

Press release: Priti Patel: Extra UK aid to Dominica following deadly Hurricane Maria

VIDEO: [footage of International Development Secretary arriving on Tortola, British Virgin Islands](#)

VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the damage on the British Virgin Islands](#)

VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the devastation wrought in Dominica](#)

The UK is providing a further £5 million UK aid package for Dominica, the island worst hit by Hurricane Maria, the International Development Secretary announced during a visit to the region today (Sunday 24 September).

Hurricane Maria ripped through Dominica earlier this week, leaving 98% of buildings damaged and thousands without power. It was the first category five hurricane to hit the island in living memory, affecting almost the entire 70,000 population.

The UK aid will provide immediate relief, including shelter, hygiene kits and cooking equipment, to the areas left devastated by the tropical storm.

Ms Patel announced the fresh UK government support as she visited HMS Ocean, which on Friday delivered 60 tonnes of UK aid to the Caribbean, almost doubling the amount of aid in the region.

Later today, she will spend time on the British Virgin Islands where she will see UK aid in action, meeting families whose lives were torn apart by Hurricane Irma, which struck earlier this month. She will also visit Anguilla to see UK efforts to get schools and businesses up and running to speed up recovery.

The £5 million pledge brings the British Government's financial support for islands hit by Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Irma to £62 million. This has gone to islands including British Overseas Territories: British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and Turks and Caicos.

The British Government is also doubling UK public donations made to the British Red Cross' Irma and Maria appeals, a pledge which has so far raised over £2 million.

During the visit Ms Patel said:

The UK has pledged to give £5 million to the people of Dominica, the island worst hit by Hurricane Maria – on top of the £57 million

already promised to the region – to strengthen recovery following these relentless disasters.

I have come to the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla to see first-hand UK aid in action, helping families whose lives have been ripped apart first by Hurricane Irma and then Maria.

The UK is leading the way in the relief effort, delivering emergency food, water and shelter to those who need it most.

We will continue to clear up after this devastation in the weeks, months and years to come.

The UK was one of the first to arrive in Dominica following the storm, with DFID field teams immediately bringing urgent medical supplies such as insulin and water purifiers. Much needed shelter has also arrived.

The UK is working with the UN, Red Cross and other partners on the ground to distribute aid, including food, across Dominica. Alongside this, we are supporting the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) to provide emergency healthcare, safe water and sanitation, and manage disease outbreaks. UK aid will go directly on restoring health services and increasing access to healthcare in the most affected areas.

This UK aid comes after the Prime Minister of Dominica formally requested international support to address the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria.

40 DFID aid experts are on the ground alongside over 2,000 military and 50 police officers and DFID has chartered a number of flights and vessels which will transport additional relief items when and where they are most needed.

The DFID field team are also looking at long-term recovery on the islands, and rebuilding houses, hospitals and schools. During her visit, Ms Patel will meet Government representatives from the overseas territories to discuss how to build back better to make sure these islands have greater resilience to future storms.

40 tonnes of humanitarian aid has already been distributed across the Caribbean, including over four tonnes of food and water on the British Virgin Islands; 720 litres of water to the Turks and Caicos Islands; and over two tonnes of building materials to Anguilla.

Work to prepare Anguilla for the impact of Hurricane Maria proved hugely successful in preventing further damage to infrastructure. Two tonnes of corrugated iron was provided to bolster hospital and police stations roofs. Food, tarpaulins, hygiene and shelter kits provided by DFID are also being distributed on the island by the Red Cross.

Vital supplies, including food, bottled water and shelters, were also distributed to the Turks and Caicos Islands earlier this week via three RAF flights and DFID field teams are urgently assessing the damage on the island. A DFID barge will soon arrive with supplies to restore power, including

building materials, generators and equipment.

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Rapid Deployment Team (RDT) has arrived in St Lucia to provide consular assistance to affected British nationals who have left Dominica by ferry. The FCO is also finalising plans for an RDT to travel to Dominica to provide consular assistance to affected British Nationals.

