



Initial Assessment Report

Hurricane Beryl: Jamaica

[19 August 2024]

The secondary data in this report is sourced from the Data Entry and Exploration Platform (DEEP) Atlantic-Caribbean Hurricane Season 2024 Project, launched on 03/07/2024, following Hurricane Beryl's impact on four Caribbean islands, including Jamaica. Coordinated with DEEP, IFRC, and GRC, the project initially focused on the hardest-hit countries—St. Vincent and Grenadines, Jamaica, Grenada, and Barbados. It later expanded to include baseline data collection in non-crisis countries like the Cayman Islands, Haiti, and St. Lucia. The data categorization follows the IFRC Analytical Framework 2024. As of 19/08/2024, the project database includes 1,072 documents and 5,000 tagged entries, covering sources such as local and international media, humanitarian documents from ReliefWeb, and academic content.

OVERVIEW

Hurricane Beryl, a powerful Category 4 hurricane, made landfall in Jamaica on July 3, 2024, causing widespread devastation across the island, particularly in the parishes of Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, and Westmoreland. With winds reaching 220 km/h (140 mph), the hurricane affected approximately 160,000 people, displacing 1,876 and severely damaging infrastructure, homes, and essential services. The storm disrupted access to clean water, electricity, and healthcare, particularly in the Southern Region, where health facilities faced extensive damage and waterborne disease risks increased. Agricultural and fishing communities suffered significant losses, further exacerbating food insecurity and economic instability. The need for emergency shelter, medical care, and livelihood support is critical, with ongoing efforts focusing on rebuilding resilient homes, restoring essential services, and providing mental health support. Despite challenges such as blocked roads and communication disruptions, national and international actors continue to coordinate relief and recovery efforts to support the affected population.

CRISIS SEVERITY AND PRIORITIES

1. Humanitarian conditions & People in Need

As of mid-July, it was estimated that approximately 160,000 people across Jamaica were affected, including 37,000 children (IFRC 20/07/2024; UNICEF 07/07/2024). The immediate needs of the affected populations include access to safe shelter, clean water, food, and medical care. In some of the hardest-hit areas, such as Clarendon and St. Elizabeth, many homes were either damaged or destroyed, necessitating urgent provision of temporary shelters and materials for rebuilding (ACAPS 18/07/2024). The destruction of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities has increased the risk of waterborne diseases, highlighting the need for clean water supplies and proper sanitation facilities. Medical care is critical, especially for those in overcrowded shelters where living conditions have deteriorated (PAHO 23/07/2024).

In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, interventions have focused on immediate relief and long-term recovery. Providing temporary shelter materials, such as tarpaulins, has been essential to protect displaced populations, while efforts to improve overcrowded shelters have focused on creating private spaces and ensuring access to safe WASH facilities. The "Build Back Better" initiative emphasizes training local contractors to construct hurricane-resistant homes. Restoring electricity and deploying generators are crucial for maintaining essential services, particularly in health facilities (IFRC 30/07/2024). Children, female-headed households, and farmers and fishermen are among the most affected populations. Children are vulnerable to waterborne diseases and food insecurity, while female-headed

households face heightened risks due to disrupted access to healthcare and livelihoods. Farmers and fishermen experience significant losses in crops and fishing infrastructure, impacting food security and economic stability (ACAPS 18/07/2024).

To mitigate these risks, the Jamaica Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations are actively providing mental health and psychosocial support, particularly in shelters, to address the psychological impact of the disaster. Efforts to improve communication and coordination between local and national responders are ongoing, with international agencies offering crucial support. However, challenges in accessing remote areas and restoring critical infrastructure have posed significant obstacles, limiting the overall capacity to fully address protection risks (IFRC 30/07/2024). Despite these difficulties, there remains a coordinated effort to strengthen the response and ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations.

2. Identified priority Needs

Priority needs #1 Health/ WASH	Priority needs #2 Livelihood	Priority needs #3 Shelter
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2.1. Health/ WASH

In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, Jamaica's health system faced critical challenges, primarily due to damage and extensive disruptions in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. Approximately 38% of all health facilities in Jamaica sustained damage, including major damage to 82 facilities. Among these, 64 reported roof damage, with additional harm to windows, walls, and storm drains. Specific health centers, such as Bellevue, Southfield, and Newell in St. Elizabeth, had their roofs completely blown off, necessitating the relocation of services to alternative locations (PAHO 12/07/2024; Radio Jamaica News 02/08/2024). As of August 07, the hurricane left approximately 70% of National Water Commission (NWC) customers without access to clean water, particularly in the Southern and North-East parishes, severely hampering basic hygiene practices and health service delivery. Nine hospitals in the Southern Region, including key health facilities in Clarendon, Manchester, and St. Elizabeth, were reduced to offering only emergency and in-patient services, relying heavily on generators due to widespread power outages and water shortages, which affected 60% of power customers (UNICEF 07/07/2024; PAHO 12/07/2024). The lack of water and sanitation facilities significantly increased the risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera, leptospirosis, and gastroenteritis. Additionally, stagnant water from flooding became breeding grounds for mosquitoes, heightening the risk of vector-borne diseases like dengue and malaria (PAHO 12/07/2024; IFRC 07/08/2024). The disruption of utility services further compromised the functionality of health facilities, forcing many to offer only emergency services and exacerbating the public health crisis (PAHO 12/07/2024).

