

Help is coming



IAN ALLEN/Staff Photographer

A little girl cries as she looks at what is left of her home in Portland Cottage, south-east Clarendon, yesterday after Hurricane Ivan ravaged the community on Friday night.

Death toll from hurricane rises to 17

Damon Mitchell
Staff Reporter

SEVERAL RELIEF initiatives were announced yesterday by Prime Minister P.J. Patterson as an initial response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Ivan on Friday and Saturday.

The hurricane, packing winds of up to 250 kilometres per hour, claimed 17 lives, directly and indirectly, including those of eight persons in Portland Cottage, south-east Clarendon.

Addressing members of the essential services at a Disaster Response Committee meeting at the Office of the Prime Minister on Hope Road, St. Andrew, the Prime Minister said a plane with relief items was expected to arrive here from Mexico within 24 hours.

MPs TO HELP

Also, each of the 60 members of parliament will be given an additional \$100,000 to assist with relief efforts in their respective constituencies. Prior to the hurricane, the MPs had received a similar sum for relief assistance.

Yesterday, a representative of Jamaica Red Cross also reported at the committee meeting that three of five plane loads of relief items should arrive here today. The Prime Minister said several

corporate entities had indicated that they would be assisting with the Government's relief programme as soon as the needs are identified.

He said: "We do not have a full and complete assessment of the damage (caused by the hurricane) but we have received communication from certain portions of Jamaica that will cause us to realise that we must not use Kingston as the yardstick to judge what has happened in the rest of Jamaica."

WORST HIT

Mr. Patterson cited Portland, Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland, Hanover and St. James as the parishes that have been worst hit.

He said he would be tabling several proposals at today's Cabinet meeting for a co-ordinated reconstruction programme while a special meeting of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) was being planned to assess the damage caused by Hurricane Ivan in both Jamaica and Grenada.

"I entertain no doubt whatsoever that we are going to pursue the recovery after Ivan in a way that we can ensure a resumption of the development agenda."

At the same time, he said that Prime Minister Patrick Manning

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Hundreds marooned in St Ann, Clarendon

Devon Evans
Gleaner Writer

CAVE VALLEY, St. Ann:

A CRISIS has developed in south St. Ann, where an intense emergency operation has been taking place since late Saturday evening to rescue hundreds of residents who are being threatened by rising flood waters.

More than 4,000 people in the Borobridge area of St. Ann have been marooned. This is the result of flood waters, which have cut off access to the area at Spaldings and Trout Hall in Clarendon, and Cave Valley, St. Ann.

The worst affected area is the town of Cave Valley, which is said to be under 15 feet of water, and from which scores of residents have had to be evacuated. The Cave Valley market, the PETCOM service station and several other businesses in the town centre have already been

submerged and the rising flood waters threaten other premises.

CLOSE WATCH

The nearby district of Aeon Town, Clarendon, is also being affected by flooding and Disaster Preparedness Committee officials are fearful that there may have to be a massive evacuation of the area if the situation worsens.

Dorothy Delgado, secretary/manager of the St. Ann Parish Council, said that members of the St. Ann Disaster Committee were keeping a close watch on the area.

She said there had been ongoing consultation with the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), the security forces, the Fire Department, the St. Ann and Clarendon parish councils and the Ministry of Health on how best to deal with the crisis.

News of the flooding was first reported to

the St. Ann emergency operation centre, St. Ann's Bay, about 6:15 p.m. on Saturday, and a rescue team was despatched from the St. Ann Fire Department. Forty-nine persons were rescued by boat and taken to the Clarksonville Primary School.

Since early Sunday morning, larger boats have had to be taken to the deep rural town to assist in the evacuation as more and more houses became threatened.

Mrs. Delgado said arrangements were being made to provide assistance to the residents by way of helicopters. So far, public shelters have been opened in the area, but it is difficult to ascertain the total number of persons being housed as the relief team is still out in the field and it is unable to liaise effectively with the emergency centres due to disabled communication services.



HOWARD GREENLEW/Staff Photographer

A man helps a woman yesterday to retrieve items from her home in a 'refrigerator ferry' in a flooded section of Bull Bay, western St. Thomas.

'Ivan' batters Cayman

GEORGE TOWN, Cayman Islands (AP): HURRICANE IVAN battered the Cayman Islands with ferocious 150-mph (240-kph) winds yesterday, flooding homes, ripping off roofs and toppling trees three stories tall as its powerful eye thundered past just offshore.

Ivan has killed at least 65 people across the Caribbean, and is expected to strike western Cuba today. About 1.3 million Cubans were evacuated from their homes, with most taking refuge in the sturdier homes of relatives, co-workers or neighbours.

The hurricane, which grew to the most powerful category five with 165 mph (265 kph) winds Saturday, lost some strength before tearing into the wealthy Cayman Islands, a popular scuba diving destination and banking centre.

"It's as bad as it can possibly get," Justin Uzzell, 35, said by

telephone from his fifth-floor refuge in a Grand Cayman office building. "It's a horizontal blizzard," he said. "The air is just foam."

STANDING ON ROOFS

High winds prevented officials from assessing damages immediately. But Donnie Ebanks, deputy chairman of the British territory's National Hurricane Committee, estimated between one-fourth and half of the 15,000 homes on the island of Grand Cayman suffered some damage.

Ivan was projected to pass near or over Cuba's western end by Monday afternoon or evening. The U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said the storm surge could reach 25 feet (7.5 metres) with dangerous, battering waves.

The hurricane centre said ham

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