



Ministry of Local Government  
and Community Development

# NEWSLETTER *e*TIMES

2025/2026 FINANCIAL YEAR

*3rd QUARTER*



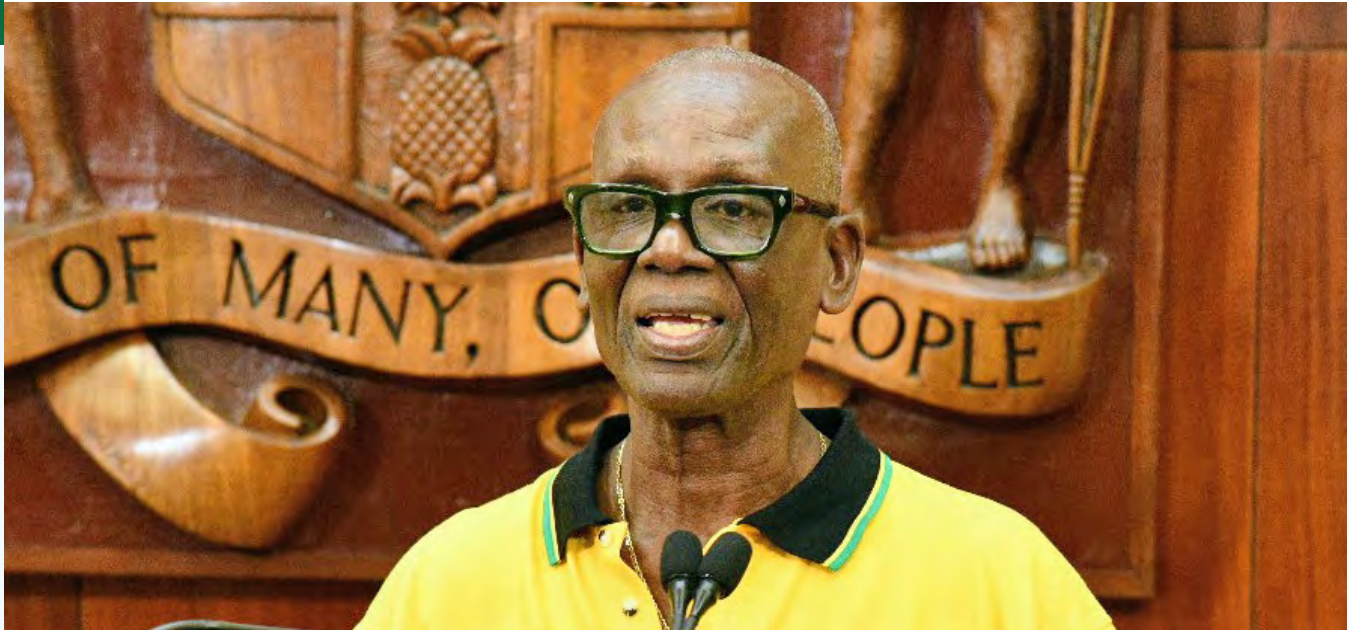
# BEYOND THE HURRICANE

*Preparedness, Recovery and Rebuilding*

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## Minister McKenzie Calls for the Removal of Construction Materials, Billboards and Cars along Public Thoroughfare



*Minister Desmond McKenzie speaking at Hurricane Melissa Press Briefing in October.*

**A**s the Government took steps to prepare Jamaica for the passage of Hurricane Melissa, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, called on persons with responsibility for construction materials, equipment, billboards, as well as cars parked along the public thoroughfare, to remove them expeditiously.

Speaking at a Special Press Briefing on preparation for what was at the time, Tropical Storm Melissa, at the Office of the Prime Minister on Saturday, October 25, Hon. Desmond McKenzie noted that several major construction sites had failed to remove items that could cause danger to human life or damage to infrastructure during the storm.

"There are several major construction sites, that still have materials, sand, gravel, steel, and some cases, cranes, still hanging in the air," the Minister said, as he appealed to operators of construction sites across the country, encouraging them to take the necessary steps to remove cranes, steel, sand, and blocks, which were expected to contribute to the blocking of drains.

Minister McKenzie noted that billboards should be dismantled immediately and stored in a safe place until after the passage of the weather system.

"Billboards should be taken down. This is the work of the Municipal Corporation, so I'm saying that all billboards, should be taken down at this time, and put in a safe place," he said.

Minister McKenzie advised used-car dealers who park their cars along the roadway to remove the vehicles, pointing out that haulage trucks were on patrol to relocate the vehicles to the Riverton dump site, should they fail to comply.