As health emerged as a critical priority for Jamaica, it necessitated immediate and sustained interventions to address the widespread damage and disruption to healthcare services. Key priority needs include the urgent repair and restoration of health facilities, particularly in the Southern Region, where extensive damage to roofing, windows, and doors has severely compromised service delivery. These repairs are crucial to restoring functionality and ensuring the safety of both patients and healthcare workers (PAHO 06/07/2024). Repairing the severe roof damage in non-smart hospitals continued while restoring services in 'smart' hospitals that sustained minimal damage and effectively utilized tarpaulin coverings (PAHO 23/07/2024). The provision of essential medical supplies, especially medications that require refrigeration, has been identified as a critical need. The Ministry of Health and Wellness highlighted the necessity of enhancing cold chain systems by securing 66 vaccine refrigerators and generators for vaccination sites to ensure the continued availability of life-saving vaccines and medicines (Jamaica Information Service 10/07/2024; PAHO 25/07/2024). Mental health and psychosocial support services are also a significant priority. There is a need for both immediate and long-term mental health interventions, with an emphasis on addressing the psychological impact on affected populations and preventing burnout among healthcare workers (IFRC 07/08/2024; PAHO

12/07/2024) Furthermore, the breakdown of routine vector control measures and the conducive environment for mosquito breeding have heightened the risk of outbreaks of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria. This underscores the need for enhanced surveillance and prioritized vector control efforts to prevent further public health crises (PAHO 23/07/2024).

2.2. Livelihood

Jamaica's vulnerability to climate hazards significantly affects the country's main economic sectors, particularly tourism and agriculture, which together comprise over 33% of employment (ACAPS 18/07/2024). Hurricane Beryl had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of the island's population, especially those engaged in agriculture and fishing. These sectors are vital to the Jamaican economy and provide sustenance for a significant portion of the population, particularly in rural communities. The hurricane's destruction of approximately 23,040 hectares of farmland and the loss of critical crops like yams, cassava, bananas, and plantains severely disrupted the livelihoods of nearly 50,000 farmers (Govt. Jamaica 19/07/2024; Radio Jamaica News 16/07/2024). Additionally, the fisheries sector was hit hard, with fishers losing essential gear and equipment, resulting in an estimated \$1 billion in losses, further exacerbating the economic strain on coastal communities dependent on fishing (Govt. Jamaica 19/07/2024). The widespread agricultural damage has led to immediate food shortages and significant disruptions in the income streams of small-scale farmers and fishers. The destruction of crops, livestock, and fishing infrastructure not only affected food production but also jeopardized food security across the island. This situation has driven up food prices, making it increasingly difficult for low-income families to afford basic necessities, thereby intensifying food insecurity, especially in vulnerable populations such as female-headed households (ACAPS 18/07/2024; PAHO 23/07/2024).

To address these critical livelihood impacts, several priority interventions have been identified. First, the provision of Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) is essential to stabilize livelihoods and support early recovery, enabling affected populations to meet their immediate needs and rebuild their economic activities (IFRC 30/07/2024). In the agricultural sector, providing farm inputs and productive assets, such as seedlings, small farm tools, and livestock, is crucial for reviving agricultural production and ensuring food security in the region (OCHA 05/07/2024). Additionally, support for the fisheries sector, including the provision of fishing nets and other essential equipment, is necessary to help fishers resume their activities and restore their livelihoods (IFRC 30/07/2024). Capacity building through training and the establishment of Farmer Field Schools are also vital for ensuring that farmers and fishers can adapt to new challenges and implement climate-resilient practices, thereby increasing the resilience of their livelihoods against future disasters (IFRC 30/07/2024). International cooperation and support, particularly from organizations like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), are crucial in providing the technical and financial assistance needed to implement these interventions effectively (FAO 11/07/2024).

