, Long Cay, Mayaguana, Inagua and Ragged Island remain active. Approximately **1,400 residents were evacuated** to New Providence and other safer islands before air operations were suspended due to deteriorating conditions. As of October 30, around **100 individuals are in government-operated shelters** in Nassau, while most evacuees are being hosted by relatives. Assistance to those who remain will proceed after the national all-clear is issued.



Authorities report that several southern islands, including Crooked Island, Mayaguana, Ragged Island and Rum Cay, remain inaccessible due to damaged roads, flooded runways, and disrupted communications. The Royal Bahamas Defence Force and DRM are planning aerial reconnaissance flights to confirm the extent of damage and identify priority needs, once conditions and air operations permit.

While Hurricane Melissa has now moved north of the Bahamas, authorities continue to warn of prolonged flooding, hazardous marine conditions, and difficult access to several islands due to debris and infrastructure damage. Rapid needs assessments are expected to begin once the all-clear is declared, and inter-island transportation links are restored.

3. Inter-agency coordination and UN role

The UN Emergency Technical Teams (UNETT) are active in Jamaica, Cuba and The Bahamas, both countries coordinated under the same Resident Coordinator. Thematic Clusters, including Shelter and NFI are also active in Haiti.

Jamaica

IOM is co-leading, jointly with IFRC, the Shelter technical working group under the CDEMA regional response mechanism for the Eastern Caribbean. In response to Hurricane Melissa, the Jamaican authorities have asked IOM to co-lead the Shelter Technical Working Group (STWG) under the Humanitarian Assistance Committee, a set-up piloted already in last year's Beryl response. This group includes management and coordination of the collective temporary accommodations (traditionally called CCCM). IOM also technically supports CDEMA, including one IOM Shelter expert participating in the inter-agency Rapid Needs Assessments Teams (RNAT) of CDEMA/OCHA for deployment as soon as possible.

On 29 October IOM, along with WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and PAHO, has packed joint relief supplies in Barbados for a sea lift to Jamaica once weather conditions allow. The vessel departed evening of 29 October on route to Jamaica via Guadeloupe.

Haiti

In Haiti, coordination efforts in response to Hurricane Melissa, with the national emergency agency Direction Générale de la Protection Civile (DGPC) fully mobilized alongside national hydrometeorological services. IOM is coordinating with OCHA and UN agencies and local partners to ensure aligned preparedness measures and assessment of the damages and needs— including daily high-level meetings convened by the Humanitarian Coordinator with DGPC and UN leads. IOM co-leads the Shelter and CCCM cluster in the country.

Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic, the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETE) remains active and in continuous coordination with the National Emergency Operations Center (COE, Centro de Operaciones de Emergencias), under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO). The Government has maintained red alerts in four provinces.

IOM actively participates in UNETE coordination meetings and maintains direct liaison with the COE, Civil Protection, monitoring potential impacts on vulnerable and migrant populations. IOM has prepositioned non-food items (NFI) and stands ready to deploy Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) teams to assess displacement and humanitarian needs in the most affected provinces — Barahona, Bahoruco, Independencia, and Pedernales.

Cuba

IOM is the main counterpart of the Civil Defense in Cuba for evacuation shelters and emergency shelter response. In Coordination with the Office of the Resident Coordinator, a merged sector of Housing (under UNDP leadership) and Shelter (Under IOM leadership, including evacuation shelter management and coordination) is stepping up for the development of the interagency strategy for response to Melissa.

IOM is deploying a surge shelter coordinator in the country to support multisectoral evaluations and the shelter response strategy, in support to the Civil Defense.

Southeastern Bahamas

IOM continues coordination with the DRM authority, which has acknowledged IOM's availability to support national response and recovery activities. In collaboration with CDEMA, IOM is monitoring post-impact developments and is ready to support assessments and response operations as needed. Coordination is ongoing through the UNETT under the Resident Coordinator's Office to ensure alignment with national and regional response mechanisms.

4. IOM response

JAMAICA

Ongoing Operations

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

- Temporary activation of Melissa Emergency Visualization tab on the LAC Pre-Evacuation Portal. Geolocation and update of evacuation centers in affected islands: Jamaica and The Bahamas (in progress), Haiti and Dominican Republic.
- Outreach and data sharing to relevant data stakeholders via the IM working group: CDEMA, ODPEM and DRM, Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT), and OCHA, including REDLAC partners in the coordination meetings at regional level
- Map production with shelters and flooding level data from Copernicus overlaid
- 4 IOM staff deploying arriving 31 October in Jamaica.

