

Holness announces formal establishment of Ministry of Defence



FILE: Prime Minister of Jamaica Andrew Holness

Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness has announced the formal establishment of a Ministry of Defence to boost Jamaica’s disaster response and ensure the Jamaica Defence Force (JDF) has “stronger coordination at the highest level”.

The ministry is based at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

In a social media post on Monday, Holness said while the prime minister traditionally serves as minister of defence though it “doesn’t have to be”, operational and administrative oversight had previously fallen under the Ministry of National Security and Peace.

The prime minister noted that the restructuring—moving JDF from the security ministry—was implemented following Hurricane Melissa in October 2025 to allow “seamless management” of disaster response and defence operations.

The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management was also moved to the OPM.

“Both institutions are now coordinated in lockstep to ensure that we are able to deliver the services required both for relief,” Holness said.

“Throughout every phase, the JDF has been present, supporting communities, protecting citizens, and ensuring continuity of government. ”

The prime minister said the relief phase from Hurricane Melissa has ended, recovery is nearly complete, and the nation is now entering reconstruction.

Holness highlighted the Government’s plans to support the JDF’s expansion of maritime and airlift capabilities in the new budget year.

He described those assets as “critical... that enable us to provide the services that the country would need in the event of a disaster or just ensuring general domain awareness and security for all people.”

The prime minister said Dr Rocky Meade, the permanent secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, will now be serving also as the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defence.

(CMC)