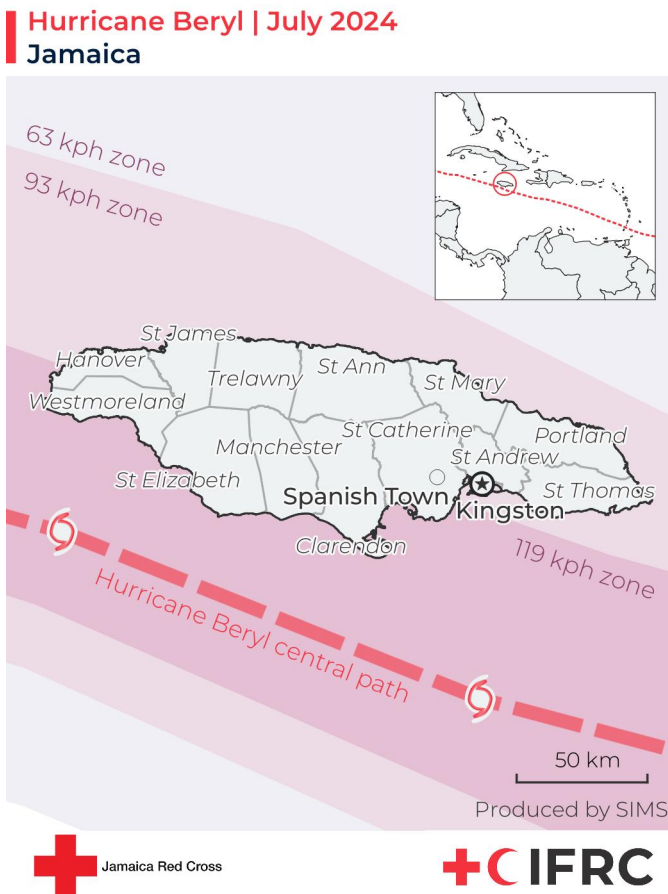
2.3. Shelter

Hurricane Beryl caused extensive damage to shelter and public infrastructure, significantly impacting the lives of thousands of people. The hurricane's destructive force not only displaced a significant portion of the population but also led to the destruction of homes, public buildings, and essential services, creating a critical need for emergency shelter solutions. On 3 July, all 12 parishes activated 275 temporary shelters (CDEMA 06/07/2024). Approximately 1,876 people were initially relocated to emergency shelters; however, these shelters themselves faced significant challenges due to the storm's impact (UNICEF 07/07/2024). The Trelawny Infirmary suffered roof damage, forcing its residents to remain longer in temporary shelter at Hague Primary School, raising serious concerns about the adequacy of these shelters to provide safe and secure environments for displaced individuals (Jamaica Observer 09/07/2024). In some affected parishes, emergency shelter centers were established in schools and community centers. However, by July 10, these centers were struggling with issues like overcrowding and insufficient facilities (ACAPS 18/07/2024). The impact of the hurricane on shelter infrastructure was compounded by disruptions in essential services such as electricity, water supply, and telecommunications, further complicating the emergency response. Approximately 60% of Jamaica's population lost electricity immediately after the hurricane, which not only hindered daily life but also critically affected the operation of shelters, where the lack of power led to inadequate lighting and increased risks of gender-based violence and other forms of abuse (PAHO 12/07/2024). Overcrowding

in shelters and insufficient facilities, including food, water, and sanitation, further exacerbated the situation, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly (UN Country Team in Jamaica 09/07/2024).

In response to these challenges, addressing shelter needs became a priority. The immediate provision of temporary shelter materials, such as tarpaulins and bedding, was crucial to protect those displaced by the storm. However, long-term recovery efforts emphasized the importance of rebuilding more resilient and secure housing. Initiatives like "Build Back Better" focused on training local contractors and repairing homes with hurricane-proofing techniques, including the installation of hurricane straps, to ensure that rebuilt structures could withstand future climate-related disasters (IFRC 30/07/2024). Enhancing conditions within emergency shelters was also critical to safeguarding the well-being of displaced populations. This included distributing indoor tents and partitioning materials to create private spaces within overcrowded shelters, as well as adapting shelters to meet minimum humanitarian standards, such as providing safe WASH facilities and adequate lighting (IFRC 20/07/2024). Protection concerns were addressed through the implementation of Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) monitoring tools, establishing child-friendly spaces, and providing mental health and psychosocial support to mitigate the trauma experienced by shelter occupants (IFRC 30/07/2024). Logistical challenges, particularly the disruption of electricity and telecommunications networks, further complicated shelter operations and the delivery of essential services. The restoration of electricity was prioritized to ensure the continuity of operations in shelters and other critical infrastructure. Generators were deployed to maintain the cold chain for medical supplies and support service delivery in health facilities (PAHO 10/07/2024).

3. Priority Geographic Areas



Priority geographic area #1 Clarendon	Priority geographic area #2 Manchester	Priority geographic area #3 St. Elizabeth
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3.1 Clarendon

Clarendon was one of the most severely affected parishes by Hurricane Beryl, with devastating impacts on both agriculture and infrastructure. The agricultural sector, which is a cornerstone of the local economy, experienced substantial losses. The Jamaica Dairy Development Board reported that approximately 34,000 liters of cow's milk were lost due to the hurricane's effects on farms located in Rhymesbury, Toll Gate, and Vernamfield ([Jamaica Information Service](#) 16/07/2024). This loss represents a significant setback for the dairy industry in Clarendon, which relies heavily on these areas for milk production.