"We still have used-car operators who continue to use the public thoroughfare to display vehicles... just to advise, that a team of wrecker operators is presently combing the streets of the Corporate Area and where we find these vehicles, they're going to remove them and take them to the Riverton City dump," he said, as he cautioned that these items could become missiles.

Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica on October 28 as a Category 5 weather system.



# State Minister, Delroy Williams, Distributes Relief Supplies in Westmoreland

## #PostHurricaneMelissa

State Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Delroy Williams and Hon. Zavia Mayne, State Minister in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, along with a team from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, visited areas in Westmoreland that were hard hit by Hurricane Melissa, on Wednesday, November 12.

The team distributed care packages and other relief supplies, which included tarpaulins, hygiene and comfort items such as blankets and mattresses, along with food supplies to last several days, for distribution, as part of the Government's collective effort to assist in the efforts to recover from devastating effects of the Hurricane, which hit Jamaica on October 28.

Some residents expressed appreciation for the supplies and highlighted that members of the community were able to repair many of the houses that were damaged during the ordeal.

**The Government of Jamaica has taken an 'all-hands-on-deck' approach to restoration with several committees and initiatives in place to fast-track relief response following Hurricane Melissa. This, as work towards restoring normalcy to western Jamaica continues.**

"A lot of us come together as a community...We did that and made it happen... and it was good," one resident said.

"We are assisting community members in various ways. Some in terms of care packages... for some, we are looking at other needs, like roofing needs. We have distributed tarpaulins... we have found in a lot of cases people wanted tarpaulins," Minister Williams said.

"You would expect that after an experience like this that people would be down and so forth. I don't see that. Some of the damage done, you would not have captured it, a lot of the residents came together in

the community spirit, in the Jamaican spirit, helped each other and started the rebuilding and the repairs where necessary. It was good for us to come here, and we will keep coming back," the Minister continued, as he commended the solidarity among residents.

"We did not want anybody to be left behind, so apart from the care packages that we brought, the kind of devastation that we saw, necessitated a more detailed response, and the agencies of government that were here were so equipped," Minister Mayne said.

During the visit, officers from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security collected information about residents who were adversely affected by the Hurricane, to determine who could benefit from the other programmes such as the Social Pension Programme and the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH).



*Ministers of State, Hon. Delroy Williams and Hon. Zavia Mayne, distribute care packages to residents in Westmoreland.*

# Minister McKenzie Tours Falmouth

## #PostHurricaneMelissa

Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Mayor of Falmouth, Councillor Colin Gager, and Technical Officers from the Ministry and the Trelawny Municipal Corporation, embarked on a tour of parish capital, Falmouth, following the passage of Hurricane Melissa on October 28. The Minister and the team had a first-hand look at the damage left behind in wake of Hurricane Melissa.

The tour included a comprehensive walk-through of the Falmouth Fire Station, the Municipal Corporation Road and Works Department, the Council building, the Drop-in Centre, the Trelawny Infirmary, the Poor Relief Department, and the Albert George Market.

"The Drop-in Centre and the shelter is in excellent condition. I visited recently and I am proud, only a few broken windows and doors.... The Municipal

Building, that building is one of the oldest buildings in Trelawny and in Jamaica, I think the time has come when I have to engage Minister Grange, who is the Minister of Culture, to speak about the question of Falmouth and buildings which are protected by the National Heritage Trust. It is clear that if any of these buildings are to be repaired, they cannot be repaired to the same standards that is set because of the existing conditions," Minister McKenzie noted, as he addressed the media after the tour.

The Minister underscored that efforts to recover from the effects of the hurricane will be a community effort.

"One lady said to me, she knows that the Government alone can't do it, and I was glad to hear that, so I'm urging the people here, to exercise some level of discretion," Minister McKenzie said.



*Hon. Desmond McKenzie, Minister of Local Government and Community Development, along with Mayor of Falmouth Colin Gager, and Superintendent of the Trelawny Municipal Corporation, Kayon Hall, assess the damage to the Falmouth Market.*



The Minister added that the Trelawny Infirmary, which sat on the coastline of the parish and housed some 50 patients, and was associated with 50 employees, was destroyed during the passage of the hurricane.

"I visited the infirmary, and I can tell you that, there is no way that that infirmary will be able, anytime soon... to take back the residents that used to occupy, over a hundred persons – residents and staff operate out of the infirmary. We are now have to be looking at what is the alternative arrangement that will be made to house the residents," he said.

The Minister commended the firefighters who have continued with duties even though many of them were displaced because of the hurricane.

He also announced that extensive clean-up efforts are underway as the town, which is already seeing some commercial businesses returning to operation, is determined to return to some sense of normalcy. These sentiments were echoed by vendors who

expressed that they wanted to have the market in operable condition in time for the Christmas season.

