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WAPA Line Crews Depart for Jamaica to Aid Post-Hurricane Power Restoration

WAPA has dispatched lineworkers and safety personnel from St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John to Jamaica for a month-long effort assisting with electrical restoration after Hurricane Melissa, while maintaining operational readiness at home.

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ST. CROIX — The Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority has dispatched a team of its linemen to Jamaica to assist with power restoration and electrical system repairs following the devastation caused by Category 5 Hurricane Melissa, extending regional support while maintaining operational readiness at home.

In an announcement issued Monday, WAPA said the crew will spend approximately one month in Jamaica, volunteering their time and expertise to support local utility crews as recovery efforts continue. The delegation includes lineworkers and safety personnel from both WAPA's St. Croix and St. Thomas/St. John districts.

The team departed Monday afternoon from the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix and the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas, traveling separately to Miami before joining for the onward flight to Jamaica. WAPA officials said the crew will provide hands-on assistance in repairing storm-damaged electrical infrastructure.

According to the release, the work will include replacing poles and transformers, restoring powerlines, and performing manual climbing and repair operations in areas where access by bucket trucks is limited. The authority said the delegation brings years of experience restoring power after major storms in the U.S. Virgin Islands, along with a deep understanding of the perseverance required to rebuild critical infrastructure in the aftermath of hurricanes.

"While we faced our own challenges last year, we are reminded that it could have been far worse. We watched as our Caribbean brothers and sisters in Jamaica were devastated when Hurricane Melissa made landfall," said Karl Knight, CEO and Executive Director of WAPA. "We have not forgotten that we were spared this hurricane season, and we will do our part to demonstrate the same goodwill we received after Hurricanes Irma and Maria."

Paul Gumbs, Line Superintendent on St. Croix, echoed that sentiment, emphasizing the shared experience of recovery across the region. "We understand the long road to recovery because we've walked it ourselves," Gumbs said. "Volunteering in Jamaica is about helping our Caribbean family move forward."

WAPA said it will continue to maintain operational readiness in the U.S. Virgin Islands while lending its expertise to support Jamaica's recovery, describing the effort as a reflection of the authority's commitment to service and regional solidarity.

The authority and the wider community extended well wishes to the crew for a safe journey and a smooth, secure return home, expressing gratitude for their dedication to service.

WAPA also noted that its Communications Department remains committed to reaching and connecting with residents across the territory — from the youngest members of the community to the eldest — through transparent, meaningful, and effective communication as the authority continues its work locally and regionally.