



Patients wait for care in the overflow accident and emergency tent set up by International Medical Corps at Mandeville Regional Hospital to support increased demand for emergency care in Manchester Parish.

On October 27, Hurricane Melissa made landfall on Jamaica as the most powerful ever to directly impact the island. The slow-moving Category 5 storm caused at least 45 deaths there and more than \$130 million in infrastructure damage. It also displaced 90,000 people, with 1,300 still in 97 active shelters. Entire communities across the western parishes of Hanover, Saint Ann, Saint Elizabeth, Saint James, Trelawny and Westmoreland experienced unprecedented devastation, prompting the prime minister to declare a national disaster.

Weeks later, critical services remain disrupted—about one-third of the island is still without electricity, as power outages persist across multiple parishes and telecommunications continue to be unreliable. This has been a concern, as many shelters close and the displaced return home.

Jamaica's health system is under severe strain. Black River Hospital in St. Elizabeth was completely destroyed and will require full reconstruction. Savanna-la-Mar and Falmouth Hospitals have sustained significant damage, drastically reducing their capacity to provide care. Though temporary field hospitals have been deployed to manage acute cases, patients needing long-term treatment are turning to facilities in other regions. As a result, hospitals in Clarendon, Kingston and Manchester parishes are now operating at up to 150% capacity due to hospital transfers and self-referrals, as well as a large influx of displaced people. This surge, which is overwhelming existing resources, is expected to continue for months as recovery and rebuilding efforts progress in the hardest-hit communities. Given widespread damage to hospitals and health centers in affected parishes, long-term care patients are being redirected to neighboring regions—further burdening facilities already stretched beyond capacity.

The Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW) is coordinating with local and international partners to restore essential health services. Efforts include establishing temporary health posts and deploying field hospitals; however, significant health care gaps continue. Communities remain highly vulnerable as heavy rainfall continues, groundwater flooding persists and agricultural losses drive up food costs. The casualties caused by the storm, compounded by the sudden loss of homes and livelihoods, have created a significant surge in the need for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS). In addition, stagnant water and damaged sanitation systems have led to a confirmed outbreak of leptospirosis, while ongoing cleanup and reconstruction efforts

FAST FACTS

- Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica in late October as an historically powerful Category 5 hurricane, with maximum sustained winds of 185 mph.
- At least 45 people were killed in Jamaica.
- Critical health infrastructure, including hospitals, was damaged or destroyed, overburdening those facilities that remain functional.
- The storm came some 15 months after Hurricane Beryl devastated Clarendon and St. Elizabeth parishes in the west of the island.

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps deployed an emergency response team to coordinate with local partners, assess critical needs and rapidly mobilize resources.
- International Medical Corps has established a temporary unit to support the overflow emergency department at Mandeville Regional Hospital, and has so far provided more than 245 essential items—from nebulizers and exam beds to glucose kits—to alleviate pressure on the emergency room.
- International Medical Corps is coordinating closely with government agencies to support health facilities across the island.
- International Medical Corps has been active in Jamaica since our response to Hurricane Beryl in July 2024, providing emergency health supplies and equipment as well as providing trauma and mass-casualty management training to first responders and healthcare leaders.

have created an increased need for tetanus vaccination to protect people exposed to debris, sharp objects and contaminated floodwater.

International Medical Corps Response

In the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa, International Medical Corps quickly deployed an emergency response team (ERT), working closely with the MoHW and its National Healthcare Enhancement Foundation (NHEF) to provide essential support to affected health facilities across the island. After performing thorough assessments of affected hospitals, including Mandeville Regional Hospital, where we have focused our response. Based on the results of our assessments, we procured and donated 245 units of critical medical and non-medical equipment and supplies to help ensure continuity of care at the hospital, which has been experiencing high surges in demand due to the storm.

Because needs in the western regions are immense and the process of rehabilitation and recovery will take time, our assessments have underscored the urgent necessity to strengthen health services in nearby parishes, which are operating beyond capacity as they attempt to absorb the increased overflow from affected areas. As we navigate toward the next hurricane season in just six months, International Medical Corps remains committed to reinforcing these facilities and enhancing their ability to manage the increasing influx of patients effectively.

Our primary efforts are focused in the parishes in the southern region—including Clarendon, Kingston and Manchester—which are experiencing significant surges in patient transfers and overall caseload due to widespread displacement. In Manchester, we are supporting Mandeville Regional Hospital, the main referral center serving a population of more than 600,000, which is witnessing a dramatic increase in patients since Hurricane Melissa made landfall. The accident and emergency department now receives more than 200 patients daily—almost double its usual level of 120—while the maternity ward has reported an 80% rise in deliveries, many of which are complex caesarean sections. The hospital, which specializes in high-risk pregnancies, is severely overcrowded, with displaced women remaining onsite for extended periods due to a lack of alternative accommodations. Serving multiple hard-hit parishes and centrally located, the hospital is expected to face elevated patient volumes for months to come.

To alleviate pressure, International Medical Corps has established a temporary unit to support the overflow of the emergency department. Staff in this unit, which has increased capacity by more than 30%, have since November 19 treated nearly 100 patients. The hospital is operating at 150% capacity, with most emergency cases awaiting admission for days due to insufficient inpatient bed capacity. To address bed shortages, International Medical Corps has delivered 25 mattresses, and plans to deploy an additional tent that can hold 20 extra internal medicine patients. We also will be supplying emergency room urgent-care equipment, along with essential medical supplies specifically for the maternity ward, to the hospital. These measures, along with targeted support to both the maternity ward and other inpatient units, are strengthening hospital operations and building resilience for long-term recovery.

[Active in Jamaica since Hurricane Beryl](#) in June 2024, International Medical Corps remains committed to a coordinated recovery effort, working closely with the MoHW and NHEF to restore and reinforce essential health services. We are exploring opportunities to support primary-care centers in other parishes in the southern region, to help restore the wider health system and ensure that all communities can access healthcare in the aftermath of the storm.



A nurse conducts a consultation in the outpatient tent set up at Mandeville Regional Hospital by International Medical Corps.