



**OFFICE OF THE  
PREMIER**  
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

# MEDIA RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Premier's Hurricane Season Message 2016**

**GRAND CAYMAN, Cayman Islands** – It is with a wish and prayer that I bring you the Hurricane message for 2016.

I say that because early predictions aren't very satisfactory for us in the Caribbean.

Prognosticators are warning that the 2016 and 2017 Atlantic hurricane seasons will be the strongest in over four years.

The early numbers are that we can expect 17 named storms, nine hurricanes and four major hurricanes during this hurricane season.

Those numbers go up for next year.

For the past three years the predictions weren't quite so dire and I had a fear that we were becoming complacent in our preparations.

After all, it seems like a long time ago since we experienced Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and Hurricane Paloma in 2008.

But for me, personally, the memories of those two storms and the way most of us had to scurry to make quick preparations still burn bright in my mind.

I also remember that we weren't given any financial assistance to help us overcome our plight in their aftermath.

That is why this Government sent US \$500,000 to our brothers and sisters in Dominica to help them in their struggle to recover from Tropical Storm Erika.

That August storm triggered floods and mudslides, left 30 people dead and caused US\$483 million in damage to that small country.

They were struggling.

That's why we sent them financial aid. It was the right and humane thing to do.

Here in the Cayman Islands we have better infrastructure than does Dominica, but we can't allow ourselves to be unprepared to deal with any natural disaster, especially hurricanes.

We all know that annual hurricane predictions are merely a best estimate of expected hurricane activity in the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.

And while we designate hurricane season to be from June to the end of November, hurricanes don't really pay attention to the calendar.

Technically, we've already had the first hurricane of the 2016 season. Some may remember that Hurricane Alex became a Category 1 storm on 14 January, nearly five months before the start of this year's hurricane season.

And we saw in Hurricane Ivan that storms can be fickle.

I remember well tracking Ivan and being more concerned about our Sister Islands and our friends in Jamaica. Then it wobbled. I dare say the majority of us on Grand Cayman were not prepared; after all, it had

been 16 years since Hurricane Gilbert and some 70 years since Cayman had felt the massive blows of a killer storm in 1932.

I pray to God that everyone who experienced those two storms remembers, as this new hurricane season approaches, how important it is to not only stock up on your hurricane supplies, but to have a plan for evacuations either off Island, to a shelter, to inland property of family or friends or to stay home and ride out any potential storms. If you do decide to stay home, please ensure that your house is a safe place to remain.

Since hurricanes Ivan and Paloma, many people will have moved to these Islands who don't know about hurricane preparations. I ask all Caymanians and those who call these Islands home and know how to prepare to reach out to the newcomers and see that they have proper hurricane supplies and plans.

If you do not yet have a personal hurricane plan, please get one in place.

Be certain that you have your hurricane supplies as well as full prescriptions of your medicines and, if you live in a high risk or vulnerable area, plan your escape route to the nearest hurricane shelter.

Government preparedness cannot be a substitute for personal preparedness.

We all need to be ready so that we can survive any storms that come our way and be in a better position to do any necessary rebuilding.

There can be information overload, especially as storms approach our shores, but I urge you to pay attention to the Government announcements and bulletins when they become necessary.

The National Weather Service, emergency managers from Hazard Management Cayman Islands and the local media will again work together to get necessary information out to the public in a regular and timely manner.

It is my prayer that God spares these Islands once again during this, the 2016 Hurricane Season.

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