

HURRICANE MELISSA

Jamaica

PAHO



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Situation Report #5 - 31-October-2025

HIGHLIGHTS

- Hurricane Melissa made landfall on Jamaica's south coast at 12 noon on 28 October 2025 near New Hope, Westmoreland with catastrophic damage sustained in the Southern and Western Regions.
- The Meteorological Service discontinued the Flash Flood Watch for low-lying and flood-prone areas for all parishes effective immediately as at 29 October 2025.
- Several health facilities have sustained significant damage, and the St. Elizabeth Health Services are significantly compromised. Communication remains significantly limited in some areas. Field assessments are in process. Several roads remain impassable.
- As at 30 October 2025, nineteen deaths have been confirmed due to injuries sustained prior to and during the hurricane.
- PAHO is working to support the MOHW in preparedness and response efforts, particularly in the areas of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Post-Disaster Infrastructure Assessments, and continuity of health services. The WASH specialist arrived in country on 31 October 2025.
- The activation level of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) remains at Level 3.

IN NUMBERS

Approx. 2.8m (entire population)

Potentially exposed¹

19 Deaths²

96 Injured³

N/A Missing⁴

N/A Evacuated⁵

5 Major hospitals⁶ severely impacted; widespread damage to health facilities in Western and Southern Regions

1: Statistical Institute of Jamaica data

2: <https://jamaica-gleaner.com/article/news/20251031/death-toll-likely-rise-five-more-bodies-reported-western-jamaica-morris-dixon>

3,4,5,6: Ministry of Health and Wellness HEOC report #8 (30 October 2025, 8:00 p.m.)



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Service Delivery

Primary Care:

- Primary care services are gradually resuming, except for Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA), due to inaccessibility and damage assessments pending, and North-East Regional Health Authority (NERHA), which could not provide detailed updates due to communication challenges.

South-East Regional Health Authority (SERHA):

- St. Catherine: All facilities operating on tank water; 90% staff attendance.
- Kingston & St. Andrew (KSA): Most facilities re-opened except Duhaney Park Health Centre, due to structural issues.
- St. Thomas: Four facilities reopened: Seaforth, Landewy, Morant Bay, Port Morant.
- 31 additional health centers are expected to reopen soon.

NERHA:

- Port Antonio Health Centre is fully functional, with minor leaks and full staff turnout.
- Manchaneil and Fair Prospect Health Centres are operational, with no major damage reported.
- St. Ann's Bay Health Centre (Smart Facility) is intact.
- Exchange Health Centre reported minor water intrusion.

Secondary Care:

- Most hospitals continue to operate in emergency mode, with partial functionality.

Western Regional Health Authority (WRHA):

- Cornwall Regional Hospital: The emergency department has been relocated to the radiology area; the children's ward roof has collapsed.
- Savanna-la-Mar Hospital: Severe structural damage; critical oxygen shortage; operating theatres non-functional, no lab service.
- Falmouth Hospital: Roof loss; patients relocated to operating theatre.
- Noel Holmes Hospital: Roof damage; evacuation plans aborted due to impassable roads.

SRHA:

- Mandeville Regional Hospital: Flooding in surrounding areas; functioning on generator and tank.
- May Pen Hospital: Partial operation; adequate staffing and supplies.
- Percy Junor Hospital: Pediatric ward relocated due to roof leakage.
- Lionel Town Hospital: Structural damage under assessment.

SERHA:

- Spanish Town Hospital: Dialysis suspended due to water issues.
- Kingston Public Hospital: Roof leaks; emergency surgeries moved to the Programme for the Reduction of Maternal and Child Mortality (PROMAC) unit.
- Victoria Jubilee Hospital: Minor leakage in labour room.
- St. Joseph Hospital: The Linear Accelerator machine used for radiation therapy in cancer treatment is currently being powered by a backup generator to ensure continuity of treatment, however this affects availability, safety, protocols application and scheduling.
- National Chest Hospital: Leaks are affecting multiple service areas, and the facility is experiencing staffing shortages.

NERHA:

- Annotto Bay Hospital: Roof leaks; a portable x-ray machine has been deployed to maintain basic imaging services while the main x-ray unit is non-functional due to air conditioning failure.
- Port Maria Hospital: Limited water and staffing.
- Port Antonio Hospital: Operating on tank and generator; partial connectivity.

Patient transfer and evacuation:

- Three critically ill children were airlifted from Black River Hospital to UHWI for specialized care.
- 18 patients at Noel Holmes Hospital are being evacuated due to flooding and structural damage.

- Patients from the Western Children & Adolescent Hospital were transferred to Cornwall.
- Patients from Black River Hospital were transferred with ground transportation coordinated via JDF Medevac.

Bed Occupancy

- SERHA: Ranges from 44% (Victoria Jubilee) to 74% (Spanish Town).
- NERHA: Ranges from 31% (Annotto Bay) to 69% (St. Ann's Bay).
- SRHA: Data pending review.
- WRHA: Reports incomplete due to connectivity issues, but Cornwall and Savanna-la-Mar are under strain.

