News
EarthBeat



Residents walk through Santa Cruz, Jamaica, Oct. 29, 2025, after Hurricane Melissa passed. (AP/Matias Delacroix)

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Before Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica and Haiti on Tuesday (Oct. 28), faith-based disaster relief groups were already making plans to respond.

Melissa, a Category 5 storm, has already rolled over Jamaica and Cuba and caused flooding and storm surges across the Caribbean, killing 20 people in Haiti, according to The New York Times. The full toll from the storm, downgraded to Category 2 by Wednesday afternoon, is expected to rise as authorities assess the damage and loss of life over the next few days.

Faith groups, including World Relief, Catholic Relief Services and Operation Blessing, have mobilized to send supplies in the wake of the storm, while also raising funds for an extended relief effort. Staff already on the ground are helping with early recovery as the waters recede. World Relief is the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals.

"The damage is already considerable, and we're bracing for worse," Pascal Bimenyimana, country director of World Relief Haiti, said in a statement. "We are deeply concerned about the continuous rains and the extent of the flooding, preventing access to families left stranded in vulnerable regions."

Send Relief, a Southern Baptist humanitarian aid group, has begun stockpiling supplies in Cuba, making plans with its partners in Haiti and preparing to send trained disaster relief to other Caribbean islands once the storm abates. The group recently sent 50 generators to Cuba, where they will be used to provide emergency power for shelters, feeding programs and other responders.

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"Send Relief is coordinating with regional Baptist partners to deliver emergency supplies and support long-term recovery as soon as conditions allow," the group said

in a statement.

According to Baptist Press, an official SBC publication, Send Relief volunteers are expected to be on the ground in Jamaica by the weekend.

Catholic Relief Services, which has 100 staff in Haiti and works with partner groups in the Caribbean, is raising funds for disaster relief and making plans to respond to the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa. "Our emergency teams are securing offices and warehouses, preparing prepositioned shelter and clean water supplies, and helping people secure their businesses, homes and fields," said a statement on the group's website.

Operation Blessing, an evangelical Christian group based in Virginia, plans to send experts in disaster relief to the region, along with water purification systems, solar powered lanterns and other supplies.

"As soon as it is safe to do so, our teams will deploy to deliver clean water, emergency supplies, and other critical aid to help families begin the recovery process," said Diego Traverso, Operation Blessing's senior director of global disaster response, in a statement.

The hurricane could have an effect on immigration policy in the United States. World Relief has called on the Trump administration to delay its plans to end temporary protective status for about 300,000 Haitians currently living in the U.S., given the hurricane and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Haiti.

"Particularly in light of the devastation that Hurricane Melissa is unleashing on a country already facing profound humanitarian crises, it would be inhumane to deport Haitians right now, and we urge the administration to refrain from terminating TPS for Haitians — and to consider granting it for Jamaicans currently present in the United States," Myal Greene, president and CEO of World Relief, said in a statement.