In addition to agricultural losses, infrastructure damage in Clarendon was extensive. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) reported that 51 houses were completely destroyed, 182 houses were severely damaged, and 141 houses sustained minor damage ([Govt. Jamaica](#) 10/07/2024). The destruction of homes has left many families displaced and in need of urgent assistance. Health facilities in Clarendon faced severe challenges due to the damage caused by the hurricane. Power outages were widespread, leading to disruptions in essential health services. The May Pen Hospital, a key health facility in the parish, experienced occupancy levels exceeding 100% as it struggled to manage the influx of patients amidst the operational constraints caused by the hurricane ([PAHO](#) 06/07/2024). Additionally, the Rocky Point Hospital in Clarendon Parish was nonoperational due to infrastructure damage, and several neighboring health facilities experienced power and water disruptions, further complicating the provision of medical services ([IMC](#) 15/07/2024).

3.2. Manchester

Manchester also experienced severe impacts from Hurricane Beryl, particularly in the agricultural sector. The hurricane caused widespread damage to crops, livestock, and farming infrastructure, leading to significant food security concerns in the parish. The damage to crops, especially in the southern parts of the parish, has raised fears of long-term food shortages and economic instability. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) responded by distributing thousands of food packages, tarpaulins, mattresses, and hygiene kits to affected households ([Radio Jamaica News](#) 09/08/2024). However, the scale of the damage means that recovery will be a long and challenging process.

The fisheries sector in Manchester was particularly hard hit, fishers losing essential gear and equipment, amounting to losses of around \$1 billion ([Govt. Jamaica](#) 19/07/2024). This devastation has had a profound impact on coastal communities, especially in areas like Alligator Pond in south Manchester, where the fishing industry is a primary source of livelihood. The economic strain on these communities has been exacerbated, and there have been calls for government support to help revive the fishing industry and assist those affected ([Radio Jamaica News](#) 09/08/2024).

Health services in Manchester also faced significant challenges. Many medical facilities in the region were affected by power outages, necessitating the use of generators to maintain essential operations. The Regional Director for the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) reported that while normal operations had resumed at most medical facilities, some continued to operate under difficult conditions due to the lack of electricity in the first week of crisis ([Radio Jamaica News](#) 02/08/2024).

3.3. St. Elizabeth

St. Elizabeth, known as Jamaica’s "breadbasket" due to its extensive agricultural activities, was another parish severely impacted by Hurricane Beryl. The hurricane caused extensive damage to crops, including bananas, plantains, and vegetables, which are vital to the local economy and food supply. Farmers in St. Elizabeth reported that the hurricane affected about 85% of their banana and plantain harvest, which is a significant blow to both the local economy and food security ([AP News 08/07/2024](#)). In addition to crop damage, the storm also caused widespread infrastructural damage in St. Elizabeth. Many homes were either damaged or completely destroyed, particularly in coastal and rural areas. The Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) reported that it would take approximately six months to repair three health centers in the parish that were damaged during the hurricane. These centers, located in Bellevue, Southfield, and Newell, had their roofs damaged, further complicating the delivery of medical services to the affected communities ([Radio Jamaica News 02/08/2024](#)).

4. Priority affected groups

Priority affected group #1 Agricultural and Fishing Communities	Priority affected group #2 Children	Priority affected group #3 Female-headed households
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Hurricane Beryl has had a devastating impact on Jamaica, particularly affecting the agricultural and fishing communities, as well as vulnerable groups such as children, women, and female-headed households. The storm caused widespread destruction of food crops, fishing equipment, and essential infrastructure, leading to severe disruptions in both sectors and exacerbating the challenges faced by these communities.

In the agricultural sector, over \$6.4 million worth of food crops and supporting infrastructure were destroyed ([IMC 15/07/2024](#)). Key staples like plantains, yams, cassava, breadfruit, ackee, mangoes, and bananas were heavily impacted. Rural areas in St. Elizabeth, Portland, and St. Mary reported nearly 3,500 acres of plantains and bananas lost ([Jamaica Information Service 08/07/2024](#); [AP News 08/07/2024](#)). The damage extended beyond crop loss to include significant infrastructure damage. Approximately 62.8 kilometers of farm roads were damaged, making it difficult for farmers to transport their produce to markets ([Jamaica Observer 17/07/2024](#)). Furthermore, irrigation systems, farm building such as greenhouse were damaged which impacted the livelihood of farmers ([Radio Jamaica News 05/07/2024](#)). Additionally, the livestock sector suffered massive losses, with over 323,000 animals, including small ruminants, poultry, and cattle, perishing due to the hurricane ([Govt. Jamaica 19/07/2024](#)). This devastation has led to severe food shortages, particularly in rural areas where communities rely heavily on agriculture for sustenance and income.