Surveillance

- As at 30 October 2025 at 8pm local time, 96 injuries, including eight deaths, were reported for persons treated in the Accident & Emergency Department of hospitals in all four regions.
 - For injuries, excluding deaths, reports include 35 persons in the Southeast Regional Health Authority (SERHA), 23 persons in the Western Regional Health Authority (WRHA), 23 persons in the Northeast Regional Health Authority (NERHA), and 7 persons in the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA).
- Information about the 96 injuries, including deaths, was available as follows:
 - Sex: 47 injuries occurred in males, 11 in females. Data on sex were not available for 38 persons.
 - Age: Three injuries occurred in those 0-14 years of age, 16 injuries in those 15-29 years of age, 12 injuries in those 30-44 years of age, 16 injuries in those 45-59 years of age, and 18 injuries in those 60 years of age and older. Data on age was not available for 31 persons.
 - The main mechanism of injury were slips or falls, affecting more than 40 persons. These occurred primarily as falls from height such as from ladders or roofs or slips in water.
 - Forty-eight (48) injuries occurred between 25-27 October, associated with incidents during storm and hurricane preparations.
- Currently, detailed and validated information is available only for those who have accessed A&E Departments in hospitals. Up-to-date information on the number of deaths and injuries is hampered by communication challenges, structural damage, and continued difficulty accessing the most highly affected communities.
- Ongoing surveillance in shelters is being conducted. As at 30 October at 8pm, no adverse health events have been reported.

Vaccination Services

- Ongoing efforts are being made to ensure that vaccines are adequately stored, and the cold chain is effectively monitored.

Nutrition

- Nutrition and dietetic services continue to report at least a 3 to 5-day food supply for some hospitals for all staff and patients.
- UN agencies have published a joint statement which highlights urgent nutrition priorities and calls for the protection and support of breastfeeding, the safe feeding of non-breastfed infants. It also calls for targeted support to meet the heightened nutritional needs of pregnant and lactating women, who are among the most vulnerable in emergency settings.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

- Continued efforts in risk communication and community engagement aim to keep the public well-informed about where and how to access mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), if needed.
- In response to the official MOHW request for support, PAHO is finalizing deployment of an MHPSS specialist to guide the response to the anticipated trauma and psychological impact on affected communities. The MHPSS specialist is anticipated to arrive in Jamaica on 3 November 2025.

- A meeting was held on 31 October 2025 with MHPSS key stakeholders to discuss coordination efforts for MHPSS and determine the next steps.
- Reports of 48-72 hour needs assessment is being received from some health authorities (SRHA, NERHA)

Environmental Health

- Focus areas remain: food safety, general sanitation, water quality, shelter management, and vector control. Environmental health assessments remain ongoing across the island.

Imaging Services

- Annotto Bay Hospital: The main X-ray unit is down due to Air Conditioning (AC) failure. Imaging services have been temporarily restored via portable X-ray machine.
- Port Antonio Hospital: The facility has limited imaging capability due to leakage in the radiology area.
- Cornwall Regional Hospital: The radiology area is not operational, as it is being used for emergency services.

Laboratory Services

- The National Laboratory Services (NLS) remain fully operational, with electricity and general operations intact for the National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) and the National Blood Transfusion Services (NBTS).
- All supplies are available, and there are sufficient reagents for three months of operations of laboratory services. Generator repairs have also been completed to ensure uninterrupted laboratory operations.
- Monitoring the supply of blood and blood products by NLS is ongoing. An update on the blood supply and quantity of platelet units is pending.
- To support the replenishment of the supply of blood and blood products, the public has been urged to donate blood. Previous security and access issues to donation centres have been resolved. The Mandeville Hospital Laboratory in Manchester parish is open for blood collection. In addition to the NBTS, donations can also be made at the National Chest Hospital in Kingston.
- PAHO is providing technical support for leptospirosis testing at the NPHL. Reagents and standard operating procedures have been provided. A virtual training was organized on 31 October for NPHL and the National Influenza Centre. The training also included a refresher on testing for Mayaro, Oropouche and Yellow Fever viruses.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Press releases, Public Service Announcements, radio and social media posts continue to advise the public in the critical areas of preparedness and response, including:
 - Medication Safety
 - Safeguarding the health of pregnant women, children, persons experiencing disability, and older persons
 - Safe storage of food and water
 - Access to services from health facilities
 - Mental health
 - Vector control disruptions
 - Emergency readiness checklists, contact numbers and guidance for evacuations



HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT

- There is a heightened risk of transmission of respiratory, vector-borne, food-borne and water-borne diseases due to the impacts on running water, pooling of water, lack of electricity and disruptions to vector control activities. MOHW continues to closely monitor preparedness and response of surveillance and laboratory systems and impacts on continuity of health services and case management.
- Telephone services and internet connectivity are being monitored to ensure timeliness of alerts and reports. No issues have been noted for attention.