Emergency Shelter and NFI, including temporary collective accommodation

Distributions of Shelter and Essential household items

- Co-leading the Caribbean Shelter Technical Working Group, monitoring the international deployments of staff and supplies.
- French navy ship has departed for Jamaica 29 October with Emergency Shelter and NFI items from IOM warehouse in CDEMA/WFP logistics hub in Barbados. A total of **4,470 essential relief items** have been prepared for dispatch to support affected populations in Jamaica following Hurricane Melissa. The items include:
 - With support of **DG ECHO** as part of last year replenishment, a total of 700 tarpaulins, 400 ropes, and 360 shelter repair kits are being dispatched to support affected households.
 - Complementing these, **Goods360 donations** include 16 generators, 65 air mattresses, 1,536 hygiene kits, 648 Luci solar lamps, and bedding sets for immediate distribution to shelters and priority communities.
 - Additional lighting and shelter items are being mobilized from **IOM MIRAC** stocks, comprising 20 LED lamps and 15 small indoor tents, while **Amazon** has provided 708 LuminAID Survivor Solar Dual Lamps and Chargers to enhance lighting capacity in collective centres and remote areas.

- These NFIs will be distributed in coordination with ODPEM to address the most urgent shelter and household needs of displaced populations across affected parishes.

Emergency Shelter assistance

- **AirBnB.org** funding is available for short-term accommodation programmes for the most vulnerable groups and IOM staff in emergency response tasks. It must serve as a pathway to a long-term solution for the affected population.
- In coordination with DTM Team, IOM will support in shelters in Jamaica, initially with monitoring services in coordination with the Jamaican authorities, ODPEM.

Planned operations

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

- Rapid launch of **DTM multisectoral assessments** in shelters across affected parishes to identify shelter occupancy and multi sectoral priority needs, to be integrated into ODPEM Shelter monitoring.
- Shelter population disaggregated by age and sex, presence of vulnerable groups including chronic illness, pregnancy, persons with disabilities, priority needs, tracking, can be expanded as b
- Mapping using Copernicus satellite imagery and Microsoft AI for Good Lab Footprints data
- Shelter/housing damage analysis combining Microsoft Footprints and Copernicus satellite imagery once available.

Emergency Shelter and NFI

- Distributions of Relief items to affected communities, in coordination with Humanitarian Assistance Committee and supporting Government of Jamaica with the coordination of all distributions of relief goods.
- Temporary Rental Assistance Programmes for the most vulnerable that have lost their houses staying on the affected islands, if the housing stock allows, as well as those evacuated to closer non or less-affected islands.

Evacuations

- Apart from provision of temporary shelter, mentioned above, if requested by local authorities, support with evacuations between affected and non or less-affected islands.

Assistance to Stranded Migrants:

- In coordination with the ODPEM and local partners, identify and register stranded or isolated migrants affected.
- Provide temporary accommodation, food, NFIs, and medical support to vulnerable migrants.
- Facilitate access to consular services, recovery of lost documentation, and assisted voluntary return where required.
- Support the government in delivering risk and safety communication targeting migrants and displaced populations, including information on available services.

HAITI

Ongoing operations

- IOM has reached a total of **2,905 families with cash assistance**, while approximately 100 cases are still pending with the service provider.
- On October 29, 42 brigadiers responsible for evacuation shelters in Artibonite department received financial support to activate around **55 evacuation shelters**. By the evening, four shelters were reported to be hosting **440 people**.
- In the Sud department, **58 evacuation shelters** are still hosting approximately **2,556 families** (8,944 people) who are waiting for their homes and communities to become accessible.
- Since 24 October, nearly **1,582 shelter kits** (plastic sheets and fixing kits) have been distributed to improve conditions in more than 26 IDP sites and host family locations through the IOM Common Pipeline, with the participation of partners: IOM, ACTED, ASHAPE, APRONHA, CESVI, and ICDH. Additional assessments are ongoing to address needs under MAPAP.
- IOM and the Shelter/NFI Cluster are monitoring the situation in Petite Goâve, where the collapse of the Rouyonne River bridge banks caused flooding. The SNFI Cluster is mobilizing Common Pipeline (CP) partners in the area to assess damages, and CP is preparing to provide SNFI kits from prepositioned stock in Camp Perrin (Sud).

Planned operations

- Logistics preparation to preposition additional SNFI stock from Port-au-Prince to Gonaives, and for prepositioning SNFI stock in Nord Ouest department.
- Coordination with Log Cluster to move additional stock to the South by boat.
- Discussions on-going with DGPC Artibonite and Nord-Ouest to evaluate the activation of evacuation shelters also in these two departments declared under orange alert.
- Awareness-raising activities in these two departments (Artibonite and Nord-Ouest) via automated calls

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Ongoing operations

- IOM is actively participating in the UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETE) coordination meetings and maintains direct liaison with the Civil Protection (Defensa Civil) in support of emergency preparedness and inter-agency coordination.
- With the support of an implementing partner, a rapid humanitarian intervention is being coordinated in Verón, La Altagracia, following a request for assistance to IOM due to heavy rains. Food kits containing raw ingredients and non-food items (NFI) will be distributed.
- Plans have been prepared to quickly procure **food kits** with raw ingredients and non-food items (NFI) for immediate deployment should they be required for affected migrants.
- IOM's communication and visibility team has also provided technical input to support the inter-agency communication working group, reinforcing community awareness and preparedness messages disseminated nationally through radio and social media.
- Through the **AirBnB.org** partnership, funding is available to provide temporary accommodation for the most vulnerable groups, prioritizing displaced and at-risk populations. The initiative aims to facilitate a pathway toward durable and long-term housing solutions, in coordination with local authorities and partners.