The fishing industry, which is vital for the livelihoods of many coastal communities, was equally hard hit. Approximately 11,200 fishers were directly affected, with the majority losing their fishing gear, including traps and nets ([Govt. Jamaica 19/07/2024](#)). Additionally, fishing vessels were damaged, along with several fishing sheds ([Radio Jamaica News 08/07/2024](#)). The loss of essential equipment has left many fishing communities struggling to recover, threatening both their economic stability and food security.

Children have also been severely impacted by Hurricane Beryl. Across Jamaica, 37,000 children are in need of humanitarian assistance due to the destruction of homes and infrastructure ([UN Country Team in Jamaica 13/07/2024](#)). Many families have been displaced, with 1,876 people seeking refuge in shelters, including 113 children in the first week of crisis ([UNICEF 07/07/2024](#)). Living in these temporary shelters exposes children to increased risks of violence, abuse, and mental health challenges ([UNICEF 12/07/2024](#)). Additionally, the disruption of essential services, such as clean water and food supplies, has heightened the risk of malnutrition and dehydration, particularly among vulnerable populations like children and the elderly ([EC 09/07/2024](#)). Water and vector-borne diseases pose

further threats to the health of children and their caregivers, especially in shelters where access to clean water and adequate sanitation is limited (UNICEF 12/07/2024).

Female-headed households, already facing economic hardships, are now grappling with the compounded effects of resource scarcity, displacement, and the added responsibility of caring for children in these challenging conditions. The loss of livelihoods has made it difficult for many women to provide for their families, increasing the risk of domestic violence as tensions rise over limited resources (UN Country Team in Jamaica 13/07/2024). In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, stress and scarcity have heightened the likelihood of violent confrontations, with women often bearing the brunt of these challenges as they struggle to care for their families.

CRISIS SCOPE AND SCALE

1. Humanitarian Profile

The recent hurricane in Jamaica has had a devastating impact on the population. As of July 18, the storm has resulted in 3 confirmed deaths and left 60 people injured (ACAPS 18/07/2024). The destruction has forced 1,876 individuals to seek refuge in emergency shelters during the first week of the hurricane (UNICEF 07/07/2024). Overall, on July 20, Hurricane Beryl potentially affected a significant portion of Jamaica's population, with approximately 160,000 people affected, representing 30% of the population (IFRC 20/07/2024). Among those affected are 37,000 children, who are particularly vulnerable to the disaster's effects, as highlighted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF 07/07/2024). These figures underscore the urgent need for humanitarian assistance to address the immediate and long-term needs of the affected communities.

<p>160,000 Estimated nr. of people affected by the disaster (IFRC 20/07/2024)</p>	<p>(N/A) Estimated nr. of people in need</p>
<p>1,876 Internally Displaced population (UNICEF 07/07/2024)</p>	<p>2 Dead (ACAPS 18/07/2024)</p>
<p>(N/A) People missing</p>	<p>60 Injured (ACAPS 18/07/2024)</p>

2. Underlying factors (Drivers/aggravating factors)

<p>Underlying factor #1</p> <p>Geographical and climate change vulnerabilities</p>	<p>Underlying factor #2</p> <p>Crime and violence</p>	<p>Underlying factor #3</p> <p>Health infrastructures vulnerability</p>
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2.1. Geographical and climate change vulnerabilities

Jamaica is highly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters due to its geographical location and socioeconomic factors. The island nation faces increasing risks from hurricanes, floods, droughts, and landslides, with over 96% of its GDP and population at risk from multiple climate hazards (Green Climate Fund 2/09/2020). The North Atlantic hurricane season, coinciding with Jamaica's rainy season, exacerbates the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, leading to severe flooding and prolonged droughts (Climate Change Knowledge Portal 13/08/2024). Additionally, rising sea levels threaten coastal communities, where 50-60% of economic assets and up to 70% of the population reside. Almost one quarter of the population of Jamaica lives within 5km of the coastline increasing the vulnerability to coastal disaster (OCHA 01/06/2022). Jamaica Red Cross was still leading before Hurricane Beryl recovery efforts relating to hurricane and flooding events from as far back as 2019 (IFRC 01/07/2023).