Notes to Editors:

1. The £5 million is UK Overseas Development Assistance funding for immediate humanitarian needs and early recovery in Dominica.
2. This additional £5 million brings the total UK response to £62 million. On top of this, the British Government is matching public donations of up to £3 million to the British Red Cross' appeals for Hurricane Irma and Maria.
3. Five DFID experts are currently on Dominica and are undertaking a rapid needs assessment to identify where aid will be delivered.
4. DFID's initial assessment team has already moved essential supplies to the region ready to provide immediate assistance once we establish what is most needed. This is helping to restore vital communications and running water, and clearing roads.
5. Response efforts are being led by DFID experts on the ground, working with national authorities and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA).
6. On Friday, HMS Ocean arrived with over 60 tonnes of UK aid on the British Virgin Islands to provide relief to the victims of both Hurricane Irma and Maria across the region.
7. The ship arrived with 5,000 hygiene kits, 10,000 water buckets and over 500,000 water purification tablets to provide more than 10 million litres of water, along with more troops to support our aid experts on the ground who are helping restore the lives of those who have lost everything.
8. This is on top of the 75 tonnes of DFID relief items that have arrived or been bought in the region, including food, water, nearly 3,000 shelter kits, 5,000 solar lanterns and 10,000 buckets.
9. An additional \$19 million is being provided to Dominica by the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility – which UK aid, along with others, helped to establish – and CCRIF has paid out \$50.7 million in total in light of both Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria.
10. VIDEO: [footage of International Development Secretary arriving on Tortola, British Virgin Islands](#)
11. VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the damage on the British Virgin Islands](#)
12. VIDEOS AND PHOTOS: [latest photos and footage of the devastation wrought in Dominica](#)
13. More footage of the International Development Secretary's visit will be available later today. Please contact the press office on 0207 023 0600

General media queries

Email

mediateam@dfid.gov.uk

Telephone

020 7023 0600

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Press release: British naval team comes to assistance of family in search and rescue mission

In the early hours of the morning, the Royal Navy vessel launched her Wildcat helicopter to search for a ship reported missing off the south east coast of the island of Vieques.

The team of UK personnel spotted an upturned hull along with some debris and a life raft in the surf. Three people then clambered up onto the up turned hull and waved for assistance, which was spotted by a US Coastguard C130 aircraft. The Royal Navy Wildcat helicopter was then tasked to rescue the three people. They were transported safely to RFA Mounts Bay where they were treated for minor injuries.

Commanding Officer of RFA Mounts Bay, Captain Steve Norris, said:

My ship and crew demonstrated exceptional teamwork today to save these lives, and I am immensely grateful to them all for their efforts in this operation.

It is with regret that we understand that a fourth individual at the scene is missing, presumed dead. Our thoughts go out to their family at this difficult time.

Currently engaged in the UK government response to the devastation left behind by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, RFA Mounts Bay continues to deliver emergency relief to affected islands. Pre-positioned in the region, she provided initial assistance to Anguilla to clear the runway and helped fix basic infrastructure and provide shelter to people in the British Virgin Islands. A specialist FCO team is on the ground to provide assistance to the individuals involved.

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News story: HMS Ocean arrives in Caribbean to boost UK disaster relief

effort

The ship arrived today with around 650 personnel and 60 tonnes of aid including construction equipment and other essential materials such as hygiene kits and water purification tablets.

Ocean's arrival means there are now over 2,000 UK military personnel working on the relief effort, making it the largest deployment of UK personnel anywhere in the world.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

The sight of HMS Ocean dropping anchor in the British Overseas Territories will be welcome respite to those who have seen their islands battered by repeated hurricanes. Ocean will help support the longer-term reconstruction of the Caribbean islands which have been devastated by this unprecedented hurricane season.

The fact that this is our largest operation worldwide underlines the scale of the damage caused and the Government's commitment to UK citizens spread across the region and in need of our support.

In the coming days she will deliver aid and equipment where it is needed on the islands. She is then due to continue to other territories affected by this month's storms, as the Department for International Development (DFID) works with the Overseas Territories' Governments on a long term plan to get the islands back on their feet.

Commanding Officer of HMS Ocean, Captain Robert Pedre Royal Navy, said:

HMS Ocean stands ready to contribute her significant capabilities to the major UK effort already underway to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the Caribbean region.

