

People walk along a road during the passing of Hurricane Melissa in Rocky Point, Jamaica, Tuesday, 28 October 2025. (AP Photo/Matias Delacroix)

Hurricane Melissa Jamaica

Humanitarian Situation Report No.2

Reporting Period: 31 October 2025

Highlights

Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica on 28 October 2025 as a Category 5 storm near New Hope with sustained winds of 185 mph (295 kph), a 9–13 ft storm surge and 15–30 in of rainfall, marking the most powerful hurricane to strike the country since 1988.

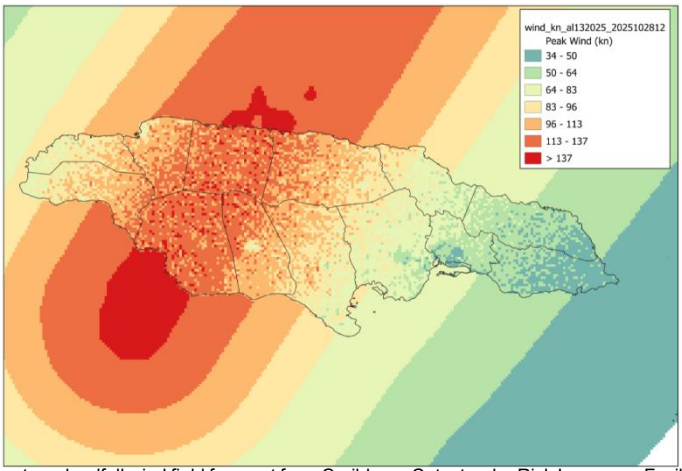
- Severe impacts were recorded across St. Elizabeth, Manchester, Clarendon, St. James, Trelawny and Westmoreland, including extensive flooding, landslides, collapsed roofs, hospital and school damage, and prolonged power and communication outages.
- As of 30 October, more than 13,000 people are sheltering in government facilities, and over 500,000 residents remain without electricity. Internet connectivity has fallen to roughly 30 per cent of normal levels.
- The Jamaican government has declared a national disaster area, launched the "Support Jamaica" donation platform and activated emergency coordination through the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), with the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) leading inter-agency support.
- UNICEF estimates that over 280,000 children may require humanitarian assistance and therefore has activated its emergency response, prioritising safe water and sanitation (WASH), nutrition, continuity of learning, humanitarian cash assistance, child protection (including gender-based violence (GBV) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), unaccompanied and separated children and risk mitigation, and life-saving health interventions.

Estimated Situation in Numbers*

Estimated Affected Population:
1,615,000*

280,000*
Estimated children in need of humanitarian assistance

864,000*
Estimated people in need



Last pre-landfall wind field forecast from Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facilit (CCRIF) shows Hurricane Melissa, Tuesday, 28 October 2025.



Satellite image provided by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration shows Hurricane Melissa, Tuesday, 28 October 2025. (NOAA via AP)

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Hurricane Melissa's six-hour passage across western Jamaica caused catastrophic flooding, storm surge and wind destruction. Early assessments indicate that St. Elizabeth is largely under water, while Mandeville, Montego Bay and Clarendon have suffered extensive structural losses.

Major health facilities—including Black River, Cornwall Regional, Falmouth and Noel Holmes Hospitals—sustained damage, with reports of disrupted services and flooded wards. The Plantain Garden River overflowed in St. Thomas, eroding banks and destroying property. Both international airports experienced damage, however, Norman Manley International is opened as of 30 October to support relief operations.

Essential and emergency services remain operational with minimal capacity, while most non-essential government offices are closed, pending restoration of access. Many communities remain isolated by blocked roads, downed power lines and communications outages. Water systems have been interrupted in multiple parishes, raising public-health risks of multiple diseases.

UNICEF estimates that 864,000 people, including 280,000 children, are affected. Initial priorities include restoring access to safe water and sanitation, resuming primary health care and nutrition services, protecting vulnerable children and adolescents, ensuring continuity of education, and providing cash and in-kind assistance to stabilise households' immediate needs for food and shelter. UNICEF carried out an initial field visit on 29 October, witnessing needs firsthand of those impacted by Melissa. UNICEF will be working closely with Government and other partners in the upcoming days to carry out joint needs assessments, which will enable ensure that its response is aligned to current situation.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

UNICEF's immediate response is being implemented in close coordination with the Government of Jamaica through the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), line ministries and partners.

Initial field reports confirm severe damage to infrastructure, schools, health facilities and water systems. Pre-positioned supplies are deployed, and assessments are under way to guide the scale-up of interventions. UNICEF's multisectoral approach integrates life-saving assistance with early recovery, including cash support for vulnerable households, while ensuring gender-based violence (GBV) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) risk mitigation and accountability to affected populations (AAP).