2.2. Crime and Violence

In 2021, Jamaica experienced a severe crime wave, recording the highest murder rate in Latin America and the Caribbean for the second consecutive year. The island saw over 1,460 murders, resulting in a murder rate of nearly 50 per 100,000 people, with the most dangerous districts experiencing an alarming rate of 190 per 100,000. Government reports indicated that gangs were responsible for nearly three-quarters of these homicides. Amid escalating violence and insecurity, the government expanded Zones of Special Operations (ZOSOs) across the island, granting authorities the power to conduct warrantless searches and impose curfews. This pervasive violence and instability further complicate the humanitarian response to Hurricane Beryl, as resources are diverted to address crime, and the heightened insecurity hindered relief efforts and exacerbated the challenges faced by already vulnerable communities (OCHA 01/06/2022).

In Jamaican inner-cities, where crime concentrates, children and adolescents are exposed to extreme forms of violent crime, which can increase the likelihood of social and psychological problems—including aggressive behaviors – later in life (REAL Education 09/03/2023). Gang violence in Jamaica is driven by various and often gender-related factors, including the lack of opportunities among young men. Community and societal contributing factors include poverty, inequality, youth unemployment, weak institutions, urban migration, and drug trafficking. The lack of economic opportunities and positive role models for young men from vulnerable backgrounds fuels masculinity discourses promoting violent or illicit behaviors (REAL Education 09/03/2023).

2.3 Health infrastructures vulnerability

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) remain a significant challenge in the Caribbean, with an estimated 81% of deaths in the region attributed to these conditions by 2023. Hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and cancer are the leading causes of death and contribute the most to the disease burden in the Caribbean. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the need to address NCDs, as most deaths in the region have been linked to elderly individuals and those with comorbidities, particularly in Jamaica. The prevalence of chronic illnesses is higher in the Caribbean than in the rest of the Americas. Additionally, the region has the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS outside sub-Saharan Africa, with 1% of the adult population being HIV/AIDS positive. The spread of vector-borne diseases, such as dengue, chikungunya, and Zika, is also a major concern, with a high risk of widespread transmission due to population mobility (IFRC 01/07/2023).

In Jamaica, the quality of healthcare services to combat these diseases is poor, partly due to delays in receiving necessary care caused by staff shortages, inadequate facilities, and insufficient supplies. Other contributing factors include delays in seeking appropriate medical help due to costs, poor education or limited information, and difficulty accessing adequate health facilities because of distance or poor infrastructure. Natural disasters, such as Hurricane Beryl, exacerbate these health challenges by increasing the risks of diseases, illnesses, and injuries, which disproportionately affect women due to their caregiving roles. The already high maternal mortality rate in Jamaica

poses additional risks for pregnant women during disasters, as deliveries may occur in improvised clinics and be treated with traditional medicine, such as arrowroot porridge ([REAL Education 09/03/2023](#)). The compounded effect of these health challenges during Hurricane Beryl significantly hampered humanitarian efforts, as the strained healthcare system struggled to meet the increased demands, further complicating the response and recovery operations.

RESPONSE CAPACITY

1. National Society Capacity and Responses

The Jamaica Red Cross (JRC), in collaboration with other National Societies in the region, has demonstrated substantial capacity in responding to the humanitarian crisis following Hurricane Beryl. Their efforts have been comprehensive, involving the distribution of essential relief items and the provision of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) to affected communities. As of July 2024, the JRC had distributed a significant amount of non-food items, including 404 hygiene kits, 291 cleaning kits, 1,383 blankets, and 1,100 units of water, among others, to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations, such as those in shelters and hospitals ([IFRC 20/07/2024](#)). Additionally, the JRC's MHPSS team, composed of professional psychologists and psychiatrists, has been actively providing targeted mental health services, reaching at least 45 individuals by early August 2024 ([IFRC 07/08/2024](#)). Furthermore, the JRC is part of a broader 12-month Emergency Appeal aimed at supporting 25,000 people across four affected countries, focusing on shelter, health, and livelihoods, with an emphasis on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) ([IFRC 04/07/2024](#)). The National Society's preparedness and pre-positioning of supplies before the hurricane enabled a swift and effective response, highlighting their capacity to manage large-scale disaster relief efforts ([IFRC 04/07/2024](#)).

2. National Actor Capacity and Response

The response to Hurricane Beryl in Jamaica showcased the robust capacity and coordination of national actors, including government agencies, private sector companies, and non-profit organizations. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS) spearheaded much of the relief efforts, distributing over 11,697 food packages, 1,925 tarpaulins, 989 mattresses, 1,911 hygiene kits, and 500 cases of water by late July 2024 to communities in need across the island ([Jamaica Information Service 24/07/2024](#)). The Ministry also played a critical role in coordinating damage assessments and distributing grants for housing repairs, offering up to \$400,000 for houses that were destroyed and smaller amounts for homes with severe or minor damages ([Jamaica Information Service 03/08/2024](#)).