The Mayor expressed appreciation to Minister McKenzie and added that the Municipal Corporation remains committed to ensuring that the parish of Trelawny carries out cleaning exercises as early as Monday, November 10, to allow vendors to be able to resume trade in short order.

"We are here at the market... cleaning up will start on Monday morning, bright and early, three trucks will be here and we will be taking away all of the debris and we want to clear the parking lot, so as early as possible, we can have bend-down market established on the compound again," Councillor Gager said.

He assured vendors that during the rehabilitative period, vendors will enjoy a market fee waiver, as the community works together to recover from the devastating blow of Hurricane Melissa.



One section of the Trelawny Infirmary following Hurricane Melissa.





*The Falmouth Court House and Council Chamber following Hurricane Melissa.*

## More Relief Pours in from International Partners

Minister of Local Government and Community Development lauded the swift action of local and international partners who mobilized effort to assist Jamaica in recovering from Hurricane Melisa.

One such partner, Global Empowerment Mission (GEM), who partnered with the Government of Jamaica in 2025 the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, will assist with food supplies and distribution, as well as infrastructural repairs.

"I'm pleased to advise the country that one of our partners GEM, this international organization came in country yesterday and they're here, headed by Michael Capponi... along with his team," Minister McKenzie informed as he addressed a special Post-Hurricane Press briefing on Friday, October 31.

"One of the first signs of their commitment to working with the Government and the people of Jamaica is a visit to the Transitional Centre in Kingston where the homeless population is, where they will be providing care package to the homeless population," Minister McKenzie continued.



*Hon. Desmond McKenzie making his presentation at a special post-Hurricane Melissa Press Briefing.*





*Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), Michael Capponi (centre) and Omar Sweeney (right).*

The Minister also informed that the Ministry would work along with the Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security's various teams in visiting Black River, St. Elizabeth and Whitehouse in Westmoreland.

Another partner is the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) which works closely with the ODPEM, providing disaster management support for CARICOM member countries. A team from CDEMA arrived on the island on October 31 to lend their support.

Minister McKenzie also announced that several roadways, community and main roads, were cleared and were able to accommodate vehicular access, an important step in mobilizing aid and supplies to the hurricane-stricken parishes.

"A significant effort by the National Works Agency and the Jamaica Defence Force and the other teams to make the roads accessible...Efforts are being made as we speak, to ensure that we can access Westmoreland going through Black River and that is being done because we're going to take a team in Whitehouse Westmoreland to start to provide some relief supplies," he said.

## Four New Prefab Containers to be used for Trelawny Infirmary

Following the destruction of the Trelawny Infirmary during hurricane Melissa in October, the Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie on Saturday, November 29, announced that a new location has been identified for the Trelawny Infirmary, and that by early December, four pre-fabricated units will be installed on the property to serve as a temporary home for the facility.

The Minister gave the assurance that the new facility will be a more modern facility as the Government of Jamaica continues to consider prefabricated, hurricane-proof units as a part of its rebuilding plan follow Hurricane Melissa.

"I am pleased to announce that the procurement has commenced, and I am expecting that by next week, the four new prefab containers will be here in Falmouth, and the installation will be done in short order. The facilities will not be as the same as what existed before, but it will be a little bit more modern, and unusual because it will be the first time that a facility like the infirmary will be using this mode of facility to house the residents," Minister McKenzie informed.

The Minister stated that in addition to basic amenities, a recreational space will also be included in the new build out.

"This new facility will have bathrooms, toilets... it will have dining area and will also put in a small recreational area, at the location," he added.

The execution of this fast-moving project will be a joint effort between technical experts and architects from the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, KSAMC, Manchester Municipal Corporation and St. Mary Municipal Corporation.

Noting that he hopes to have the facility ready to house residents by the end of December, Minister McKenzie said, "the residents will have this new facility that they will call their home, for the time being."

Mayor of Falmouth, Councillor Colin Gager, expressed his gratitude for the swift intervention.

"This is more than a joy to me this morning to be here and to see what you have helped us to achieve... We will make sure we will try to do our best because we do want to get back on our feet, we do want to be able to earn again so this coming in, it is a blessing to us," he said.



*Hon. Desmond McKenzie tours the Trelawny Infirmary following Hurricane Melissa.*

The residents at the Trelawny Infirmary were housed at the Hague Primary School, while the Ministry of Education had been working on resuming classes for students who will be sitting the Primary Exit Profile exam (PEP), the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) and Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate exams (CSEC). As such, there was a need for the facilities, some of which were being used as emergency shelters.