We bring tonnes of aid, significant air and surface lift capacity and hundreds of highly skilled personnel including engineers, logisticians and medical professionals drawn from all three Services. My Ship's Company and embarked forces are highly trained and we are ready to make a real difference.

There are considerable military assets in the region supporting UK personnel in the relief effort. RFA Mounts Bay has been in region since July, responding to initial disaster relief effort.

Commanding Officer of RFA Mounts Bay, Captain Stephen Norris, said:

RFA Mounts Bay has been stationed in the Caribbean since July working with the Overseas Territories in preparation for the 2017 Hurricane season. The ships company and embarked forces, made up of disaster relief specialists and equipment, has been providing critical support to the Islands since Irma first struck on the 6th September.

My people have worked tirelessly on the herculean task to assist those effected, and are committed to continuing with the delivery of life supporting aid and to helping the local population with recovery and rebuilding.

There is also a C-130 aircraft and two Chinook helicopters providing tactical airlift operations, three Puma and a Wildcat helicopter conducting reconnaissance flights and helping to deliver supplies and aid. On board, HMS Ocean also carried three Wildcat Mk1, one Merlin Mk2, three Merlin Mk3 and two Chinook helicopters.

The UK has already committed £57m to the relief effort and are matching public commitments to the British Red Cross Appeal up to £3m, and so far 75 tonnes of much-needed humanitarian aid has arrived or been bought in the region.

International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

The UK has acted without hesitation to get the right supplies to those whose lives have been torn apart by these catastrophic hurricanes. With 60 tonnes of aid arriving on HMS Ocean today we are almost doubling the amount of aid from the UK for the worst hit islands.

Ocean is bringing 5,000 hygiene kits, 10,000 water buckets and over 500,000 water purification tablets to provide more than 10 million litres of water, along with more troops to support our aid experts on the ground who are helping restore the lives of those who have lost everything.

There are also six FCO Rapid Deployment Teams in the region to work closely with the governments and 36 DFID aid experts on the ground working on immediate recovery and the long term humanitarian effort.

Press release: Latest on UK response to Hurricane Maria

UK aid teams have been on the ground in Dominica to assess the devastation caused by the recent extreme weather in the Caribbean.

DFID field teams arrived on the island yesterday (20 September) to carry out a three day assessment of the impact of the Category 5 hurricane.

Initial reports suggest widespread destruction, with 90% of buildings damaged or destroyed.

Medical supplies, including insulin and aquatabs, funded by DFID and a medical doctor from the Pan American Health Organisation also arrived on one of the first ships into Dominica yesterday.

Today a UK team will also travel to Monserrat to assess the impact of Hurricane Maria. Initial reports suggest the damage to buildings is not extensive, with the east side of Island being more affected.

It comes as a Red Cross appeal to help the victims of Hurricanes Maria and the earlier Hurricane Irma hit over £2million.

The appeal launched a fortnight ago was boosted by DFID's aid match scheme doubling all public UK donations.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

This is an unprecedented crisis with two hurricanes of such brutal force hitting the Caribbean in less than a fortnight.

Our focus now is on making sure the islands affected have the right supplies in the right places to deal with the aftermath of the latest hurricane.

The British public has once again shown its overwhelming generosity in a time of crisis by helping out the victims of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

This money will ensure food, water and shelter goes directly to those who need it most on the worst hit islands.

To date 75 tonnes of DFID aid has arrived or been bought in the region, including food, water, nearly 3,000 shelter kits, 5,000 solar lanterns and 10,000 buckets.

Another 60 tonnes are on the way on HMS Ocean due to arrive in the region on Friday.

Work to prepare Anguilla for the impact of Hurricane Maria proved hugely successful in preventing further damage to infrastructure. Two tonnes of corrugated iron was provided to bolster hospital and police stations roofs. Food, tarpaulins, hygiene and shelter kits provided by DFID are also being distributed on the island by the Red Cross.

Vital supplies, including food, bottled water and shelters, were distributed to the Turks and Caicos Islands yesterday via three RAF flights and DFID field teams are urgently assessing the damage on the island.

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