WASH

In coordination with ODPEM and local authorities, UNICEF is preparing to distribute six tonnes of WASH supplies, including WASH dignity kits, 12-litre water containers and cleaning kits for shelters and childcare institutions. Water trucking and the installation of hand-washing stations in critical facilities are planned, alongside rehabilitation of community water points with pumps, generators and pipe repairs. Hygiene promotion campaigns will include menstrual hygiene management. We will also be supporting the Ministry of health and Wellness with water purification resources and vector control equipment. UNICEF is also supporting the WASH sector Coordination at the regional and local level.

Health & Nutrition

UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) and partners to restore primary health care and maternal, newborn and child health services. The following major health system risks have been identified by the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO)

- Emergency and primary care services are under strain, with several hospitals operating over capacity.
- 18% of facilities in the Western Region report critical generator failures, threatening continuity of care.
- 15% of facilities in the Southeast Region require larger diesel tanks, exposing vulnerabilities in fuel storage and backup power.
- Imaging and diagnostic services are compromised in key hospitals due to lack of generator connectivity.

Rapid nutrition needs assessments are planned to determine specific nutrition needs. Emergency nutrition supplies are being mobilised, including micronutrient powders, and iron and folic acid supplements to prevent the deterioration of the nutrition status for more than 18,000 children under five and pregnant and lactating women in affected parishes. Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) tapes, anthropometric tools and therapeutic foods will support identification and treatment of severe acute malnutrition. Notably, damage has been reported to several Baby-Friendly Hospitals, including Black River, Noel Holmes and Mandeville Regional Hospital impacting the quality of neonatal care and nutrition. UNICEF will support the government to scale up the promotion of breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling in hospitals, shelters and child-friendly spaces.

Education
UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information to enable continuity of learning. Emergency supplies, including 210 school-in-a-box kits and 210 early childhood development kits, will reach the most-affected schools. Additional teaching and learning materials will be provided as needed, with up to US$500 per school for up to 100 schools allocated for emergency supplies. Infrastructural repairs will also be supported in at least 10 schools positively impacting close to 10,000 students, their parents and teachers. The UNICEF Jamaica Country Office *Be Prepared* psychosocial first aid focused activity guide will also be reprinted to reach close to 20,000, children and a second volume developed as part of a series of mental health and psychosocial support interventions. 600 teachers from the most affected schools will receive training in the Return to Happiness (RTH) methodology to support their own recovery and enable them to better support some 18,000 students.

Child Protection
UNICEF, in close coordination with the Child Protection and Family Services Agency, continues to monitor the situation of children in residential care and foster families following Hurricane Melissa. The Agency has commenced an island-wide assessment to determine the overall impact, with preliminary findings indicating no structural damage and all children accounted for and safe, though power and communication disruptions persist. The Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation reports significant structural damage and connectivity losses across centres in St. Elizabeth, Clarendon, St. James, Westmoreland and Manchester. The Department of Correctional Services reports that all juvenile centres remain secure and operational on backup power, with only minor water intrusion observed. The Government has identified urgent needs for non-food items (NFIs) and generators to ensure continuity of essential child protection services and maintain communication with facilities in affected areas. A contingency Programme Document with Children First Agency is being activated to deliver community-based outreach, psychosocial support, and gender-based violence in emergencies (GBViE) awareness in shelters and affected communities, with deployment prioritized for the most impacted areas.

Humanitarian Cash Assistance
The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) has fully activated disaster protocols, mobilizing its 14 parish offices, and pre-positioned relief supplies. Damage assessments are underway using mobile tools. UNICEF is using wind impact benchmarks to guide the immediate vertical expansion of social protection for children within households on the Programme of Advancement through Health and Education (PATH), in collaboration with MLSS and UN partners, harmonizing cash transfers across the hardest-hit parishes to ensure timely, equitable support for more than 80,000 children (including children with disabilities) in vulnerable households.

Cross-cutting – Social and Behaviour Change (SBC)
Child-sensitive public communication campaigns are disseminating safety, nutrition and service information via U-Report, social media, youth networks and shelters. Community feedback is being gathered through partner mechanisms and digital surveys to inform programme adjustments and strengthen accountability to affected populations.

Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination
Coordination platforms have been established with UNICEF line ministries including Ministries of Health, Education, Labour and Social Security, ODPEM and other public institutions and local partners in Jamaica. UNICEF is also actively participating in regional, sub-regional, national and local meetings with the Caribbean Development Partners Group – Disaster Management (CDPG-DM) through the Thematic Working Groups, United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) and National Emergency Operations Centre meetings. UNICEF continues to work closely with implementing partners and key government agencies to ensure readiness and a coordinated response.

As the co-chair for the UNETT, UNICEF is facilitating the harmonization of the UN response alongside government authorities and humanitarian partners. UNICEF is taking the lead in WASH, Nutrition and Education in coordination with other UN agencies.

Funding Overview and Partnerships
UNICEF is reaching out to donors and private sector partners to secure timely, flexible funding for immediate priorities when the government and communities require support. Immediate fundraising requests will be finalized following rapid needs assessments and ongoing coordination.

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