

2025 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

FROM DR. THE HON. ANDREW HOLNESS, ON, PC, MP

PRIME MINISTER

Merriment is a part of the Christmas Season. It is a happy time as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Now, ironically Jesus was born in a time of great hardship, and he came into the world in humble shelter, a stable. As I speak, I know there are many Jamaicans without shelter and experiencing hardship as a result of Hurricane Melissa. Yet the Christmas story reminds us that even in these moments, life, hope, and renewal can still emerge.

This is not to diminish the challenges of our people, but to remind us that hardship does not cancel the possibility of hope. Just as the stable did not diminish the significance of Christ's birth, our current circumstances do not diminish the strength, dignity, or future of our communities.

And in the spirit of hope and renewal that defines this season, the Government of Jamaica is advancing a comprehensive programme of support aimed at rebuilding homes, restoring livelihoods, and strengthening affected communities. Already the JDF and engineering corps from other supporting countries are already in some communities repairing roofs of the most vulnerable persons. By mid-January after a critical threshold of damage assessment is completed, we will begin issuing rebuilding and rehabilitation grants scaled to the assessed level of damage. And we will continue to offer relief support to those assessed as being in need.

2025 has been a faith-testing year. But at the same time, we saw brotherly and sisterly love that is so characteristic of who we are as a people, we saw that shine through.

To every Jamaican who opened their home, shared their resources, or gave their time to help someone else, thank you. You embody the very best of who we are.

And many thanks to our brothers and sisters in the diaspora, who continue to support families back home and invest in Jamaica's future, you remain an essential part of our national story.

We are also grateful for the outpouring of support and solidarity from the international community in the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa. Friends of Jamaica, including development partners, experts, and international institutions, have mobilised alongside us, offering support, guidance, and cooperation as we work through recovery. Through active engagement and advocacy in international fora, we have spoken clearly on behalf of our people to ensure that the country has the backing it needs to rebuild.

At the same time, Jamaica's ability to respond has been strengthened by years of responsible economic stewardship. Because we planned, saved, and made difficult decisions when times were good, we were not left powerless when the storm came. That preparation has allowed us to act, to support our communities, and to look ahead with confidence. As we move forward, we will continue to build on that foundation, strengthening disaster resilience and working with our international partners to build forward, to build stronger and build smarter.

Christmas is, at its heart, a story about hope born in uncertainty. It is about light appearing where darkness once prevailed. That message is deeply relevant to us today.

Over the past decade, Jamaica has undertaken difficult but necessary reforms to stabilise our economy, restore credibility, and put the nation on a strong footing. Those sacrifices are yielding results. Debt has been reduced. Confidence has been restored. Investment is growing. We achieved the lowest unemployment rate in our history, and our institutions are stronger today than they were a generation ago. Murders and shootings are trending below 700 per year, the lowest in 30 years. Our logistics industry is expanding rapidly, construction, agriculture and tourism are also growing. Jamaica is on a good path. Yes, Hurricane Melissa will interrupt our growth, but we must not allow it to be a drag on our economy. The part of Jamaica that was spared must double our efforts to make up for the fall in output of the severely damaged parishes.

Now, as we look ahead to the new year, let us carry forward the lessons of this one. Let us commit to planning better, building smarter, and caring

deeper. Let us reject cynicism and choose responsibility. Let us remember that progress is not delivered to us, it is built by us, together.

The Christmas story teaches that even in the midst of despair, the lord our saviour, will provide hope and opportunity for renewal and rebirth.

Hurricane Melissa poses a crisis of incomparable proportions for Jamaica, but it is also an incredible opportunity for reset and rebirth.

May this season bring peace to your homes, strength to your hearts, and renewed faith in what we can achieve as one people.

Let us continue to roll up our sleeves and put one block on top of the other to keep rebuilding our great nation.

From my family to yours, I wish you a safe, peaceful, and blessed Christmas, and a hopeful and prosperous New Year.

God bless you, and God bless Jamaica.