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EXPERIENCE FROM JAMAICA IN ADVANCE OF HURRICANE MELISSA

Experience from Jamaica in advance of Hurricane Melissa

Starting on 21 October, a tropical storm started forming in the Caribbean. Over the coming days it continued to intensify.

Jamaican Red Cross submitted an imminent DREF request on 23 October 2025, within 12 hours the approval was granted. The transfer of funds was made on the same day, 23 October, from the IFRC Americas Regional Office to the Jamaican Red Cross.

Over the following days, Melissa became better organized, and from October 25 to 27, rapidly intensified into a Category 5 hurricane before making landfall near New Hope, Jamaica, just below peak intensity, on October 28.



The forecasted track of Hurricane Melissa as of 22 October

Detailed budget and activities of the Imminent DREF operation for Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica

Proposed Actions			
	Sector	Activities	Budget (CHF)
Early Actions	Shelter	• Setting up of emergency shelters • Mobilisation and distribution of stock to 250 at-risk households through local branches and designated shelters before the impact of the tropical storm including 250 shelter kits, 250 hygiene kits, 250 cleaning kits, 500 tarps, 750 blankets.	
	NS Strengthening	• National Society strengthening, internal coordination and early response planning with local branches • Mobilisation of staff and volunteers and preparation of support necessities (transportation, communications, visibility items, safety gear, etc.) • Support the operation of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NOC)	CHF 56,250
Early Response	NS Strengthening	• Support the operation of the National Emergency Operations Centre (NOC)	
	CEA	• Initiate a Damage and Needs Assessment to collect information on existing needs after impact of the storm. • Advance CEA activities by establishing the feedback and complaint mechanism channel for the response.	
	Shelter	• Run emergency shelters • Procurement of supplies for registration and temporary sheltering of disaster-affected households. • Repatriation of items distributed during the early actions. • Distribution of relief items stocked in local branches and shelters to affected communities after impact of the storm. • Repatriation of relief items distributed during the early response.	CHF 18,750
Sub-total			CHF 75,000
Indirect Cost			CHF 5,000
Total			CHF 80,000



“The early release of iDREF funding allowed the Jamaica Red Cross to move supplies quickly to branches ahead of landfall, enabling immediate support to the most affected and hard-to-reach communities following Hurricane Melissa. These early actions significantly reduced delays after the hurricane and ensured that lifesaving assistance reached people when it mattered most.”

Leiska Powell, Emergency Services Manager, Jamaica Red Cross

The imminent DREF operation was complemented with an Emergency Appeal of CHF 19 million, including a loan from the IFRC-DREF of CHF 1 million, to kick start response activities until public donations are received by the Appeal.



For more information on the IFRC’s Imminent DREF, please review chapters: 3.2 “decision to apply for funds”, or for more in depth information, “3.5 Imminent DREF”, in the latest version of the IFRC-DREF Guidelines (2026).

