



Ministerial Statement

By

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Minister of National Security

Royal Bermuda Regiment Deployment to Jamaica – Hurricane Melissa Recovery Support

March 11th, 2026

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to update this Honourable House on Bermuda's continued commitment to support the people of Jamaica following the catastrophic devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members will recall that when Hurricane Melissa made landfall on 28 October 2025 as a Category Five storm, it caused widespread destruction across Jamaica. More than 700,000 people were affected. Twenty-seven communities were cut off, and more than 200,000 homes were destroyed or severely damaged. Critical infrastructure, including roads, electricity, and water systems, remains degraded as national authorities continue the long process of recovery and rebuilding.

Mr. Speaker, in the immediate aftermath of the storm, the Bermuda Government made a clear commitment to the Government and people of Jamaica that we would provide humanitarian assistance. I am pleased to

advise this Honourable House that Bermuda has fulfilled that commitment.

Following reconnaissance conducted by the Royal Bermuda Regiment in November, and further engagement with the Jamaica Defence Force, Cabinet approved the deployment of up to twenty-seven (27) Royal Bermuda Regiment soldiers to Jamaica from 15th to 28th February 2026.

Mr. Speaker, the Regiment was embedded with the Engineer Regiment of the Jamaica Defence Force and also worked alongside the Guyana Defence Force, and contingents from the Cayman Island and Turks and Caicos Islands, as part of a coordinated recovery effort. Their primary task was to repair roofs damaged by Hurricane Melissa in the parish of St. Elizabeth, one of the areas most severely impacted by the storm. This work provided immediate, tangible relief to affected families and helped create the conditions necessary for sustained recovery.

Mr. Speaker, this deployment was deliberately structured to ensure that Bermuda's contribution was practical, focused, and aligned with Jamaica's identified priorities. The Jamaica Defence Force is leading and coordinating all projects, ensuring that the skills and manpower provided by Bermuda were directed where they were most needed.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to note that all soldiers deployed on this mission volunteered to do so. These men and women stepped forward willingly to serve in another country where there is a need for humanitarian aid. They

operated in field conditions and met strict pre-deployment requirements, including medical clearance and fitness standards. The Regiment was accommodated at Forward Operating Base Luana in St. Elizabeth, with logistical and life support provided by the Jamaica Defence Force to ensure that Bermuda's presence did not place additional strain on local resources.

Mr. Speaker, whilst this was a physically demanding deployment for all involved, it provided the opportunity to undertake a focused overseas operational mission. All deployed personnel had the opportunity to apply their existing specialist skills and further develop them through practical experience. The deployment also reinforced the strong relationship that the Royal Bermuda Regiment maintains with the Jamaica Defence Force and, with the additional personnel joining from the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands, the relationship with fellow British Overseas Territories.

Mr. Speaker, the total cost of the two-week deployment, approved by Cabinet, was up to two hundred forty-one thousand, three hundred and eighty-five dollars (\$241,385.00). This included transportation, equipment, supplies, and an operational allowance that reflected the demanding conditions under which our soldiers are serving.

Mr Speaker, along with our National Disaster Coordinator, I visited our soldiers in Jamaica to see their progress firsthand and to witness the

impact they were having in Jamaica. His Excellency, the Governor, also joined me on this visit. What I saw, **Mr Speaker**, was a Bermuda contingent of eager, professional and organized soldiers who were making an immense impact on the lives of people in St Elizabeth Parish.

Mr Speaker, remarkably, our troops were erecting a new roof at a rate of every two (2) days and were doing so with the utmost expertise and palpable enthusiasm. I could see true Bermudian craftsmanship on full display with astounding results. Added to the skill and speed with which our soldiers are working, it was clear to me that their morale was very high and that they were enjoying the opportunity to be of service to their fellow man. All of Bermuda ought to be proud of the efforts of our soldiers on this deployment, as I am.

Mr. Speaker, this mission represented more than a deployment. It was a demonstration of solidarity between small island countries that understand the realities of vulnerability to extreme weather events. By working with the Jamaica Defence Force and the contingents from Guyana, the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands, Bermuda is making a huge statement on the international stage about cooperation and collaboration amongst regional partners in times of distress and need.

Mr. Speaker, Bermuda understands that disaster recovery does not end when the headlines fade. The transition from emergency response to long-term rebuilding is often the most difficult phase. By deploying skilled and

disciplined personnel to Jamaica, Bermuda contributed where the need remains real and where our capabilities could make a measurable difference.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Duncan Simons, and his team for their preparations and planning to make this deployment a reality. I hasten to especially thank all members of the Royal Bermuda Regiment who volunteered for this deployment. Their willingness to serve beyond our shores reflects the professionalism, discipline, and spirit of service that this Honourable House has come to expect from the Regiment.

Mr Speaker, I assure this Honourable House that the efforts of the Royal Bermuda Regiment are definitely having a lasting impact on St Elizabeth in particular, and Jamaica in general, and I am proud that our Government facilitated the deployment.

Mr. Speaker, the Greek philosopher Ennius in the 3rd century BC coined the phrase “a sure friend is known when in difficulty”, otherwise well known as “a friend in need is a friend indeed”. **Mr Speaker,** Bermuda and Jamaica are indeed friends, and in Jamaica’s hour of need we have honoured that friendship. Bermuda made a promise to support the people of Jamaica following Melissa’s onslaught and this deployment was the fulfillment of that promise.

Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.**