In addition to the government's efforts, various private sector entities made significant contributions to the relief operations. Restaurants of Jamaica Limited (ROJ), for example, donated \$14 million to support ongoing relief efforts and provide essential aid, including a \$1 million donation to Food for the Poor Jamaica to sustain their continuous operations in the affected areas ([Jamaica Observer 02/08/2024](#)). The Caribbean Cement Company Limited also invested more than \$7.7 million through an Emergency Disaster Relief Fund, providing non-perishable food items, zinc sheets, screws, and plywood to assist in rebuilding efforts ([Jamaica Observer 12/07/2024](#)).

Additionally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Food For The Poor (FFP) played a crucial role, pre-positioning disaster preparedness kits for 500 families and delivering 540 food packages, hygiene kits, tarps, and blankets to the hardest-hit parishes of St. Mary, St. Thomas, St. Catherine, Clarendon, Manchester, and St. Elizabeth ([Jamaica Observer 10/07/2024](#)). The coordinated response, led by local authorities like the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management (ODPEM), ensured that international aid was effectively managed and distributed. This collective effort not only provided immediate relief but also contributed to building resilience in affected communities, highlighting the importance of global partnerships in disaster recovery ([OCHA 06/07/2024](#)).

The coordinated response by these national actors reflects a strong capacity for disaster response and recovery in Jamaica, leveraging both governmental resources and private sector support to mitigate the impacts of Hurricane Beryl and assist affected communities in rebuilding their lives

3. International and other humanitarian partner’s capacity and response

The international response to Hurricane Beryl in Jamaica showcased a robust and coordinated effort among international organizations with National actors and NGOs. The United States played a pivotal role, with the U.S. Government, through USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), providing a comprehensive \$2.5 million hurricane recovery package. This package included essential supplies like plastic tarpaulins, shelter fixing kits, water tanks, and safe drinking water ([Jamaica Information Service 31/07/2024](#)). Additionally, USAID granted \$200,000 to the Jamaica Red Cross to support relief efforts in the hardest-hit parishes ([IFRC 30/07/2024](#)).

The United Nations also responded promptly, with the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocating \$2.5 million to Jamaica for immediate lifesaving needs. These funds targeted areas such as shelter, food security, cash transfers, and water and sanitation ([UN Country Team in Jamaica 09/07/2024](#)). The World Food Programme (WFP) further aligned its efforts with the Jamaican government, focusing on food security and providing cash transfers to assist over 18,000 individuals or 6,000 households ([Radio Jamaica News 06/08/2024](#)).

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) contributed \$217,850 to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Emergency Appeal, benefiting Jamaica and other affected countries in the region ([OCHA 19/07/2024](#)). Additionally, Scotiabank Canada donated CAD \$25,000 to United Way of Jamaica to assist small farmers and CAD \$100,000 to the Canadian Red Cross for Jamaica's relief efforts ([Jamaica Observer 10/08/2024](#)). The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Nestlé also partnered with the Jamaica Red Cross, providing in-kind donations such as food packages and water ([IFRC 07/08/2024](#)).

OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Operational Constraints #1 Blocked Roads and Physical Access	Operational Constraints #2 Communication Disruptions	Operational Constraints #3 Logistical Challenges Due to Infrastructure Damage
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The aftermath of Hurricane Beryl in Jamaica severely hindered humanitarian access, particularly in remote and rural areas. Flooding, debris from fallen trees, landslides, and significant infrastructural damage, such as blocked roads, created substantial barriers for relief actors attempting to reach affected populations. This obstruction not only delayed the delivery of aid but also complicated efforts to assess the full extent of the damage, significantly impeding overall response efforts ([UN Country Team in Jamaica 09/07/2024](#)).

The challenges faced by humanitarian workers were exacerbated by widespread communication disruptions, especially in rural and heavily impacted areas of western Jamaica ([Jamaica Observer 08/07/2024](#)). The collapse of telecommunication towers contributed to a breakdown in communication, making it difficult for relief teams to coordinate their efforts and gather timely information on the needs of those affected. This disruption not only impeded access for relief actors but also hampered the ability of the affected population to seek assistance and stay informed about ongoing relief operations ([Jamaica Observer 11/07/2024](#)).

Further complicating the situation were the logistical challenges brought on by widespread infrastructure damage. The destruction of power lines across several parishes, including Clarendon, Saint Elizabeth, and Manchester, posed significant

challenges to both the delivery of aid and the restoration of essential services. Prolonged power outages limited the capacity of humanitarian actors to operate effectively, leaving vulnerable populations without necessary support for extended periods (ACAPS 18/07/2024). These physical barriers, coupled with the delayed response, also heightened security concerns, creating an increasingly precarious environment for both relief workers and those in need of assistance (IFRC 11/07/2024).

