



Disaster Relief Project Update



A PERSONAL UPDATE FROM A VOLUNTEER PILOT IN JAMAICA

I am writing this update not from an office, but from the perspective of a volunteer pilot serving here in Jamaica in the days following Hurricane Melissa.

What we are seeing from the air is difficult to fully put into words. Entire stretches of coastline and inland communities have been heavily affected. Roofs gone. Roads blocked by fallen trees and debris. Power lines are down in many areas. In some places, it looks like the storm has rewritten the landscape. And yet, even in the middle of all this destruction, what has stayed with me most is not just what is broken, but the resilience of the people on the ground trying to help each other.

From the very first assessment flights, our focus has been simple: identify where people are most isolated, where access is cut off, and where aviation can make a

real difference. Volunteer pilots with AWA have been flying carefully mapped routes over affected regions, relaying real-time observations back to coordination teams and local leaders.

One of the hardest things is knowing that behind every damaged roof or blocked road, a family is trying to figure out what comes next.

From Assessment to Relief

In partnership with GSI Jamaica, we are now transitioning from initial assessment flights into direct relief operations. Working closely with local Seventh-day Adventist pastors, we are preparing flights into Negril and surrounding communities, delivering urgently needed school supplies and basic support

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materials for children and families who have been significantly impacted.

These flights are not just logistical missions. They are deeply relational. Local pastors are meeting us at landing points, helping distribute supplies, and staying with families who are still processing loss and disruption. In many cases, these moments are as important as the supplies themselves.

One pastor told me after a recent coordination meeting: “The children are eager to return to school, but many have lost everything. When the supplies arrive, it is not just help—it is hope.”

The Reality on the Ground

It is important to state clearly that the scale of destruction is large and that recovery will take time. Much longer than most people expect when they first hear the news.

Some communities will need to be rebuilt from the ground up. Others will need months of restoration work to regain basic stability. The emotional and economic impact on families is still unfolding.

As pilots, we often see the first layer of a disaster from above—but the real story is always at ground level, where people are living the aftermath every day.

Why Aviation Matters Right Now

In situations like this, aviation becomes more than transportation. It becomes accessibility. It allows us to reach areas that are still difficult or impossible to access by road. It allows supplies to move quickly. It allows coordination to happen in real time. And sometimes it simply lets people know they have not been forgotten.

Every flight we are operating right now is made possible by volunteers, partners, and supporters who believe that service matters when it is most needed.

A Strong Appeal for Support

I want to make a direct and honest appeal. The needs here are significant, and the work ahead will require sustained support.

We are asking for three things:

First—prayer.

Please pray for Jamaica, for families who have lost so much, for children trying to return to school, and for

the volunteers and local leaders working tirelessly on the ground.

Second—financial support.

These relief flights are only possible because of donations that cover fuel, aircraft maintenance, logistics, and the cost of operating safely in challenging post-storm conditions. Every contribution directly enables more flights and more deliveries into affected communities.

Third—continued partnership.

Recovery will not be measured in days or weeks, but in months and likely longer. Continued engagement will be essential to help communities move from emergency response to rebuilding.

Closing Thoughts

Flying over Jamaica after Hurricane Melissa has been one of the most sobering experiences of my flying career. But it has also been one of the most meaningful. Because even in the middle of damage, there is something else you see if you look carefully—people helping people. Communities reaching out. Churches organizing. Volunteers stepping in. And hope, still present, even when everything else feels uncertain.

We cannot change what the storm has done. But we can choose how we respond in its aftermath. And right now, every flight matters. Thank you for standing with us, for praying with us, and for helping keep these aircraft in the air as we serve Jamaica together.

—AWA Volunteer Pilot, Jamaica



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