Response to Hurricane Melissa - Sitrep #1

07 November 2025

Main highlights

CONTEXT: Hurricane Melissa has severely hit Jamaica on October 28. Telecom networks have been mostly disrupted in the affected areas. The western side of the island is still isolated as of 07 November.

RESPONSE: TSF focuses on reconnecting isolated areas and communities. Building on its existing partnership with the Jamaican Red Cross (JRC), 3 branches have been reconnected and 2 mobile Wi-Fi operations have been conducted.

KEY FIGURES

- **3 coordination centers** reconnected

- **2 mobile Wi-Fi operations** conducted

- **+370 devices** connected

- **+300 GB** data exchanged

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Context

On October 28th, **Hurricane Melissa hit Jamaica** as a Category 5 storm, the highest on the Saffir-Simpson scale, with **winds reaching up to 280 km/h**. Melissa is considered the most powerful hurricane to ever hit Jamaica since weather records began. The hurricane, along with the landslides and floods that followed, **caused severe damage**, especially in the western part of the island. At least 32 people were reported dead, and homes and public infrastructure were destroyed.
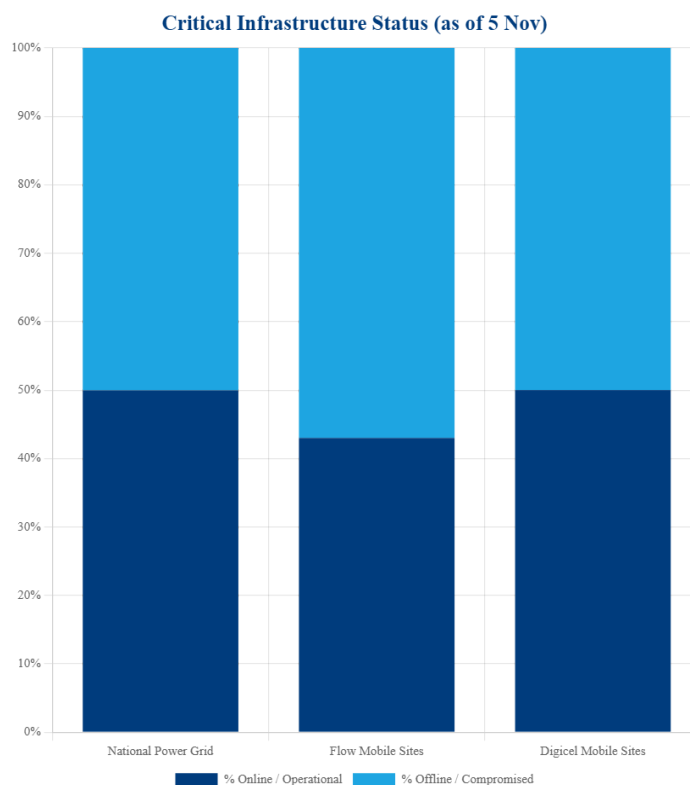
General telecom situation

Communications and power infrastructures have been impacted, making it difficult for affected communities to call for help and reach their loved ones and for organizations to respond to the crisis. Major outages persist, as of 5 November.

Power

Electricity is still an issue in the affected areas. This prevents people from charging their devices. Generators are in short supply in the country.

Logistics

The main roads have been cleared (south to Negril, North to M-Bay and Hanover parish), but latest information shows that there are still isolated/blocked communities in the backcountry. Not all roads are suitable for trucks yet, because of electrical poles hanging down that need to be removed.

Critical Infrastructure Status (as of 5 Nov)

Stacked bar chart showing, for each of National Power Grid, Flow Mobile Sites, and Digicel Mobile Sites, the % Online / Operational (dark blue) and % Offline / Compromised (light blue). National Power Grid ≈ 50% online; Flow Mobile Sites ≈ 43% online; Digicel Mobile Sites ≈ 50% online.

Response

Map of activities

TSF Operations in response to Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica

Objectives

Reduce the impact of Hurricane Melissa on affected communities by providing emergency communication means in the most isolated areas.