- MOHW continues to monitor burn-out of staff and impacts on health infrastructure to inform service continuity during the emergency preparedness/response period.



INFRASTRUCTURE

- Widespread structural damage has been reported across all regions. This includes roof collapses, flooding, compromised buildings.
 - Savanna-la-Mar Hospital: Entire roof of one building lost.
 - Catherine Hall Warehouse: Extensive damage and looting.
 - Lucea Health Centre: Dental unit roof gone; water damage to equipment.
 - Spanish Town Hospital: Boiler down; partial internet.
 - St. Ann's Bay Hospital: Dietary department roof damaged.
 - Alexandria Community Hospital: Trees fell on building.
- 68% of the hospitals operate on generator power and use backup water supplies.
- 11 hospitals are reported as having less than 1-days' supply:
 - Savanna-la-Mar Hospital
 - Cornwall Regional Hospital
 - Falmouth Hospital
 - Noel Holmes Hospital
 - Port Maria Hospital
 - Port Antonio Hospital
 - Spanish Town Hospital
 - Kingston Public Hospital
 - National Chest Hospital
 - St. Ann's Bay Hospital
 - Lionel Town Hospital
- Water scarcity is impacting both clinical operations and infection control, especially in surgical and inpatient areas.

Phone and Radio Communications:

- Many health facilities are reporting partial or complete failure of their DECOM radios.
- This has led to:
 - Delayed reporting of facility status and patient data.
 - Limited coordination with regional health authorities and the HEOC.
 - Increased reliance on mobile phones, which are also affected by network disruptions and battery limitations.
- Facilities in Western and Southern Regions (St. Elizabeth Parish) are particularly affected due to infrastructure damage and road inaccessibility, further complicating physical delivery of communication equipment or technical support.
- The lack of reliable communication is hampering logistics, resource allocation, and emergency medical coordination.
- It also affects surveillance reporting, staff mobilization, and patient transfers, especially in remote or severely impacted areas.



WASH

- 70 NWC water supplies remain inoperable due to high turbidity and electrical outages across the island.

- PAHO remains active in the Caribbean Development Partners Group (CDPG) WASH Thematic Working Group and the National WASH Collaboration Group to provide effective and strategic support to the response under UNICEF coordination.



SHELTERS

- Approximately 900 emergency shelters have been prepared island-wide, with 694 of all shelters deemed satisfactory for occupancy, considering their public health status for housing members of the public in a disaster situation.
- As at 5pm on 29 October 2025, there were 513 emergency shelters activated islandwide.
- Seven thousand (7,000) shelters were previously reported; the number continues to decrease.
- Daily monitoring by the public health team continues.



HEALTH NEEDS

Immediate needs

- The Ministry of Health and Wellness (MOHW) has issued a national call for doctors and nurses to volunteer for the Black River Hospital and other affected areas.
- MOHW has issued a call for blood donations.
- The Preliminary National Needs List published by ODPEM, including detailed health needs, is available ODPEM at <https://supportjamaica.gov.jm/needs>. The list is based on support for response and recovery for an estimated 400,000 people affected by the hurricane.
- Assessments are ongoing to determine priority health needs.



RESPONSE

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:

- The National Emergency Operation Center remains activated at Level 3.
- The MOHW HEOC remains activated, with twice daily briefing meetings to facilitate decision-making for the health response.
- All government ministries, departments and agencies have been in the field gathering data and information to inform ongoing preparedness activities and upcoming response activities.

PAHO RESPONSE:

- PAHO JAM EOC and Incident Management Team remains activated since 26 October 2025.
- PAHO continues to provide technical guidance to the MOHW HEOC and maintains dialogue with the HDC.
- PAHO is represented at the Caribbean Development Partner Group – Disaster Management meetings, with the last meeting on 31 October, as well as in CDPG Thematic Working Groups.
- PAHO is coordinating deployment to support the MOHW requests on WASH, MHPSS and infrastructure assessments.
 - An International Consultant arrived in Jamaica on 31 October to support WASH assessment and services at health care facilities.
 - WASH supplies are underway, such as potable water testing kits, multi-parameter meters for pH, turbidity, chlorine, and salinity, coliform test kits, and incubators.

- The MHPSS specialist is anticipated to arrive in Jamaica on 3 November 2025.
- PAHO is also supporting coordination with MOHW for the deployment of international partners and Emergency Medical Teams (EMTs). PAHO EOC is deploying the Regional Advisor, EMT, Mr. Luis De La Fuente, to act as EMT coordinator in Jamaica.
- PAHO continues to provide technical support in additional critical areas, including surveillance, vector control, and continuity of health services.

COORDINATION

- PAHO is represented at UN meetings, including the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) which is held daily.
- Regular contact is established with key health sector partners.