## The Epitome of Community

The spirit of community was demonstrated at the St. Elizabeth Infirmary on Tuesday, November 25, when representatives from the Ministry of Local Government and Community Development, the National Solid Waste Management Authority (NSWMA), the Social Development Commission (SDC) and the Jamaica Fire Brigade (JFB) carried out cleanup activities, following the passage of Hurricane Melissa.

This joint effort came as sections of the infirmary were badly damaged after the property was submerged in flood waters and the roofs of the female ward, canteen and storage areas were destroyed. During the workday exercise, the roofs were repaired, debris removed as well as a comprehensive wash down of the facility.



Sanitation workers from the SPM branch of the NSWMA prepare for a clean-up exercise at the Santa Cruz Infirmary.

The damage was so severe, that the female residents were moved into the male ward, and many staff members lost their homes and personal belongings — an experience that brought the Minister to tears.

"The staff here at this infirmary, deserve all the credit and praise in the world... many of them have lost their homes, they have to be staying here [at the infirmary] ...We have a set people in this country, that will go the extra mile," he said.

"When I was here last week and I walk through the ward and I saw the conditions, I said look, anything that it takes, let us start the repairs immediately so that we can ease the discomfort and to put them back in a place where they are much more comfortable," he added.

The Minister said that at least five infirmaries across the countries were affected during the passage of



Hon. Desmond McKenzie removes debris from the Santa Cruz Infirmary with the help of a sanitation worker from SPM Waste Management Limited.

Melissa and that the Government is working on making the necessary changes to ensure that residents who rely on the infirmary can be housed in a safe and comfortable home.

The matron, Bianca Mitchell Smith, welcomed the inter-agency initiative, and said this will help restore the infirmary in time for the holiday season.

"I am quite elated and happy for the response shown by the Ministry of Local Government, especially Minister McKenzie to come and pull together this team, to come and fix the infirmary. We're removing debris, rubbish and we're bringing back our infirmary to what we are used to. It's our home and we treasure it deeply and I am just really happy and the staff has expressed how happy they are to see all the things coming together," she said.

Sheldon Smith, Regional Manager at NSWMA, made a commitment on behalf of his team that they would help with removing the debris from the property and restore the therapeutic park.

"I guarantee you that Jamaica, we going to build back stronger, we're going to be more beautiful, we're going to be better.... My team is here today, and they are here to work hard, and to get the place back up and as best as possible and in good order," Smith said.

This clean-up exercise was a precursor to the beginning of the National Clean-Up Programme in Whitehouse, Westmoreland.

# National Clean-up Programme: A United Effort

The highly anticipated National Clean-Up Programme was officially launched by the Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie in Darliston, Westmoreland on Friday, December 5.

Although clean-up efforts had begun in different parishes across western Jamaica, the launch of the Clean-up Programme signaled the official beginning of a national collaborative effort across government agencies and departments.



*Hon. Desmond McKenzie (left), Dr. Dayton Campbell (centre) Councillor Danree Delancy (right) at the launch of the National Clean-up Programme.*

At the launch, Minister McKenzie spoke to the importance of community involvement for Jamaica to holistically recover from Melissa's onslaught.

"We are not only dealing with the major thoroughfares in which the National Solid Waste Management Authority will continue to work on that programme. But this is a programme that goes deep within the communities, where persons will have an opportunity to put out the couch that you never

want to part company with, but you have to. All the things that were damaged and have no use," he said.

The Minister emphasized the importance of setting political differences aside, especially during this time, stating that the road to restoration for Jamaica is not grounded in politics.

"We as a country must put aside our political differences, because it is Jamaica that matters... the challenge that we face today, we still going to have it because it is not going to take us 10 years to do what is necessary to restore Jamaica to the place that we want... Melissa never asked who they voted for... Dr. Dayton Campbell is General Secretary of the People's National Party, I am the Deputy Leader of the Jamaica Labour Party, both of us are working together for one cause," he added.

He also commended first responders on their dedication to their duties in light of Hurricane Melissa, highlighting that many of them have not returned home, or have a home to return to, since the passage of the Category 5 Hurricane.

"I want this morning to use the opportunity and to ask you all to help us to celebrate and honour and appreciate the work of our first respondents, the fire brigade, the police, the army, the National Solid Waste Management Authority, our nurses, our doctors, those community persons who volunteer, who was there in the middle of Melissa... several of them have lost their homes. They have nowhere to go, they have to be staying at the Infirmary in Savanna-la-Mar. Same thing for persons in St. Elizabeth, in Falmouth, while they were there taking care of the residents, their homes were destroyed," he stated.

The National Clean-up Programme is a part of the Government of Jamaica's collaborative response to restoring Jamaica by accessing communities, towns and cities of the hardest hit constituencies in Western Jamaica.



# On the Lighter side







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