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B-FAST sends generators to Jamaica

Severely affected by hurricane Melissa, Jamaica has asked for help and Belgium, through B-FAST, has responded to this call by providing hundreds of generators, in order to support the Jamaican people during this disaster.

On October 28, hurricane Melissa, of category 5, hit Jamaica, and especially the west of the island endured a lot of damages. With sustained winds of over 290 km/h, torrential rain, and a passage speed of 15 km/h, it is one of the most powerful hurricanes ever recorded in the region. Initial reports point to 31 casualties and more than \$14 billion in damage, including the destruction of much of the power grid in the western part of the island.

On the approach of the hurricane, the Jamaican authorities requested the activation of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), in order to be able to count on the support of partner countries during this phase of emergency. The Jamaican *Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management* has submitted a list of priority needs. In this context, B-FAST has offered to provide emergency assistance in the field of electricity production. As such, 409 small generators were purchased to be donated to Jamaica. A first donation left for Kingston on Monday November 3rd via an A400M flight of the Belgian Defence, while the rest will follow in the coming days.

This operation once again illustrates the Belgian solidarity in the face of large-scale disasters, and confirms Belgium's active commitment to international aid.

"I was in contact with my Jamaican counterpart yesterday to express Belgium's full solidarity and our desire to remain by their side in this ordeal. We will continue to explore further support options together, as to accompany the reconstruction of the country." - Maxime Prévot, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and International Cooperation.

Thanks to this international solidarity, Belgium hopes to contribute to alleviating the suffering of the Jamaican people and also to support the efforts of resilience and sustainable recovery.

B-FAST (Belgian First Aid Support Team) is the structure of the federal government that is activated when providing emergency aid abroad and consists of the FPS Home Affairs, the FPS Policy and Support (BOSA), the FPS Public Health, the Ministry of Defence and the FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, in which the Prime Minister's Office is also involved.



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