Activities

Emergency Connectivity for Humanitarian Coordination Centers

Connecting Jamaican Red Cross centers to support coordination and communication with Kingston

- **Santa Cruz**, St. Elizabeth Parish
- **Savanna-la-Mar**, Westmoreland Parish

Emergency Connectivity for the Affected communities

Providing Wi-Fi to affected people alongside the Jamaican Red Cross' aid distributions

- **Mount Salem**, Montego Bay
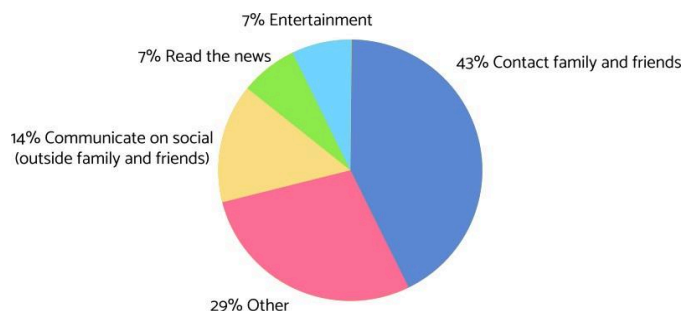- **Jericho Town**, Hanover Parish

Humanitarian Coordination

- TSF collaborated with the ETC to develop and establish a shared Kobo-based assessment form used by all emergency communications responders - contact Lena Bock (ETC) for more information.
- Regular coordination with OCHA and other telecoms responders such as EICT, TWG and ITDRC.
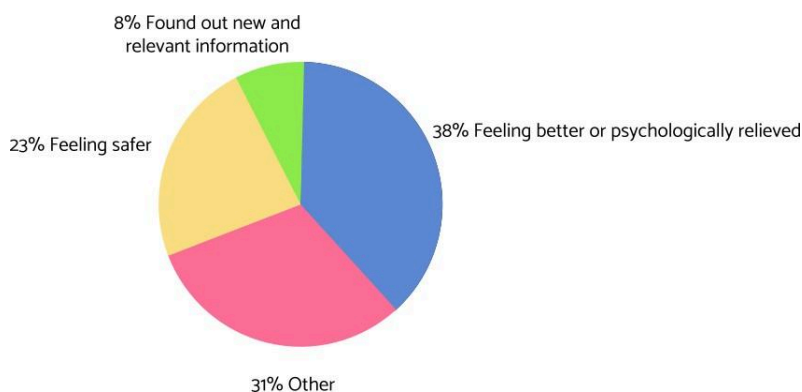
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Feedback from affected communities

Feedback from beneficiaries was collected during mobile Wi-Fi operations.

Distribution of Connectivity Uses

- 7% Entertainment
- 7% Read the news
- 14% Communicate on social (outside family and friends)
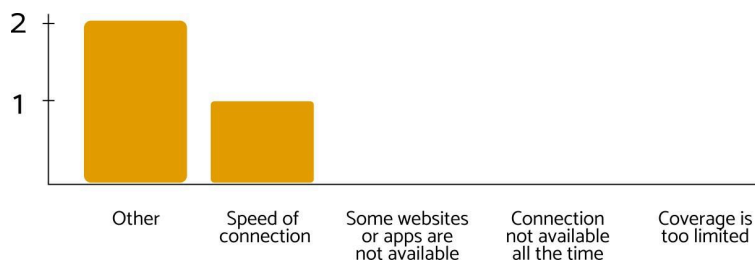- 43% Contact family and friends
- 29% Other

'Other' uses include :"Access to information", "Letting friends and family know we're ok" and "YouTube".

Impact of Emergency Connectivity on Beneficiaries

- 8% Found out new and relevant information
- 23% Feeling safer
- 38% Feeling better or psychologically relieved
- 31% Other

'Other' mentioned impacts include: "Makes me feel happy", "Like I got back to the world", "Less stressed because I didn't know what's going on".

Negative feedback received

Other	Speed of connection	Some websites or apps are not available	Connection not available all the time	Coverage is too limited
2	1			

* 'Other' include "Not that good" and "Not very stable"

Future plans

Emergency Connectivity for Coordination Centers

- **Additional branches from the Jamaican Red Cross to be connected** in the next few days. Planned branches include Montego Bay and Trelawny - possibly more, exact locations to be confirmed.

Emergency Connectivity for the Affected communities

- **Continue mobile Wi-Fi operations alongside distributions** in cooperation with Jamaican Red Cross and possibly other organizations
- **Expand mobile Wi-Fi units / vehicles** in collaboration with different humanitarian actors

Mission Gallery

View of catastrophic damage to infrastructure and vegetation from a rooftop.

Field coordination between TSF and Jamaican Red Cross (JRC) staff during assessment.

Installation of a TSF Access Point (AP) to provide WiFi at a JRC branch.

TSF staff engage with communities using the service at a mobile connectivity point during a distribution.

Field contacts

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