Planned operations

- Subject to funding availability, IOM plans to assist up to **1500 affected families** (approximately 6000 individuals) through the distribution of non-food items (NFI), 1000 food kits and protection monitoring in coordination with the COE and UN partners.
- IOM will deploy **Displacement Tracking Matrix** (DTM) teams to assess displacement patterns, humanitarian needs, and access to services in the 10 priority provinces.
- The Organization will continue supporting UNETE and risk communication activities, ensuring that response actions are aligned with COE priorities and national response mechanisms.

CUBA

Ongoing operations

- IOM is currently conducting needs assessments to inform the upcoming response to Hurricane Melissa.
- Preliminary findings indicate that the main needs for Cuban affected population are shelter in collective evacuation centers and at affected areas with emergency shelter, including NFI support such as mosquito nets, given the ongoing arboviral disease outbreak in the country, as well as solar lamps, in light of the current challenges affecting the national power supply.
- Additional needs are being identified in coordination with UN Agencies and the Civil Defense as assessments continue in coordination with partners on the ground.

Planned operations

- In coordination with Civil Defense, distribution of essential household items to affected populations through the mobilization of IOM-UNHRD stocks in Panama.
- Ensure minimum conditions for temporary post-disaster shelter for affected populations, prioritizing vulnerable groups, through shelters, as well as temporary facilities and shelter housing directly in affected homes.
- Improve the basic living conditions of people affected by Hurricane Melissa through a dual strategy of assisting those affected who remain in their homes, with support in temporary facilities and shelter housing, and those evacuated to shelters.
- Ensure inclusive management of shelters by strengthening the knowledge and skills of space managers, as well as monitoring basic services and protection.
- Support, in coordination with health authorities, the response to the current high epidemiological risk situation due to the spread of arboviruses by providing mosquito nets and repellents.

SOUTHEASTERN AND CENTRAL BAHAMAS

Ongoing operations

- In coordination with the DRM, IOM is supporting preparedness efforts under the National Disaster Response Framework.
- Through its partners; Bahamas Red Cross, Hands for Hunger, and the Organization for Responsible Governance (ORG), IOM is available to assist government-led response operations, including shelter management, evacuation support, and distribution of relief items to affected communities.
- The DTM is on standby for activation to collect initial population and needs data in evacuation centers.

- Emergency shelter and NFI stocks are being mobilized through CDEMA/WFP logistics hub in Barbados for deployment to impacted islands if requested.
- IOM continues coordination with UN, CDEMA, and DRM partners to ensure protection standards in shelters, with special attention to vulnerable and migrant populations.

Planned operations

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM):

- In coordination with DRM, activate rapid DTM assessments in coordination with DRM and The Bahamas Red Cross once access to the affected islands is restored.
- Conduct population tracking in evacuation centers and temporary shelters to collect data disaggregated by age, sex, and vulnerability.
- Use findings to inform humanitarian planning and coordination, including targeted shelter, NFI, and protection interventions.
- Deploy additional technical capacity from the IOM Regional Office in Panama to support real-time data analysis and reporting.

Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFI):

- Provide emergency shelter kits, NFIs, and cleaning materials for displaced households and communities affected by flooding or structural damage.
- Support the management and coordination of emergency shelters, ensuring standards of safety, accessibility, and privacy for all residents.
- Mobilize additional regional stocks through the logistics hub in Barbados as needed.
- In coordination with DRM and local partners, prepare community clean-up and recovery support to enable safe return and early recovery of affected populations.

Assistance to Stranded Migrants:

- In coordination with the DRM and local partners, identify and register stranded or isolated migrants affected.
- Provide temporary accommodation, food, NFIs, and medical support to vulnerable migrants.
- Facilitate access to consular services, recovery of lost documentation, and assisted voluntary return where required.
- Support the government in delivering risk and safety communication targeting migrants and displaced populations, including information on available services.

IOM continues monitoring the situation in those countries already affected by Hurricane Melissa: Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, as well as on further impact in Cuba, The Bahamas, and Turks and Caicos.

IOM is thankful to its donors for all their support: CERF Anticipatory Action, AirBnB.org and DG-ECHO.