

6 September 2017 - *Seul le prononcé fait foi*

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# Statement by Emmanuel Macron - Hurricane Irma

Ladies and gentlemen,

I've just had a meeting of the crisis unit with the Prime Minister, the Ministre d'Etat, Minister of the Interior, all the ministers present here and their departments.

First of all, I want to say a few words to express our deep sympathy, our solidarity with our fellow citizens in Saint-Martin and Saint-Barthélemy, who have been affected by Cyclone Irma. I want to tell them, I want to tell their families, their loved ones, that the whole nation stands by them, mobilized.

So we've just reviewed the situation in great detail, following the cyclone which, during the day, has attacked – because that is indeed the appropriate term – those two islands in a devastating way.

The situation had been anticipated by all our departments for several days and had led to a mobilization of all our relevant departments, to address the emergency and get things organized.

Since the beginning of the day, since this morning French metropolitan time, we've been fully mobilized. (...)

As I speak, it's too early to provide an accurate toll of any kind. But I can already tell you the toll will be harsh. We must expect casualties, and the damage to the two islands is considerable.

All the government departments are mobilized today, firstly to restore links and ensure the rescue is organized and secondly to carry out reconnaissance, by every means, with a link set up from Guadeloupe. So in the coming hours we'll have more detailed information on the different situations.

The government departments are also fully mobilized to cover everyday needs, treat the injured, provide shelter to the victims and supply water and food as quickly as possible. (...)

More broadly, international solidarity will be harnessed to respond to the situation, and under the Prime Minister's authority all the departments are already mobilized. Finance will also be released to address the situation, with an emergency fund set up, and a national reconstruction plan will be deployed as quickly as possible.

In addition to sympathy and this mobilization of the whole government alongside our fellow citizens, I want to express our determination to address all the situations that arise in the coming hours. To this end, the Interior Ministry has set up a hotline for families, which was publicized in the middle of the afternoon. The Minister for Overseas France will leave for Guadeloupe this evening to be as close as possible to the situation and visit as soon as access is possible.

We've also made contact already with several of our international partners and other countries that are victims of Cyclone Irma or will be in the coming hours. I'm thinking in particular of our Dutch friends, who share the island of Saint-Martin; I'm also thinking of, among others, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, with which we've already established cooperation, sending experts, technical – and tomorrow, if need be, humanitarian – cooperation to come to their aid; and finally perhaps, by the end of the week, Florida.

So the government is fully mobilized, not only alongside our fellow citizens in the two islands but also all our friends in the whole region, given the extreme violence of this cyclone and the damage it's causing throughout the region. (...)

Thank you for your attention, and I remind you that this evening we stand by all those on our territory, a few thousand kilometers from here, who are destitute, stripped of everything, some having lost loved ones, and that we stand by their families in metropolitan France and elsewhere who are experiencing anxiety. (...)