PRE-CRISIS OVERVIEW IN AFFECTED AREAS

1. Socio economic Vulnerability

The Jamaican economy and livelihoods were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the economy contracting by 9% in 2020, largely due to a more than 66% decline in tourism arrivals. At least 50,000 people directly employed in tourism were laid off, leading to an increase in poverty to nearly 25%. A CARICOM-led survey in February 2022 revealed that nearly half (48%) of respondents reported disruptions to their livelihoods, while 57% reported reduced or lost income (OCHA 01/06/2022).

Jamaica faces a serious brain drain problem due to lack of economic opportunities and high unemployment in the country, in part related to the succession of disasters striking the island and the COVID-19 pandemic. Young adults experienced greater job losses, with unemployment rates reaching record levels of 23.8% and 33.9% for men and women, respectively. Women's jobs have been harder hit by the pandemic because of their concentration in sectors most affected by the crisis, such as trade, hotel and restaurant services, and education (REAL Education 09/03/2023). ILO data reveals almost 38% of young people in the labor force in 2023 are unable to secure jobs while unemployment spells are particularly long. Job searching for some 40% of unemployed young people was lasting longer than one year (REAL Education 09/03/2023). Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the long-term effects of brain drain that was already ongoing in the health system also led to shortages in healthcare professionals, especially nurses. Jamaica has therefore become highly dependent on remittances (15.5% of its GDP), which constitute an important source of foreign exchange and income support for households (OCHA 01/06/2022).

Additionally, the Jamaican economy is currently highly exposed to the impacts of the war in Ukraine, as 5.5% of its exports are destined for the Russian and Ukrainian markets, and it remains heavily dependent on food imports (OCHA 01/06/2022).

2. Agriculture and Food Security

Before Hurricane Beryl struck Jamaica, the island was already grappling with significant challenges in terms of agriculture and food security. High income inequality, exacerbated by technical limitations in agriculture, left many communities vulnerable. Global warming and a growing population further strained resources, while environmental degradation compounded these issues. The complexities of international trade, coupled with Jamaica's climatic vulnerabilities, created a volatile market. This volatility manifested in frequent crop failures, water conflicts, displacement, and widespread food insecurity (UNDRR, OCHA 01/06/2023).

Therefore, in recent years, agricultural production in Jamaica has witnessed a protracted decline while the country's food import bill continues to rise. Due to the pandemic's devastating impact on livelihoods, the number of people estimated to be food-insecure doubled to 400,000 – around 13% of the population – with female-headed households disproportionately affected. The latest CARICOM-led survey on food security and livelihoods found that more than 40% of respondents reduced their food consumption amid rising prices (OCHA 01/06/2022). In addition, severe flooding and food shortages have destroyed crops. The banana export sector and the tourism sector were devastated due to these events leading to the loss of jobs, and foreign exchange revenue. Floods and droughts threaten food security. Water resources are also increasingly scarce (UWI 19/09/2023).

3. Women's vulnerability

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted employment in Jamaica, with women being particularly affected. By October 2020, unemployment rates had risen to 8.7% for men and 13.2% for women following the pandemic’s onset in March 2020. This surge in unemployment has led to increased poverty rates, especially among female single caregivers (REAL Education 09/03/2023).

Additionally, natural disasters such as floods and landslides this past decade have exacerbated the situation for female-headed households, causing further stress by damaging or destroying income sources like livestock, particularly chickens. Droughts and water shortages have also placed additional burdens on women and girls, who are traditionally responsible for water collection. Women in rural areas have been facing even greater challenges due to limited access to formal employment, land ownership, and financial resources, making their livelihoods particularly vulnerable to climate-related events. Despite a higher distribution of human capital among women and girls, many remained before hurricane Beryl excluded from the labor market. These disparities were largely due to a lack of opportunities, labor market discrimination, and their primary role as caregivers. Conversely, men are more frequently found in vulnerable and informal employment. Jamaicans, particularly women, rely heavily on loans and gifts from family, including remittances from abroad, during emergencies (REAL Education 09/03/2023).

In addition, nearly one-fifth of women in Jamaica in 2023 were reporting gender-based violence either domestic or at their workplace impacting their ability to concentrate on their work, with around 15 percent reported having their work disrupted by their partners. Moreover, children of abused women were four times more likely to drop out of school. The closure of schools during the COVID19 Pandemic and recurrent when a disaster strikes the island also bring an increased risk of girls getting pregnant, with the accompanying detrimental effects on their education, and on their life prospects (REAL Education 09/03/2023).

<p>2,827,377 Total Population (HDX 2022)</p>	<p>49.6% Male Population (HDX 2022)</p>	<p>50.4% Female Population (HDX 2022)</p>
<p>70.5 Life Expectancy at Birth (HDX 2021)</p>	<p>1.24% Under-five mortality rate (HDX 2021)</p>	<p>57% Population living in urban areas (HDX 2022)</p>

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